



PT Butler

Bible Study Notebooks

Study of The Gospel of Luke

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Chapter	Page	Chapter	Page
1	2	15	63
2	7	16	68
3	13	17-18	75
4	20	19-20	81
5-6	25	21	87
7-8	32	22	94
9	38	23	98
10-11	45	24	102
12-13	51	bio	106
14	57		

These Bible study notes are provided for your use in the preparation of teaching the holy scriptures. They were meticulously prepared over many years to serve the Kingdom of God and aid in the growth of Christians of any age. Please use them in combination with prayer and diligence to promote the clear and honest declaration of God's word.

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LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 1:1-80

The gospel of Christ was on the cutting-edge of the first century social malaise. Society was as sick then as it is now! All one has to do is read the history of that era to find that unredeemed human nature was as wicked, violent and perverse as it was in the days of the prophets of Israel or is in late 21st-century-America (i.e. Will Durant's *Caesar and Christ* or, *The Rise and Decline of the Roman Empire*, by Gibbon, or *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, by Suetonius). People hungered to rid themselves of guilt, find purpose and joy in their lives then as now. **AND SHOULD MAN AND THIS WORLD EXIST FOR ANOTHER 2000 YEARS THE GOSPEL WILL NEVER BECOME IRRELEVANT OR PASSÉ.** Doctors, CEOs, philosophers, scientists, politicians, mechanics, carpenters, fishermen, tax-collectors in every generation need the TRUTH! "Things" change---the TRUTH NEVER CHANGES. But the truth of God has to be VERBALIZED, either orally or in printed form if it is going to "cut" into the hearts of the millions imprisoned in the dark dungeons of sin. Christians must never forego doing good deeds, but we can DO good until we're blue in the face and the GOSPEL will never get into people's minds and hearts until it is taught in word or print to individuals, one by one. Jesus verbalized the message of God to people at both ends of the social spectrum—but he also referred to the written word of God; Paul preached to philosophers in Athens, politicians in their offices, common people in their homes, in their meeting places, in the market places, in their places of employment. Even when he was a prisoner in Rome he communicated the gospel until some of Caesar's own household and perhaps some of the Praetorian Guard had become Christians (see Phil. 4:22 & 1:13). A great company of Jewish priests became Christians (Acts 6:7); so did a Roman army officer (Acts 10 & 11); so did a businesswoman, and a jailor (Acts 16:15,33); so did a philosopher and some students of philosophy (Acts 17:34); a king almost did (Acts 26:28) and a Roman proconsul did (Acts 13:23). A city treasurer became a Christian (Rom. 16:23), and so did some "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, transsexuals, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and swindlers" (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

It should be extremely important to every Christian that Luke declared his Gospel account was an "orderly" "narrative" compiled of those actual, historical events which "happened" among his contemporaries, and were "eye-witnessed" by his contemporaries, "JUST AS THEY WERE DELIVERED" to him. In making such a declaration Dr. Luke laid his account open to critique and contradiction, if there was evidence warranting it. Do not think that people who heard and/or read the first century gospel message would be indifferent toward it. Response to the message was mentally and morally "turning the world upside down" in the first century. If the enemies of the gospel, and they were plentiful and powerful and could have produced evidence to contradict it, you can be certain they would have documented it and published it! The word "eyewitness" comes from the Greek word *autoptai* (literally, "see for oneself") from which we get the modern English word, autopsy. AN

AUTOPSY IS PERFORMED BY METICULOUS ADHERENCE TO SCIENTIFIC PROCESSES FOR ARRIVING AT THE FACTUAL TRUTH ABOUT CAUSES AND EFFECTS. Luke also used the Greek word *parekolouthekoti* (lit. "followed alongside") which means he "traced precisely and carefully" all the data he received to its source (another Greek, for "beginning"). The gospel accounts are pure history. They make no attempts to interpret meanings----they are purely and simply records of what Jesus said and did. Modern news reporters would do well to follow their example. The gospel evangelists of the first century had confidence that honest-minded, clear-thinking men and women who heard or read their historical accounts of Jesus could form their own conclusions about who Jesus is and what they should do about their conclusions (John 20:30-31). Our commitment to Christ is NOT based on emotions, but on facts! Facts produce emotions, but emotions never produce facts! Believing in Christ may be done "beyond any reasonable doubt." Christian faith is just as scientific and fact-based as any laboratory experiment or jury-decision in any court of law anywhere. Actually our faith in Christ is based on better certainty than today's judicial decisions because the whole world of mankind has had 2000 years to critique the historical documents (the OT & NT) and produce any evidence to the contrary. NONE HAS EVER BEEN PRODUCED. The work of modern archaeologists, philologists and historians has thoroughly authenticated the historical accuracy of Luke's Gospel (as well as the other gospel accounts). All other religions, including Islam, are for the most part based on fantasy and myth. They would never dare represent their data as historically factual. Usually people follow other religions out of intimidation and ignorance, or because they have some personal moral agenda they wish to justify. Whatever the reason, it is always by free choice. Abraham was born and reared in an idolatrous home and culture, but he worshiped the One True God by choice.

The name Zechariah means, "Jehovah remembers." The name Elizabeth means, "my God has sworn." Very appropriate names, wouldn't you say. There were 24 "courses" (i.e., shifts) of priest. The course of Abijah was the 8th "shift." There were some 20,000 priests altogether taking turns at officiating at the temple in Jerusalem. There were about 900 priests in each shift. Each shift served for a week, twice a year, burning incense, sacrificing, caring for the showbread, and scores of other duties. Not all the priests lived in Jerusalem. Some, like Zechariah, lived in villages and cities scattered throughout Judea and came to Jerusalem only when they were "on duty." During the three great feasts, Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, all 24 courses/shifts served at once. Zechariah and Elizabeth took the law of the Lord seriously all their lives. They loved it and obeyed it. Of course they sinned---everyone except Jesus has (Rom. 3:23). But they knew what the law of God was all about (even that administration of God's law given to Moses). The law was about atonement, mercy, grace---not about self-righteousness. They walked in the law "blamelessly" which means they kept the law by faith. Thus, they were spiritual, as well as genetic, children of Abraham (Rom. 9:8). Like their progenitor Abraham, it was their faith which was "reckoned unto them as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). God chose these two paragons of the faith of Abraham because they were completely surrendered to his will---he could use them in a way no other two people in all of history could be used. THEY WOULD HAVE THE SINGULAR BLESSEDNESS OF BEING INSTRUMENTS OF GOD TO GIVE BIRTH TO THE "VOICE" PREDICTED 700 YEARS EARLIER IN ISA. 40:3. THEY WOULD

BE THE PARENTS OF THE "ELIJAH WHO WAS TO COME" (MALACHI 4:5). AMONG ALL HUMAN BEINGS BORN BY HUMAN PARENTS, THERE WOULD BE "NONE GREATER" THAN THEIR ONE AND ONLY BOY (MATT. 11:7-15). THEIR CHILD WOULD MARK "THE FULLNESS OF TIME." HE WOULD USHER IN THE ERA WHEN THE LAW OF MOSES WOULD BE FULFILLED (Lk. 16:16). HE WOULD IDENTIFY THE MESSIAH, THE PERFECT ATONEMENT WOULD BE MADE AND THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF GOD WOULD BE INSTITUTED. But Elizabeth was barren! (we do not know whether the inability to conceive was in Elizabeth or Zechariah). At this point in time they were too old to produce children. How could God use them to produce such a child? Miraculously, of course. With God, anything is possible. And that made Zechariah's and Elizabeth's humble, faithful service to the Lord bring even more glory to God. Millenniums prior to Zechariah's and Elizabeth's birth Almighty God planned for that very moment in history. These two believers purified their lives so that God could use them as "vessels for noble use" (2 Tim. 2:20-22). Dwight L. Moody once said, "God has yet to see what he can do with one person who is totally, completely yielded to the divine will revealed in the scriptures." God certainly did something tremendously significant with Zechariah and Elizabeth!

The child born to Zechariah and Elizabeth was to begin the fulfillment of Isaiah's and Malachi's prophecies (Isa. 40:1-8; Mal. 3:1-5; 4:5---should be read in connection to this lesson). Malachi (3:1-5) predicts both John the Baptist (the Way-Preparer) and the Messiah ("the Messenger"). John the Immerser's mission was much broader than merely reuniting families. His mission was to reunite or re-tie the whole nation's mentality toward the arrival of the promised Messiah. His mission was to "turn" the minds of those godly, but down-trodden, Jews of his day back to the doctrines and practices of their godly forefathers. It was his task to turn the minds and aspirations of those first century Jews away from Greek and Roman idolatry and materialism toward the heroes of the faith (Abraham, Moses, David, et.al.). He was sent to turn all who would believe him away from their self-righteous complacency in anticipation of the Coming One who proclaimed himself to be God-Incarnate, and the vicarious Lamb of God for their sins. THIS WOULD TAKE SOME DOING! The theology of the day was self-justification by keeping the traditions of the rabbis. Like that of most ancient and modern Jews this is the doctrine of 20th century neo-orthodoxy proclaimed in all liberal churches today, i.e., that God is totally "wholly-other" and could never become human. Therefore, the neo-orthodox have to find God out of an "inner experience" and not in history. The Jews should have been prepared for the coming of the Messiah. But they were not prepared. For the most part, they hoped for a militaristic, grandiose, economical savior. Every "false-Messiah" in the history of the Jews made those claims. Their rabbis (see Jewish apocrypha, & Talmud, Mishna, Cabala, etc.) taught that such a materialistic Messiah was what was predicted by their prophets (Isaiah, et. al.). To this very day most Jews (who even give Messianic concepts a thought) still hope in a "this-world-only" Messiah. John's mission was to turn Jewish minds and hearts back to what the prophets really said about a spiritual Savior and spiritual kingdom of God. His success is counted in the thousands in the book of Acts (3000 on Pentecost, then 5000, then a large company of the priests, etc.). Still, the majority of Judaism did then, and still has, rejected Jesus Christ as God's Messiah and their Savior. Pray for them!

How could a woman who is a virgin, who has never had sexual intercourse become pregnant? Of course, in those days, artificial insemination was not practiced. Human experience would certainly discredit such a story. Even today with all the "scientific advances" we have, a woman cannot conceive without male sperm being placed in her womb. Clearly, Dr. Luke is declaring that Mary's conception was supernatural. Someone, other than a male human placed male-human-sperm in her womb. Christians believe it was, as Luke says, none other than the Holy Spirit of God who placed human sperm in Mary's womb so that she conceived "without having (sexually) known a man." We must assume that what the Holy Spirit did was through the agency of human sperm because Jesus was born in human flesh (Jn. 1:14; Rom. 1:3; Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 5:7, etc.). But the implantation of that human sperm was done miraculously. TO BELIEVE IT REQUIRES TRUSTING THE DOCUMENTATION OF IT TO BE CREDIBLE. We have no laboratory or clinical way of "proving" it. It is an unrepeatable event! (unless God Almighty should see fit to repeat it). Ultimately, everything we believe about God, Jesus, our origin, our destiny, our salvation, our purpose DEPENDS ENTIRELY UPON THE AUTHENTICITY, HISTORICITY, AND CREDIBILITY OF THE BIBLICAL RECORD! Preaching the evidence for the historicity, authenticity and credibility of the Gospel events IS BIBLICAL!!!! All one has to do is make a very cursory reading of the book of Acts to see that this was the bed-rock fundamental proclaimed by the early church---EVIDENCE FOR THE BASIS OF THEIR MESSAGE. Then turn to the epistles and you find the same thing (i.e., 1 Cor. 15; 1 Jn. 1:1-4, etc.). Any congregation of Christians that does not MAJOR in EVIDENCES as its message to the community is defaulting on its purpose for existence! Some theologians today say it is not important to our Christian faith that we believe in the virgin conception. But the fundamental integrity of both Matthew and Luke as historians is impugned if we do not. We could never believe anything else they recorded if we do not believe the accuracy and historicity of this event! Harold Fowler wrote, "the virgin conception is the keystone which supports the arch of logical connection between the incarnation of God and the Messiah's necessary identification with humanity." (The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. I, pg. 45, by Harold Fowler, pub. College Press).

The preservation of these "songs of praise" from the two women is a great blessing for us. They should help us find proper words by which to THANK God for sending the Messiah to save our souls. In these two "songs" it is the words, not the melody or tempo that is important. They show that it is not Mary we should worship, but Mary's Son, Jesus Christ. Mary was merely the "handmaiden" of the Lord---an instrument, a vessel---just like we are to be. Mary had God's treasure, his Holy Spirit, in an "earthen vessel" to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us...and so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in...mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4:7). Remember, that while John the Immerser was called "greatest among those born of women," he who is "least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he (John)!" We have lived on the fulfilled-side of Christ's redemptive work. How our souls ought to "magnify the Lord." Imagine what it would be like to live under the Law and the Prophets---always in anticipation of the Messiah!

God emphatically demanded that Zechariah name his future son, "John."

Zechariah had not believed God would give him a son at the first announcement (Lk. 1:18-20). God made Zechariah mute (unable to talk) as a signal to Zechariah that when one receives a divine prophecy and/or command, one is to believe and obey, without hesitation. God put Zechariah to the test again to see if he had learned his lesson (notice, God didn't strike Z. dead at the first unbelief as he did Uzzah). Is God so rigid that when he tells a father and mother something so insignificant as to what name to give their child, he expects implicit obedience? You betcha! There are no insignificant commandments from God. We may not always understand God's explicit commands, but he expects man to trust him enough to obey to the letter. If God has proven himself absolutely gracious and good, then we should be ashamed if we do not exert every ounce of our abilities and energy to doing what he had told us to do. HE HAS PROMISED BLESSEDNESS TO THOSE WHO TRUST HIS WORD AND KEEP IT. Is not the Bible a record of God keeping that promise of blessedness to those who have lived within his will in the past?

The preservation of Mary's and Elizabeth's "songs of praise" was primarily to show the world that their experiences were fulfillment of prophecy. Clearly, they show that O.T. prophecy was intended to have its highly symbolic, apocalyptic, and figurative language ALL fulfilled in the FIRST advent of the Messiah---and NOT in the second coming of Christ!!! Since these women were under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in uttering their "songs" it demonstrates that this is what the Holy Spirit intended the language of the O.T. Prophets to predict! The same goes for Zechariah's "prophecy" (Lk. 1:67-79) where he uses words like, "visited and redeemed his people," "saved from our enemies," "remembered his holy covenant," etc., etc. Everything the O.T. Prophets predicted for the Israelites of old was to find its fulfillment in the FIRST coming of Christ and his kingdom, the church. It was not until Jesus came the FIRST time that prophecies were made by NT writers concerning his SECOND coming.

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Luke 2:1-52

Augustus Caesar (a.k.a. Octavian) ordered a census (actually for tax purposes) taken of the "all the world" (the world known as the Roman empire). His order went out "when Quirinius (or Cyrenius) was governor of Syria" (the Roman province which included Palestine). Octavian's order at this time was said to be the first one when Quirinius was governor. Archaeological inscriptions have been unearthed showing that Quirinius was governor of Syria twice; the first time from about 9 to 6 B.C. and the second time from about A.D. 6-7. It is believed that Herod delayed in implementing the order in Palestine in 6 B.C. So Jesus could have been born December 5 B.C. or January 4 B.C. Herod the Great died April 1, 4 B.C. Jesus was born a considerable time before March 4 B.C. Jesus was still in Bethlehem 8 days after his birth and was circumcised. Forty days later he was taken to the Temple in Jerusalem for Mary's purification and Jesus' dedication to the Lord. Almost two months after his birth he was still in Palestine. Joseph, Mary and Jesus return to Bethlehem and were in a house when the magi found them (Mt. 2:11). Joseph and Mary are warned, they obey and flee to Egypt. Herod flies into a rage and orders the newly born Bethlehem babies slaughtered. All this had to happen before April 1, 4 B.C. when Herod died. Would all this take 90 days, more or less, to happen? Surely! Then Jesus was born late December, 5 B.C. Another way to determine the time of Jesus' birth is from the time of Zechariah's service in the Temple. According to Josephus the priestly "course" of Abijah was "on duty" in the Temple October 3-9, 6 B.C. Elizabeth apparently conceived during Zechariah's service, October, 6 B.C. She conceived 6 months before Mary conceived. John the Baptist was born 9 months after October sometime in June, 5 B.C. Jesus was born 6 months later, December 5 B.C. Still another way to determine it has to do with the remodeling of the Temple by Herod the Great. That remodeling was begun in 20 B.C. When Jesus was baptized at about 30 years of age, the Temple had been under remodeling for 46 years (see Jn. 2:20). That would mean Jesus was baptized about A.D. 26. which would mean he had to have been born about December 5 B.C. or January 4 B.C. Luke's gospel record is accurate in every minute detail. But how could Jesus be born "B.C." which means, "before Christ?" Evidently the Gregorian Roman Catholic monk who formed our present "calendar" made a 4-year error in his calculations. And there is historical evidence that this is precisely what happened. Yes, it is important to know the time of Jesus' birth in order to verify the historical accuracy (and thus, the credibility) of Luke's record. But isn't it interesting that there is no indication in the NT or in Christian literature of the first two centuries that the early Church ever made a special celebration (Christmas) of Jesus' birth! The earliest record of the Church celebrating Jesus's birth is nearly 350 years after it happened (in A.D. 345). It is also puzzling to some why Jesus' birth is not noted in any secular literature of 5-4 B.C. Well, it probably was, in the tax records of the town of Bethlehem, province of Syria, empire of Rome. But such a notation was probably made only once, on papyrus, and was of no significance at all like the OT scrolls or the Gospel papyrus. Those Bethlehem tax records were either destroyed or

simply oxidized back into dust centuries ago. And no bureaucrat or secular historian saw any need to preserve the notation that the carpenter from Nazareth, Joseph and Mary his betrothed, had paid their taxes and added their first born son to the census in Bethlehem. How many other famous people's birth notice has never been found in secular literature? Lots of them! One right here in Newton Co., MO----George Washington Carver! And that was only a little over 100 years ago!

Shepherds were humble people. They were not smart-alecks who "knew so much" that they could never believe that angels could appear. They had learned from the dangerous and difficult life they lived to guard against the pride and arrogance that causes men to deny reality. It would be a very welcome diversion from the onerous task of herding sheep to be confronted with a heavenly host which told them to go to the Bethlehem inn to see the fulfillment of the prophets. They would be men who saw God "in the things that have been made" (Rom. 1:18-20) as well as from their Hebrew scriptures. They would be awed with the majesty of God as they herded sheep night and day observing the handiwork of God in creation. And when angels appeared to them they were honest-minded enough to realize God had spoken and they should respond with immediate obedience. They were "unsophisticated" men who were unashamed to tell everyone else they met about their supernatural confrontation with God's angelic host! They were probably lovers of people (babies) as well as lovers of nature (and sheep). They must have been godly Israelites who were waiting (like Simeon, and Anna, Lk. 2:25,36) to hear that at last God's promises to their forefathers were beginning to come to pass. They certainly responded differently to the announcement than the Pharisees or Herod! Who better to be the first to see The Good and Great Shepherd (Jn. 10 & Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25; 5:4) than a crew of godly shepherds? The shepherds told everyone they met about seeing the angels and the Messiah-child and their listeners marvelled, but were apparently not interested enough themselves to go to the inn and see the Christ-child.

Most mothers want to let all the world know about their babies. But Mary did not go about telling all the wonderful, supernatural things she knew about her baby boy. She hid them in her heart (Gr. suneterei, "kept hidden in a protective way") and set each event and thing she knew about him (Gr. sumballousa, "cast them alongside") side by side in her mind so she could compare one with the other. A few were given momentary glimpses of the awesomeness of Mary's child, but Mary gathered all the events, pondering, wondering, marvelling at them but keeping the whole picture to herself. She was well read in the scriptures. She believed her child was the Messiah. She also knew what Herod and the Jewish rulers attitude would be toward a lowly, powerless, vulnerable child whose parents might claim was heir to the crown of David. Mother's instinct! Danger! The birth of Jesus is mentioned, post facto (after the fact), by many years in the blasphemous Jewish work entitled, Toldoth Jesu, a medieval rabbinic tale about the birth and acts of Jesus. It was first translated into English in 1823 and in the dedication of the Jewish translator, Solomon Bennet, he makes it clear that "it is considered of authority by the wise men of my nation" to at least the same extent as Christians revere the NT Gospels. This Toldoth Jesu is sanctioned in an article in the Jewish Encyclopedia, 1905. According to Toldoth Jesu, Mary

was raped twice by an adulterous, unclean, violent thug known as a robber. She conceived a child by this rape and both her rapist and, Joseph, her real fiancé deserted her so her child had no father. The child was given the name Jesus "as a sign, that he was a man whose name and memory ought to perish." When "the report that Jesus was a bastard had been spread abroad, he left Upper Galilee, and came privately to Jerusalem." There he learned "the sacred letters and the unutterable name" and became a practitioner of "black magic." That is the only non-biblical document to my knowledge that exists and it is repudiated as having no credible historical authority by most modern Jewish scholars. See Israel, Our Duty and Our Dilemma, by Theodore Winston Pike, pg. 77-86 & 330-335, pub. Big Sky Press, 1984. Both the Jewish Encyclopedia and the uncensored Talmud sanction the account of Toldoth Jesu! 4. The Greek word in Luke 2:22 is katharismou, the word from which we get the English, catharsis. It literally means, "a cleansing, a purging." For 40 days after childbirth, a Hebrew mother was ceremonially unclean according to the Law of Moses (Lev. 12:1-8). The regulation was for spiritual and hygienic reasons. If the mother and child are isolated from everyone else (as required by that statute) the chances for the survival of both would be greatly increased. Otherwise the child would be especially vulnerable to communicable disease. This regulation in Lev. 12 had nothing to do with making the mother sinful due to childbirth, perse. The fundamental purpose of all Levitical laws of purification was to develop the sensitivity of the human being to his sinfulness and God's holiness. Also laws which seemed unreasonable to the human mind were intended to habituate obedience to the will of God whether man understood or agreed with the statutes, or not! When a Jew became ceremonially unclean he was unable to worship God in the Temple (where God stipulated he was to be worshiped) or to have fellowship with God's covenant people until he purified himself according to the rituals of the Law. This would emphasize the grace of God in providing a way for him to be restored to covenant relationship.

The law required an offering to the priest for sacrifice, a lamb and a young pigeon. If the candidate for cleansing was poor he/she could offer two pigeons or two turtle doves (costing about 16 cents---8 days wages). So about the first week in February, 4 BC., Mary, with her husband Joseph, traveled the 5 or 6 miles from Bethlehem to Jerusalem and presented herself to a priest with 2 turtle doves to receive cleansing. WHAT A BLESSED FREEDOM WE HAVE IN CHRIST THAT WE DO NOT HAVE TO PRACTICE A MULTITUDE OF RITUALS, REPEATING THEM OVER AND OVER, KNOWING THAT BY THE VERY REPETITION OF THEM WE COULD NEVER HAVE THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF OUR SIN PURGED FROM OUR SOULS (see Heb. 10:1-18)!

Simeon's whole life was focused on "looking for the (paraklesin) consolation of Israel." That is another way of saying he was looking for the Messiah who was predicted by the OT prophets to be the paraklesin, literally "the One called alongside." We get the English word, Paraclete from that Greek word. It is the very same word Jesus used to describe the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7) who was to be sent to believers after he accomplished his redemptive work on earth. Jesus was, in fact, the Holy Spirit in the flesh when he was on earth (Jn. 14:17-21). Isaiah predicted that God would comfort his people and "end her warfare" when the Messiah came, preceded by the "Voice" (John the Baptist) preparing the

way for him (Isa. 40:1-5; see also Isa. 49:13; 51:3; 52:9; 54:11; 61:2; 66:13; Jer. 31:13---all of these are Messianic prophecies). The Hebrew word is nacham (the Hebrew names, Nahum, Menahem, and Menachem Begin derive from this word). The Hebrew word nacham, like the Greek word paraklete means, "Strengthened Comforter." God predicted in the OT that he was going to give Israel a "Strengthened." Simeon spent his life "looking for The Strengthened." Simeon would live to be an old man but the Lord promised him he would not die until he saw with his eyes the promised Strengthened of Israel---the Messiah. It is interesting that Luke used the Greek word despota, ("despot" in English) to represent what Simeon called the Lord, and the word doulon, ("bond-slave") to represent what Simeon called himself. Is God a despot? A "despot" is an absolute sovereign, a "dictator," if you please! YES, God is an absolute dictator. He dictates, and we obey. Many people are shocked when God is described like that. But when people came "face to face" (so to speak) with God in the Bible they realized immediately that God is an absolute dictator. He dictated to Adam and Eve even before they sinned in the Garden of Eden! God and Jesus are our Absolute Masters. If you will study the parables Jesus told you will find him representing himself and the Father as Absolute Master and everyone else as servants. Like it or leave it! Simeon's mission was to announce good news that the "salvation of Israel and the Gentiles" had arrived on earth. But he had some bad news to announce as well. Some would "rise" in Israel by accepting the way this Messiah worked out mankind's salvation, and others would "fall" rejecting the way he "saved." (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18-25).

The sweet little infant Simeon held in his arms was "set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce your (Mary's) own soul also, that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." Luke 2:34-35. The "sign spoken against" is predicting the vicious slander against Jesus by the Jewish rulers (see Jn. 8:39-41 where the Jews imply that Jesus was illegitimately born). It also predicts the hateful accusations that Jesus was a blasphemer (Matt. 9:3; Jn. 5:18; 10:33; Matt. 26:65), the mocking and scoffing and his crucifixion (Lk. 23:35-38). It was predicted that the Messiah would be despised and rejected by his own people (Isa. 53:1-12; Psa. 22:1-18) and be a stumbling-block over which many in Israel would fall (Isa. 8:14; Psa. 118:22; Lk. 20:18; Rom. 9:32-33; 1 Cor. 1:23; 1 Pet. 2:8). The Eternal Father, coming to earth in human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ has "revealed the thoughts of many hearts." It was witnessed by some, believed by many, and has brought millions to a mental confrontation with the reality of their own sinfulness and to the mercy and love of God (Acts 2:14-39; 2 Cor. 5:14-21). No other person in human history has made such a soul-searching, cathartic impact on the psyche of some human beings. What people think of Christ reveals the true thoughts and intents of their hearts (Heb. 4:12)! Men in rebellion against the Creator take a relativistic, self-centered attitude toward everything. Once confronted with the historical Christ and his absolute deity, every person capable of reasoning makes a decision. His lordship must either be denied or accepted. Jesus summed up what Simeon was predicting in John 15:22, "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin....If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. It is to fulfill the word that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause." See also John 3:16-21! And, as we have already pointed out, 1 Cor. 1:23ff reveals that Jesus was, and still is to

many, a "stumbling block" to the Jews and "foolishness" to the Gentiles (i.e., all who are not Jews).

Nazareth was the place where Joseph lived and worked as a carpenter. Mary was also from Nazareth. Bethlehem was the home of their ancestor David (son of Jesse, 1 Sam. 16:1-12). It was according to Roman law (not Jewish) that Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem, the city of their ancestors, to be "enrolled." Nazareth was in Galilee. The word "Galilee" means, "the circuit of the Gentiles." Judea was under the rule of Archelaus, son of Herod the Great. He was carnal-minded, vicious, and hated by the Jews. A few short years after his taking "charge" of Judea, the Jews sent an embassy to Caesar in Rome saying, "We do not want this man to rule over us." So, Caesar sent a procurator to rule Judea (procurator is the Latin word for Greek hegemon which in English is "governor" i.e., one who rules a hegemony). Galilee was under the rule of Herod Antipas in the adulthood of Jesus. Antipas was another son of Herod the Great by Maltheus, a Samaritan and one of his 8 wives. The town of Nazareth (est. population in Christ's time 15,000) was situated on the main Roman highway from Asia Minor to Egypt. It was extensively traveled by Roman army legions and by merchants and other travelers from all over the world. Nazareth was about 15 miles west and slightly south of the Sea of Galilee. The large cities of Sepphoris and Tiberias were within 5-15 miles of Nazareth. Herod had built theaters, gymnasiums, hippodromes (race tracks for chariots and horses), and a pagan temple to the Roman emperor Tiberius in the city renamed after him. The orthodox intelligentsia of Jerusalem were contemptuous of Galileans considering them to be am-ha-eretz (Hebrew for "people of the land"), i.e., ignorant hillbillies because of their colloquialisms, lack of formal (i.e., rabbinical) education, cultural crudities, and questionable genealogical background. Most Galileans were, in fact, a genetic mixture of Jew and Gentile as a result of the importation of Gentiles into Galilee at the captivity of the ten northern tribes by Assyria (2 Kings 17:24). There are, in fact, "Gentiles" in the ancestry of Jesus (Rahab and Ruth, Mt. 1:5). There is no OT prophecy that uses the word, "Nazarene" (see Matt. 2:23). However, the city of Nazareth could have been named notserah which is Hebrew for "that which guards or watches" because it is situated on an extremely prominent and strategic hill which overlooks and guards that extensive region mentioned in Isaiah 9:1-2, "the land of Zebulun and Naphtali...the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations." Isa. 9:1-2 is clearly a prophecy as to where the Messiah would come and bring "light to those who sat in darkness." God clearly had a definite reason for Jesus to spend his boyhood in Nazareth rather than Bethlehem or Jerusalem. Probably for safety, for contact with a wide range of travelers, and in an area where "in every respect was tempted as we are, yet without sinning" (Heb. 4:15 RSV). Whatever the reason, God's providence was working "in the fullness of time" to bring forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law..." Gal. 4:4

Jesus did not disobey his parents by missing the "company" returning to Nazareth. There was, so far as we know, no specified orders from Jesus' parents to him that they were leaving Jerusalem and that he must see to it that he was leaving with them. The text says they just "supposed" he was in the "company" that was leaving Jerusalem to return to Nazareth after the Passover (Lk. 2:44). There is no evidence that they had told him not to

stay behind in Jerusalem. By the age of twelve, Jesus would be bar-mitzvah, which means, "a son of the commandment" and responsible to know the will of God for his life from the OT. And he did know it! His answer to his mother indicates that he knew he was where he should be---sitting among the "teachers" (rabbis) asking and answering questions. His reply to his exasperated mother, was, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house" Lk. 2:49). He knew he was on a special "mission" from God. He was surprised that his parents did not understand his uniqueness. He implies they knew or should have known that he had a special job to do and that his life was not going to be that of an ordinary person of his age. He was surprised they were surprised that he would be more interested in discussing God's Law than in other matters surrounding his stay in Jerusalem. Mary already had many signs about him. Jesus expected the Jews (and esp. Mary) to recognize in him a uniqueness not to be found in other people and he was disturbed when they did not (e.g., Lk. 24:25ff). Finally, submission to parental authority can never mean a child must disobey God. The will of God, when plainly revealed, is sovereign in every human life. There is no higher authority than that, and every human being capable of making moral choices rejects it at the peril of eternal damnation.

The word increased in Greek is, proekopten, and means literally, "a striking or cutting forward, like a pioneer cutting his way through brush." Thayer says the word "means to lengthen out by hammering as a smith forges metals." Thus the word describes someone "going forward chopping his way by struggle or strenuous activity." It is active not passive. Jesus' young manhood was a daily hammering out his human life in the crucible of God's will. Each day he "chopped" (sinlessly) through the jungle of human experience so that all who search might know he was God in the flesh come to redeem all creation. Jesus "hacked out" of the wilderness of human sinfulness a life of perfect sinlessness and walked completely in the will of God. He did so in boyhood, young manhood and adulthood. He did so mentally, physically and spiritually. He mastered all of life as he pioneered and became "the Way" in human flesh. The English preposition "with" (God and man, Lk. 2:52) is para in Greek and means "along side." As he cut his way forward each day he was constantly "along side" or within the will of God and in proper relationship to man. Jesus is manhood as God intends it for all mankind! Jesus demonstrated that it is possible to live life in the flesh as God intended it. But since none of us have done it (except him), he suffered and experienced obedience to the will of God to bring us, by his grace and our faith, to the same glorious ideal manhood (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:10-18; 5:7-10; 10:1-18). He is the pioneer and author of our salvation. Jesus earned, in the flesh, our salvation for us. And he offers it to us vicariously if we are willing to trust him enough to enter into a covenant relationship with him. A covenant-receiver knows there are terms and obligations to keep in order to enjoy the advantages offered by the covenant-author. It is just like going to the bank and receiving a loan---there are terms the loaned must obligate himself to in order to enjoy the advantages of the loaner's money.

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 3:1-38

John the Immerser preached during the reign over the Roman empire by Tiberius Caesar; during the rule of Judea by Pontius Pilate as procurator; during the rule of Herod Antipas as tetrarch of Galilee; during the rule of Herod Philip as tetrarch of the region of Ituraea NE of Palestine beyond the Jordan (Ituraeans were descended from Ishmael, Gen. 25:15, who had a son named Jetur, from whom the name Ituraea is derived); and Trachonitis (a volcanic region SE of Damascus where violent people lived); during the rule of Lysanias as tetrarch of Abilene; during the reign of Annas and his son-in-law Caiaphas as high-priests of the Jews. An assemblage of more violent, corrupt, lascivious, and perverse rulers could hardly be found in all history. It would rank right along with Adolph Hitler's gang and that of Joseph Stalin and Mao Tse Tung. The Roman, Herodian, and Jewish rulers of John's day were equally as cruel, bestial, depraved and ruthless as any in history. It was nothing for Tiberius and the Herods to kill members of their immediate families (wives, sons, mothers) for political or any other reason they saw fit. They were depraved sexual perverts. They were paranoid. They were avaricious. They were cold-blooded murderers. They were extravagant, self-centered people who indulged and luxuriated themselves at the expense of the poor and common people who had to pay the exorbitant taxes demanded to keep them in the life-style to which they were accustomed. Anna and Caiaphas, Jewish high-priests were no slouches at cruelty and profligacy. Ever since the days of the Seleucid (Greek-Syrian) occupation of Palestine (300-164 B.C.) continuing through the Maccabean and Roman rule of Palestine in Jesus's adulthood (164 B.C. to 26 A.D.), the high-priesthood of the Jews had been politicized. It was actually ruled over by those Gentile rulers who had conquered Palestine and those Gentile rulers had either appointed whom they wished among the Jews and half-Jews to be high-priest or sold the office to the highest bidder. That was true of Annas & Caiaphas. The office of high-priest exercised great power (as much as their conquerors would allow) and those occupying the office were in strategic political and religious position to make large financial fortunes from it. They "cornered" the market in what was acceptable sacrifices to be made in the temple. They controlled the money-changing concessions. Jewish worshipers had to change their Roman denarii into Hebrew shekels to pay their temple tax and give other offerings. Jewish high priests were adroit politicians so they undoubtedly had their fingers in many different financial "pies." These Jewish hypocrites were extremely paranoid about anyone they envisioned as a threat or challenge to their power and pocketbooks. They would not hesitate to violate their own religious and civil laws to kill, or get someone else to kill, any one who stood in their way to financial gain. So, it is as Jeremiah said, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?" (Jer. 13:23). Human nature has not changed from Day 8 in Eden EXCEPT through the cleansing, saving and sanctifying power of the word of God. Man has had over 4000 years to try his own finite schemes in psychology, political ideology, sociology, economics, etc. etc. ad nauseam to "change the spots" on his soul BUT WITHOUT CHRIST HE IS JUST THE

SAME AS WERE THOSE WITHOUT HIM IN JOHN THE BAPTIST'S DAY!

Of course, the simplistic answer is to say, "God can order a baptism for the remission of sins to be instituted ANYTIME HE WANTS TO DO SO!" But there is another answer. It is from scripture. Jesus said, "The law and the prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached...." (Lk. 16:16). John's ministry was to introduce the Messianic age by showing that covenant relationship and atonement for sin would no longer be made repetitiously through animal sacrifices (the law and the prophets). Once the Messiah establishes his rule (kingdom) on earth, atonement for sin and covenant relationship would be made efficacious through the "death and resurrection" of a "Messiah" (i.e., "Anointed One") which is what "baptism" is all about (cf. Rom. 6:1-11). John was announcing that the old ordinances were going to be replaced by a new ordinance which would unite the believer to the ultimate, final, perfect atonement—the vicarious death and resurrection of the Messiah (see Heb. 10:1-18). Immersion in water would not only depict a death and resurrection, it would become the one ordinance, obeyed by faith, that would, by divine fiat, make it possible for the believer to vicariously participate in the death of Christ. Baptism is more than "an outward symbol of an inward grace." In baptism we "wash away our sins" (Acts 22:16); in baptism we are "buried with Christ and raised with him" (Col. 2:12-13); in baptism we "put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27); we are saved by baptism (1 Pet. 3:21). John was a unique, supernaturally-commissioned, God-sent LINK between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. He was sent to prepare the people of Israel to turn away from the Old system and to turn them toward the New system. John insisted that Israel not only repent of their immorality, but they must repent of their temporary, ineffective theology—the law of Moses (see Heb. 10:1-4). By works of the law shall no flesh be justified (Gal. 2:16). Baptism is also an announcement by the believer who obeys it that he, the believer, has "been crucified with Christ and it is no longer he (the believer) that lives, but Christ who lives in him..." (Gal. 2:20-21; 2 Cor. 5:14-15). When a believer in Christ obeys Christ's command in baptism, the believer is declaring his egocentricity is put to death. Christ takes over his life. Christ takes over his thinking (2 Cor. 10:3-5). The values, the will, the feelings, the actions of the believer are all "swallowed up" in the will of Christ. The believer does not lose his identity—far from it, he finds his true identity IN CHRIST. Of course, those who were baptized by John could not know this much about baptism. However, those who did prepare themselves for the imminent coming of the New Kingdom by repenting as John preached were immersed for the remission of their sins (Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3). In that state they awaited the establishment of the New Kingdom. John's immersion was performed under the authority of God and was valid until God transferred that authority to the Son. After Christ completed his redemptive work and ascended to God's right hand, authority for covenant terms was assumed by him. He poured out his Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2) and announced that immersion must be in his name, in recognition of his Lordship over all. It took some time for everyone who had been immersed with John's immersion to get the inspired word that John's immersion was no longer authoritative (Acts 19:4,24,25).

John immersed,(Greek ebaptisthete plunged, dipped) people in water (mostly in the Jordan River). Sprinkling or pouring water over the head or any other portion of the body in

no way describes what the word baptisma, means in the Greek language in which the New Testament was originally written. Baptisma is a "burial" in water of the whole body. That is the whole point of being baptized---to be "buried" as Christ was buried and be "resurrected" as Christ was resurrected (Rom. 6:1-11; Col. 2:12). All ancient sources outside the NT (the writings of the earliest church "fathers") clearly show that the ancient church immersed people in obedience to the command of Christ and the apostles. The Jews who translated the OT into the Greek language in what is known as the Septuagint (or LXX) ca. 200 B.C. translated their Hebrew word taval (which is always used in the OT for "dipped" -- see 2 Kings 6:14) into the Greek word ebaptisato, which is simply the aorist tense of the Greek verb baptizo. The Hebrew language has only one word for "dip" "submerge" and that is taval. Why did the English translators translate the Hebrew word taval and the Greek word ebaptisato of the LXX as "dip" in 2 Kings 6:14, and then erroneously transliterate the Greek word baptisma in Luke 3:3 (and every where else in the NT) into "baptism?" The Greek word hrantizo is always translated "sprinkle" in the NT. The Greek word most often translated "pour" in the NT is cheo. The Greek word, baptizo, (and derivatives) is NEVER translated sprinkle or pour. What the translators actually did was TRANSLITERATE the Greek word baptizo in to the English "baptism." In other words, they merely transposed Greek alphabetical symbols into English symbols. They DID NOT TRANSLATE (give the meaning of) THE WORD AS IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN. I am convinced those English translators dishonestly transliterated the Greek word baptisma because of their necessity to preserve the unscriptural practice of sprinkling infants---which in turn was necessary to perpetuate to preserve their unscriptural doctrine of "original sin." WHO GAVE THE TRANSLATORS THE PERMISSION TO DO SUCH A MISLEADING THING? AND WHO GAVE ANYONE THE PERMISSION TO CHANGE THE METHOD OF BAPTISMA FROM IMMERSION TO SPRINKLING AND POURING? Clearly, God did not give anyone permission to change the meaning or definition of the original Greek language. His revelation to man ceased when the New Testament was completed. There are no revelations from God beyond the New Testament. The next revelation God has for the world will be when Jesus Christ returns in his glory to bring an end to the world, eternally judge the impenitent, and take those who have trusted Christ to eternal life in heaven. Does God intend man to obey his revelation with precision? Remember the naming of John the Baptist! Remember Uzzah in the OT who touched the ark of the covenant intending to do a good deed and keep the ark from falling to the ground---Uzzah died on the spot!

John isn't the only one who called Jewish religious leaders, a "brood of vipers!" Jesus did also---twice (Mt. 12:34; 23:33)! Jesus called the Pharisees "sons of hell" (Mt. 23:15). He called Jewish unbelievers sons of the devil (Jn. 8:44). Paul called the Judaizers, "dogs" and "evil workers" Phil. 3:2. Jesus said there were people who were "hogs and dogs" (Mt. 7:6). Peter called some false teachers "irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and killed." (2 Pet. 2:12). These are just a sampling of the blunt and caustic words used by the Lord, his apostles and John the Baptist. If you want to read more such scathing, rebuking, straight-from-the-hip language from the lips of preachers, read the OT prophets! How may such language be called, "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15) or "gracious, seasoned with salt" (Col. 4:6)? Well, do parents talk bluntly, in love, to erring children? Do wives and husbands rebuke one another in love? Does your doctor tell you straightforwardly

your physical condition, with concern? Why, then, should we become "miffed" at preachers, elders or Bible teachers when they "tell it like it is?" Is it better to withhold bitter medicine or radical surgery from a dying man instead of hurting him to cure him? Paul "charged" Timothy, "preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching" (2 Tim. 4:2). Paul charged Titus to "rebuke sharply" (Titus 1:11-13) those who were "insubordinate, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." Jesus advised, "If your brother sins, rebuke him..." (Lk. 17:3). And Paul told Timothy, "As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear." (1 Tim. 5:20). Brethren, we have "pussy-footed" around the teaching of false doctrine, around immoral living of church members, around those causing dissension, and around other aberrations of the brotherhood too long! If we are serious about "restoring" NT Christianity in doctrine and practice, we need more preachers and teachers like the prophets and apostles "telling it like it is!"

The Greek word for repentance is *metanoeo*. It comes from Greek military life and means, literally, "about face, or, to the rear march." I like William Chamberlain's definition of repentance. He wrote, "Repentance is a pilgrimage from the mind of the flesh to the mind of Christ" (The Meaning of Repentance, 1943, Westminster Press). In other words, Chamberlain viewed repentance as a JOURNEY from carnality to spirituality. To repent is to keep on learning the mind of Christ as revealed in the Bible, and letting his revelation CAPTURE our thoughts so that we no longer see anything or anyone from a human point of view (cf. 2 Cor. 10:3-5; 5:14-21; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 3:1-3; Rom. 8:5-8; 12:1-2, et.al.). Repentance begins and ends with the mind! In between it deals with our actions. But as Jesus showed unequivocally in the Sermon on the Mount, when the mind-set and motives are wrong, even "good" actions are evil. Peter thought he would do a "good" thing and protect the Lord from being killed by his enemies. Jesus told Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance (stumbling block) to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men." Mt. 16:23. One version translates the second sentence, "...you mind not the things of God, but the things of men." What Peter had set his mind to do seemed the right thing to do, but it was not the mind-set of Christ! Peter needed to REPENT of that by changing his mind to the mind of Christ! Now where would Peter find the mind of Christ on any subject? Certainly not from within himself, nor from some other human being....only from the verbalized words of Christ! Peter could not discover the mind of Christ in Peter's emotions or in his experiences. Only when Christ gave Peter his mind by putting it into human language could Peter know it. Did you notice that the focus of John's preaching here is that the Jews were to CHANGE THEIR ATTITUDE (THINKING) about what was necessary to be in covenant relationship to God. They had mentally decided that because they were genetic descendants of Abraham, they could do pretty much as they pleased and God would accept them. It was not so much a matter of WHAT they were doing (outwardly they lived a most religious life, praying, fasting, tithing, sacrificing animals, etc.). All of those actions are pleasing to God---BUT ONLY WHEN THE MIND-SET ABOUT THEM IS IN ACCORD WITH GOD'S MIND ABOUT THEM. That principle is doubly certain for the NT church since we have the benefit of the COMPLETED REVELATION OF GOD'S MIND FOR SALVATION AND SANCTIFICATION IN THE INCARNATE WORK OF CHRIST AND IN THE SCRIPTURES. Jesus made a very provocative statement in Luke 16:16..."The law and the prophets were until John; since then

the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, AND EVERY ONE ENTERS IT VIOLENTLY." Did you see that word, "...EVERY ONE...?" Did you enter the kingdom VIOLENTLY? What could Jesus mean by that? I think he meant that EVERYONE entering God's kingdom must do so BY DEATH TO HUMAN EGOCENTRICITY. We must take up our cross individually....we must DIE to "self-centeredness." This is what Paul meant in Gal. 2:20-21; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 6:6-7 and see 1 Pet. 4:1-2. The classic example would be the Rich Young Ruler. For him to sell all his possessions and give the money to the poor and follow the poor and persecuted Jesus would be DOING VIOLENCE to his ego, to his self-sufficiency, to his independence, to his pocketbook! That would HURT! Then when the disciples were shocked that Jesus would not equate the man's riches with righteousness, he told them it was as HARD for a rich man to enter the kingdom as it was for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. If you think that isn't VIOLENT, just ask a camel! REPENTANCE IS A VIOLENT EXPERIENCE. And Jesus' main message to the CHURCH is, "REPENT" (see Revelation chs. 2-3). Every epistle of the NT was written to direct Christians in the "pilgrimage" of repentance. It is IMPERATIVE that the primary focus of the church of Jesus Christ be on EDUCATING ITS MEMBERS IN THE WORD OF GOD WHICH IS THE REVEALED MIND OF GOD!

Indeed, a Christian may be a government "servant" (or official) and please God. It has pleased God to ordain the establishment of civil governments for the protection of "inalienable human rights" in a fallen world. I have a list of 40 believers who were officials of one sort another in civil government in the Bible----from Melchizedek (king) in Genesis 14, to Archippus (soldier) in Philemon 2. This list is on pages 250-252, of my book, What The Bible Says About Civil Government, pub. College Press, 1990. Even bad government and bad government officials are better than no government at all! However, let all who have political ambitions for "service" in civil government pay close attention to Rom. 13:1-7, etc.), for God holds all civil officials responsible to his Absolute rule as his "servants" to execute his wrath on wrongdoers (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:14-17, et.al.). In other words, being an official of civil government is a ministry unto God. It appears that many government officials, all through history to the present time, have not realized and/or acknowledged that their's is a Biblically mandated ministry. Paul even uses the Greek word diakonos, or "deacon," in Romans 13 when he speaks of God's civil "servants" (instead of the word doulos, or "slave") to emphasize ministry. All three branches of civil government, legislative, executive and judicial are God's servants. From the highest and most "powerful" representative, senator, president, or supreme court justice, to the lowest private in the army or clerk in a government office. THEY WILL ALL ANSWER TO GOD FOR THEIR MINISTRY. The world would be a much better place if more fully-surrendered Christians would consider public office (or the military) a MINISTRY and make that their life's ambition. We can't all be church-supported preachers or missionaries, but some of us can serve God in civil government. The Church needs to quit speaking of politics as a despicable profession and all "politicians" as corrupt. The church should hold up public service as a God-ordained, worthy calling (ministry) for life. The Bible DOES!

It seems clear from the rest of the NT that John did NOT intend all believers

(Christians) would be immersed ("baptized") in the Holy Spirit, any more than he intended all persons would be immersed ("baptized") in fire! John promised that the MESSIAH would immerse some in the Holy Spirit and some in fire. The question is, therefore, who are the SOME? Are we to take John's prediction as EITHER/OR, i.e., EITHER a person was to be immersed in the Holy Spirit OR a person was to be immersed in fire? It is very doubtful from the other few scriptural references to immersion in the Holy Spirit that this would be the case! (a) First, the context doesn't demand such an interpretation. We do not know who the "you" is in either the case of the Holy spirit or of the fire. Andrew, James, John, Peter were all early disciples of John the Immerser. It appears from the rest of the NT John clearly meant the immersion in the Holy Spirit referred exclusively to them; (b) John's primary purpose in this statement is NOT to give the complete doctrinal statement about immersion in the Holy Spirit. Rather, his purpose is to make a contrast between himself and the Messiah in importance of ministries; (c) There are ONLY FOUR distinct references to the "baptism (immersion) of the Holy Spirit" in the NT---they are: (1) John's first prediction (with parallels); Mt. 3:11; k. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; (2) John's second prediction; Jn. 1:33; (3) Jesus' promise; Acts 1:5 (Acts 2:1-21 is the stated fulfillment of this); (4) The experience of Cornelius and his household; Acts 11:15-17. This lone event upon Gentiles seems to indicate the phrase "all flesh" of Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17 was intended as representative or general (i.e., the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon some Jews and some Gentiles signified the opening of the kingdom to the whole world); (d) Baptizo means "immerse, overwhelm." Some extraordinary supernatural powers exercised by the apostles (casting out demons, raising the dead, punishing some wicked with judgments) were never exercised by any other Christians. Ergo, only the apostles were immersed or overwhelmed in the Holy Spirit. These powers exclusively exercised by apostles indicates Cornelius did not receive the "baptism" of the Holy Spirit but only a miraculous "gift" momentarily in order to signify something---not to empower him to raise the dead---certainly not to save him. If we are going to call Bible things by Bible names, it is readily apparent John's announcement that the Messiah would immerse some in the Holy Spirit did not infer that all believers were to receive the "baptism" of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, God incarnated, willingly divested himself of some of his divine prerogatives when he chose to become human (see Jn. 1:14; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9-18; 10:5-10). In Greek this is called Jesus's kenosis (i.e., "emptying"). He said that there were some things even the Son did not know here on earth (Matt. 24:36). Numerous times it says of Jesus he was "astonished," that he "marveled," that he was hungry and tired. Of course, Jesus lived a perfectly sinless life as a human (2 Cor. 5:21, etc.). But being fully human and having taken the form of a "servant" Jesus had to be immersed with John's baptism because John's baptism was commanded by the heavenly Father. Jesus learned or experienced obedience by the things he suffered (Heb. 5:8-9). It was necessary for him to do so in order to be worthy of being our vicarious atonement. It was necessary for him to do so in order to become our sympathetic intercessor (high priest) before God the Father (Heb. 4:14-16; 5:8-10; 7:23-28). And it was necessary for him to do so "to fulfill all righteousness." Jesus, being creator and owner of the temple, did not have to pay the half-shekel tax, but did so in order that others might not "stumble" (Matt. 17:24-27). In fact, Jesus did not have to go to the cross (Heb. 10:5-10) but he did because it was the Father's will.

Genealogies were of primary importance to God's covenant with Israel. Their inheritance within God's covenant depended upon proof of their ancestry. The service of the priesthood depended upon ancestry. But most important, the identity of Israel's Messiah (anointed Savior) depended upon his ancestral lineage. The recording of Jesus' ancestral lineage (in both Matthew and Luke) establishes God's faithfulness, wisdom and power to carry out his redemptive plan through the Divine-Man in spite of all obstacles and enemies. Imagine the difficulties we would have getting people to become Christians if we could not show he was descended from Abraham and David! Luke's genealogical roster traces Jesus' lineage back to Adam, the first man. That was to prove that God's plan was to save man by a Man. Jesus inherited his body-genetics from Adam. In the gene-pool in the first two humans (Adam and Eve) was all the DNA that was ever made by God. Every variation you see in the human race was resident in the genetic structure of Adam and Eve at their creation. So, according to his fleshly nature, Jesus is ACTUALLY OUR "BROTHER." If anyone is going to mediate for man between him and his Creator, it must be a man----a perfect man (Gal. 4:4-5; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 2:17-18). The genealogies of Jesus show that God kept his word to preserve a family and a nation through whom he delivered to the world its Savior. In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword, God preserved a specific family. In spite of bondage, captivities, and the resistance by this chosen nation itself, God preserved a throne. In spite of sinful men and women in the lineage of Jesus Christ (Abraham, Jacob, David, Bathsheba, Rahab, a harlot, and Ruth, a Moabite, marrying into the covenant lineage), God produced a believing, humble peasant girl and her fiancé through whom to deliver the Messiah to mankind. God's providential power is evident even in the genealogies of Jesus.

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 4:1-44

Jesus was sent to "do the will of God." (Heb. 10:5-10). Part of the will of God for Jesus was to "be made a little lower than the angels (i.e., human)...so that by the grace of God he might taste death (and all other human physical frailties) for every one (Heb. 2:9). It was "fitting" in the redemptive program of God the Father, that Jesus, "the pioneer of our salvation," be made perfect (i.e., be made to reach the divine goal for humanness) through suffering" (Heb. 2:10). Since humans are "flesh and blood" it was God's will that Jesus partake of the same (flesh and blood) nature that he might destroy the devil who exercises the fear of death and judgment. The devil is not the sovereign of death—God is. The devil has the power of death only through deception (Heb. 2:14-15). Therefore, Jesus had to be made like his "brethren" (i.e., human beings) in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest...to make expiation for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:17-18). Thus we have a high priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses...one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). Jesus grew tired (Jn. 4:6). Jesus knew extreme hunger (Mt. 4:2; Lk. 4:1-2). Jesus knew sorrow (Jn. 11:35; Lk. 19:41ff). Jesus knew anger (Mk. 35). Jesus knew stress and pressure (Lk. 12:50). Jesus knew extreme difficulty in obeying the will of God (Mt. 26:30-46). Jesus knew what it was to be misunderstood by people who should have understood (Mt. 11:2-6; Mt. 12:46-50; Mt. 20:20-28; Lk. 22:24-34). Since he was tempted in every respect as we are, we must assume he was tempted in the areas of sexuality, greed, inordinate ambition, intemperate anger, etc., etc. Jesus was "led by the Spirit" into the wilderness to be tempted. He did not just wander off and get lost in some place where he couldn't find food. God the Father deliberately put Jesus in the wilderness in order that he would become hungry, extremely hungry. Human beings have committed many crimes and sins in order to alleviate hunger and poverty and have justified by rationalizing that criminal behavior is moral when one is starving to death. Jesus was "driven" (Mk. 1:12) into the wilderness to be tempted in order to "nourish" his spiritual strength (see Rev. 12:14 where the early church was "flown" into the "wilderness"---the hostile environment of ancient Rome---to be "nourished"). As long as this world exists temptation is sure to come. Jesus warned it would be so Mt. 18:7. Man exists in a "soul-making-world." Man has a sovereign free will in this "probationary" existence. He needs to have his faith and value-system put to severe tests. God wants to "re-create" his soul for an existence where the will of God is honored and desired absolutely, joyfully, and instantly ("Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" Mt. 6:10). If man can not come to that state of mind and heart during the "probationary, soul-recreating" time on earth he would not be happy in the heavenly existence. **JESUS, IN CONQUERING TEMPTATION, SHOWED US HUMANNES AS GOD HAS PLANNED IT TO BE AND THAT GOD HAS "FOREORDAINED WE BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON" Rom. 8:29**

Temptation is sure to come! Jesus said it! Since Jesus was fully human,

temptation had to come to him. Yes, Jesus was the fullness of the God-head in a human body (Col. 1:19; 2:9). But he was also fully human! Don't ask me to explain how that can be. I don't understand it. I simply believe it on the basis that Jesus proved he could back up every claim he made---even to raising the dead, and coming back from death himself. Since he was fully human temptation was really a problem for him. "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear. Although he was a Son, he learned (experienced) obedience through what he suffered..." (Heb. 5:7-8). More than once Jesus said "now is my soul troubled" (Jn. 12:27; Lk. 12:50; Mt. 26:38; see Isa. 49:1-4 for a prophecy of the soul-trouble for the Messiah). Can you imagine our hopelessness had no one in all mankind conquered temptation and satisfied the wrath of God upon sin by offering himself as a vicarious atonement for all sin? There would be no expectation of grace from God---only a "fearful prospect of judgment" (Heb. 10:26-31). There would be absolutely NO GOOD NEWS in all the world. Everything we do would be in vain. We would be of all creatures most to be pitied. We would simply eat and drink for death and judgment would be our destiny.

At the moment when Jesus was most vulnerable, the devil was there with lies, falsehood, and illusions. But when Jesus was at his lowest, darkest moment, he set his mind on the Scriptures! He did not do a miracle for himself, or pray, or sing; he did not seek a counselor, or quote a philosopher. HE REMEMBERED, TRUSTED, AND QUOTED THE BIBLE! Dealing with temptation strictly by knowing and doing what the Scripture says is so simple it is childlike! But childlikeness is precisely what Jesus said a person must have or they will not even enter the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 18:3-4; see also Mt. 19:13-15; Mk. 10:13-16; Lk. 16:8; 18:15-17; 1 Thess. 5:5; 1 Pet. 1:14; 2:1-3). Unless we become teachable, trusting, guileless, honest and willing to be told what we do not know and cannot know, we shall always be vulnerable to egotism and arrogance. Self-righteousness and independence from God makes us totally vulnerable to fall into temptation when it comes---AND IT WILL COME! There is no temptation you or I have ever experienced that is "not common to all mankind" (see 1 Cor. 10:13). Furthermore, God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength (1 Cor. 10:13). In fact, when God allows you to be tempted, he will provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it (1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Thess. 3:3). Perhaps God gives us providential ways to escape temptation, i.e., perhaps God helps us by ordering the affairs of human beings in ways beyond the ordinary. I tend to believe that God has already provided the most significant MEANS of escaping temptation---HIS PROPOSITIONALLY REVEALED WORD IN THE BIBLE. You will notice in the Corinthians and Thessalonian passages cited above, Paul prefaced his promises that we would be afforded a "way" to escape temptation and "guarded" from evil with the statement that "God is faithful." Our faith and trust in God's FAITHFULNESS (leading in implicit obedience to him) is the WAY God has provided for us to ESCAPE temptation! God's faithfulness is documented in the Scripture and in creation. Jesus, when he was tempted, cried to the Father in "godly fear" (Heb. 5:8-9) and was heard for his trust. When Jesus was tempted, he trusted and obeyed the Father's WRITTEN WORD and was delivered (Lk. 4:4; 4:8; 4:12)! Most little children are teachable. They quickly acknowledge they do not know everything and are eager and willing for someone to tell them or teach them. That is how we have to

be. One of the most amazing prayers of Jesus is the one in Matt. 11:25-30. He thanks God that the things of the kingdom are hidden from the "wise" (those who think they know everything and no one can tell them anything) but revealed to babes! Only those who come humbly to Jesus will ever "know" the Father. Only those who take up Jesus' "yoke" and "learn" from him will ever know the things of the kingdom of God. The secrets of the kingdom of God CAN NEVER BE LEARNED ANYWHERE ELSE!

Jesus read from Isaiah 61. You must read all of Isaiah 61 to get the context. These Jews knew what all of Isaiah 61 said. They expected it to be fulfilled literally. But Jesus told them it was to be fulfilled spiritually---not literally. Jesus said, "Today is this scripture fulfilled in your ears!" On "that day," however, none of the "captives" were being physically "liberated," none of the prisons were being opened; they were not building up the ancient ruins; aliens were not feeding their flocks; they were not eating the wealth of the nations and glorying in the riches of Gentiles, etc. etc. And because it was not being fulfilled literally the Jews did not believe and accept Jesus as the Messiah! Jesus knew they wanted him to do physical, "bread and fish" miracles for them (in Nazareth) like he had done in Capernaum, etc. (Lk. 4:23). After all, Nazareth was where he grew up as a boy. The people of Nazareth, thought that just because Jesus had lived there they should receive from him whatever they wanted! However, Jesus told them, it was not just because he was there they would receive Messianic blessings, but only if they had enough faith in God's promises to give up material things---LIKE THOSE GENTILE WIDOWS DID FOR THE PROPHETS (Elijah & Elisha)! To shame Jews about their faith by recounting the faith of Gentiles was to press their "red-hot-anger" button! Jews, then, and now, believe they are the ONLY chosen people of God! But the Jews, who remain Jews, do not produce fruit of repentance toward God commensurate with their privileges of having his word, his covenant, worship, promises, patriarchs, and Messiah! (Rom. 9:1-5). Jesus always taught, "unto whomsoever much is given, of him much will be required." Great privilege, great responsibility! Greater opportunity, greater obligation. And here was this "carpenter's son" telling them they weren't as pleasing to God as a couple of Canaanite widows! Is there a lesson in this for us? Indeed! How MUCH greater privileges and opportunities we have as Christians in America than so MANY others in the world. I mean in spiritual blessings! Jesus said it would be more tolerable for Sodom than Capernaum at the judgment because Sodom would have repented had he done as many mighty works there as he had in Capernaum. Are we believing in Jesus as we should? Doing what he tells us in his word is believing. Believing in Jesus is doing the work of God (see Jn. 6:29)! One thing we should definitely be doing is making every effort to see that those in the world who do not have his written word in their language have it! Will it be more tolerable for China than for America at the judgment?

Jesus summed it up at the end of this chapter (Lk. 4:43). He "must" preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also." Jesus is practicing with Nazareth what he would later tell his apostles to do (Mt. 10:14; Mk. 6:11; Lk. 9:5). Paul practiced the same principle in all his ministry (cf. Acts 13:46,51; 18:6; 28:28---see Mt. 22:1-10). When people with as much preparation as the Jews had to believe in the Messiah's coming, preachers of the Gospel are wasting God's time on those who give evidence they don't want

to hear when there are others who will hear. Did you know that much more is said in the NT about the responsibility of Jesus's disciples to hear, than is said about their preaching (evangelizing)? Not even Jesus or his apostles could win everyone. Think of the merciful miracles Jesus did, the tremendous sermons he preached, and still most of his hearers rejected him. There were millions of Jews and Gentiles who heard the apostles preach and saw their miracles and still did not accept Christ as Savior and Lord. We must not become discouraged and quit evangelizing when people do not respond. "Many are called, but few are chosen." "The way that leads to life is difficult and narrow, and few there be that find it." We are responsible ONLY to present the Gospel in the most intelligent, attractive, and caring of which we are capable, to all who will listen. But we are NOT responsible for their decision to heed or not heed. That choice is entirely up to them! Jesus did not take the coward's way out. The coward's way would have been to compromise the message, preach what the people at Nazareth wanted to hear, stay there and become a hero, indulge himself and let the truth go untold. Jesus cared about the people there. He told them the truth because they needed to hear it. He became their enemy because they didn't want to hear the truth as did the apostles (cf. Gal. 4:16). The people of Nazareth had shut their ears to the truth. He could not force them to accept it. There were others who would hear and heed the truth. He must leave the people of Nazareth to their own choosing.

The instances of healing by Jesus in Lk. 4:31-41 demonstrated divine power and authority. Modern allegations of "divine healing" by pseudo miracle workers, demonstrate nothing but hokum and fraud. Case in point! November 9, 1997, on the television Discovery Channel, program entitled, In The Grip of Evil, a dramatized re-enactment of an alleged demon exorcism by Roman Catholic priests (alleged to have occurred in 1947) was portrayed. It took them months of performing numerous rituals, including baptizing the boy into Roman Catholicism, to supposedly "cure" him. The priests had declared he couldn't be cured unless he was baptized into Catholicism. His mother and father also converted to Catholicism. In his book, The Modern Tongues and Healing Movement, Carroll Stegall, Jr., documents case after case, witnessed by himself, of fraudulent claims and actions of so-called "faith healers" like Oral Roberts, O. L. Jagers, Amiee Semple McPherson, William Freeman, etal. Stegall's book has been reprinted numerous times and has been quoted in Reader's Digest, Journal of the American Medical Assoc., McCall's, and other publications. Another book exposing the chicanery and imposture of these quacks is, Modern Divine Healing, by Waymon D. Miller, himself a former member of a church that practiced these shams. Miller relates one instance (which would be comical were it not so tragic) when Oral Roberts was holding a "healing meeting" in a huge tent in Tulsa, OK. A wind storm blew down the tent and injured 500 people. But rather than miraculously healing all the injured, Robert's assistants called the Tulsa hospitals to send ambulances to take the injured to be treated in hospitals. Quite a bit different than Jesus's healing meetings when "all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to him (Jesus); and he laid his hands on everyone of them and healed them..." Lk. 4:40. Those healed by Jesus were healed instantaneously, healed completely, of any and all diseases, and never needed repeated healing.

The miracles Jesus did were primarily to prove his deity and his promises. He could have healed the whole nation of Israel if his ministry had been primarily healing. On more than one occasion (John 5 & 9, etc.) Jesus healed one single individual out of a multitude of people who also wanted and needed healing. More than once in the NT people who wanted healing were not able to have it even though there were those who had the power to heal them present (2 Cor. 12:7-9; 2 Tim. 4:20, etal.). Even here, in Luke 4:42, the multitudes sought him again for healing but he did no more for, as he said, his primary mission was to preach the good news of the kingdom of God. When he fed the 5000 as recorded in John 6, the multitude followed him into Capernaum seeking more miraculous food. But when he preached the Sermon on The Bread of Life he gave them no more miraculous food. They all left him and went away. I would hazard a guess that this is exactly how most people would react to true miracles of healing and food were they done by the same Jesus in the streets of Joplin today! Today's "miracle-healing" charlatans need to be exposed. They defraud ignorant people of thousands of dollars!

Of course, popularity was a temptation to Jesus! To be admired and applauded by one's peers is one of the strongest temptations to get human beings to compromise integrity and truth---from childhood to adulthood. No one wants to be ignored or verbally ridiculed. Everyone wants to be the "king of the hill" just once in a lifetime. Male "menopause" or "mid-life crisis" has ruined more men than almost any other temptation. Almost every male begins to realize at about age 40-50 that he hasn't attained the presidency of a corporation, or had his name in lights or in print, or he hasn't built his dream house, etc., etc., and he feels he's lost his masculinity so he behaves in all sorts of aberrant ways. Women have the same problems when they begin to feel age has robbed them of usefulness. So, most people go through life seeking "identity," the plaudits of the crowd, or hoping to make their name "immortal." They will sacrifice their moral standards, their integrity, their health, and often sacrifice those near and dear to them to get applause. Think of all the politicians, athletes, entertainment figures, preachers, and others who have done just that. **THEY COULDN'T HANDLE FLATTERY.** They couldn't handle being taken for granted or forgotten. Jesus handled it. He was true to his God-ordained purpose of proclaiming the Word of God and helping others. **THAT'S HOW IT'S HANDLED!**

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 5:1---6:49

Jesus used fishermen because they were common, ordinary, hard-working, God-fearing people of the day. They were courageous, practical-minded, men who were "in touch" with the majority of the other people of that day. They were unspoiled by the hypocritical theology of the Pharisees and the greed and corruption of the Sadducees. They were teachable (they often asked Jesus to explain his teaching so they could understand), sincere men who were looking for something spiritual in their lives. There was apparently a spiritual vacuum in their souls and they were searching for the truth to fill it. As fishermen they would be industrious, ingenious, and willing to make a commitment to truth and to fight for it when they found it. They would be the kind of people who would wish to help their neighbor and to share whatever blessings they had with others. Men of the sea have a camaraderie that others do not experience. The expertise fishermen have is in catching fish. Catching fish requires more hard work and steadfastness than it does expertise---at least in the way they fished. There was some craftsmanship involved, of course, since they had to know their gear, the mechanics of casting nets, and hopefully, where the fish are. But there are enough discouragements in fishing to make persistence the main "expertise" of the fisherman. You have to be committed to the vocation through thick and thin, good times and hard times. This, above all else is what Jesus saw in these men. Remember, when he told Peter, "you are a rock." Peter had his faults, but commitment and courage were not among them. He was the one who answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life." (Jn. 6:68). Peter was willing to go with Jesus even if it meant physical death. And he proved that in Gethsemane.

These fishermen made a total commitment the first time Jesus said, "Henceforth you will be catching men," because this is not the first time they had met Jesus! They were disciples (learners) of John the Baptist and first met Jesus where John was baptizing (Jn. 1:24-34). Then the next day they followed him to where he was staying and listened to him teach all day (Jn. 1:35-42). The day after that they were with Jesus when Philip and Nathanael were found. The next day after that they followed Jesus to Cana of Galilee and saw him change the water into wine (Jn. 2:1-11). Then they followed him back to Jerusalem and saw him cleanse the temple the first time (Jn. 2:12-22). They were there when he talked to Nicodemus (Jn. 3:1-36). They followed him back toward Galilee and were at the well when the woman of Sychar believed in him (Jn. 4:1-42). At this point in time the fishermen apparently went back to the sea of Galilee to catch up on their fishing business. But Jesus came by and called them to follow him and to make their first priority that of "catching men." So they spent the first 9 months of the first year of his ministry with him. At this point, Jesus begins their training. In his book entitled, *The Training of the Twelve*, A. B. Bruce shows Jesus developing, most importantly, their spiritual understanding of the kingdom of God. They also learned by "doing" when he sent them out two by two to preach. They learned by

watching him as he preached. They learned that caring and loving the lost was most important. Above all, they learned that you must persist in preaching and doing the revealed will of God whether people respond or not. They learned it was not their obligation to do people's "hearing" and heeding for them....their responsibility lay in proclaiming and caring and the harvest was sure to come. Maybe they would only sow and others would reap where they had sown (Jn. 4:36-38), but the reaping would come so long as they did not fret about who got the credit. These are the main characteristic one needs as a "catcher of men"—humility and persistence. "Rome wasn't built in a day." And people are not converted to Christ, usually, at their first contact with one of his disciples. The parable in Mark 4:26-29 teaches that the kingdom grows slowly, "first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear." Usually, the word of God works imperceptibly in the hearts of people (like leaven). We may get discouraged if we do not understand these principles. Paul taught that we are changed into Christ's image "from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor. 3:18). It does not happen in any of us all at once! Of course we need to know our "gear" (the Bible), the boldness to teach it to others, and hopefully we need to know where the "fish" are. Beyond that, we cannot do anything but sit back and let the "seed" do what it does "of itself" (Mk. 4:28). If the fish aren't biting, we can't force them to do so.

Levi (Matthew) introduced Jesus to his friends by giving a huge supper in his house. There was a large company of tax collectors "and others" sitting at the dinner table with Jesus and his disciples. The Pharisees would not have been in Matthew's house---sitting with "sinners and tax-collectors." So they evidently heard about it from someone else. Jesus welcomed the opportunity to sit down with publicans and sinners for it was sinners to whom he came to preach the gospel of grace. He came to save sinners (those who acknowledge they are sinners) and not those who know they are so righteous they do not need his salvation. Ironically, often people saying, "I'm too bad to be saved," are using a false humility to keep from surrendering to Christ's grace. Some of these men had undoubtedly cheated, coerced, and bribed as they collected taxes. The "others" were those who also had committed "sins" which are not enumerated, but they had undoubtedly violated the traditions of the Pharisees by which they would be categorized as "sinners." Jesus was there to set everybody straight on what were sins against God and what were not! Jesus was strong enough in his own convictions that he was able to "sit" with sinners and minister to them, help them, and proclaim God's love to them. Are we strong enough? Yes! We should be. The apostles and other Christians of the first century were! Jesus' sitting with sinners at a meal does not mean he "ran around with them"—sinners were not his bosom companions. He did not frequent the taverns (and there were plenty of them in that day in Galilee), he did not go to the races, or the theaters (where perverted plays were put on), or to the arenas where gladiators violently fought one another. He found plenty of sinners by just being out in the temple courts and streets of the cities and in the homes of civil servants (tax collectors) and Pharisees.

The pharisaic attitude of self-righteousness feeds on legalism. Legalism is the point of this encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees. It is all connected to the graciousness of Jesus toward Levi as contrasted with the self-righteous bigotry of the

Pharisees toward publicans. This is not a renunciation of the law of God; it is a disavowal of legalism and Pharisaic traditions. Jesus never renounced the law; he came not to destroy it but to fulfill it. The origin of fasting is spiritual, not dietary. The commandment of the Law was that the Hebrew worshiper should hannah ("afflict") the soul (Lev. 16:29-34; 23:26-32; Num. 29:7, et al.). There is no specific instruction that abstinence from food or the normal things of life in the original commandment. The first 6 books of the OT use hannah for "fast" and the later OT books use the word tzum for "fast" which evidently did mean some kind of abstinence. The Law of Moses (the Pentateuch) commanded Israelite worshipers to "afflict their souls" (or as translated into English, "fast") only on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). Later Jewish practice was to establish "fast" days not even legislated in the Law (e.g., in the book of Esther Purim became a time for fasting). True fasting (or afflicting the soul---penitence) cannot be legalistically and arbitrarily regulated by human traditions. This is the point of Jesus' answer. There is a time for fasting and a time for feasting. The fact that the long-promised Messiah had arrived (God incarnated among them---Immanuel) demanded rejoicing, feasting. Time would come when his followers would be "bereaved" of him---he would leave them in an ignominious death and they would renounce him. Then was the time for "fasting" or afflicting the soul. But the Pharisees would not acknowledge him as Messiah (Savior, Redeemer) and Fulfiller of the Law of Moses. They would cling to the Law---as they interpreted it by their "traditions." He wanted them to understand that he did not come to "patch up" their Judaic system. The grace of God in Jesus's once-for-all (see Heb. ch. 10) vicarious atonement cannot be contained in the OT Law, let alone be conformed to human traditions! I repeat, Law and Grace are not contradictory but Grace is the fulfillment (filling-up-full) of the Law. Grace was what the Law predicted, typified, and foreshadowed. But once the One whom the Law predicted has come, the Law must give way to its fulfilling. The idea that man can earn his own standing before Almighty God is planted very, very deep within the mind of man by the devil (in Eden). Just watch TV today or talk to your next door neighbor. 99% of the world today believes and continues to strive to be "good enough," "religious enough," to force God to accept them on their merits. I TELL YOU THAT WE MUST FLING OUR WHOLE REPUGNANT BEING AT THE FEET OF JESUS AND ACCEPT HIS MERCY AND GRACE FOR REDEMPTION AND SALVATION. Once we have done that we will be controlled by a law much, much stronger than that given to Moses---THE LAW OF LOVE (Rom. 13:10; 2 Cor. 5:14ff).

No! It is never right to break one of God's laws unless you have to keep a higher law of God. But Jesus was saying there are higher and lower laws of God. You will find what is called a "hierarchy of morality" within the revealed word of God. God's lower laws are always to be kept unless there is, in a particular situation, a higher law that needs to be kept. This is necessitated by man's sinful nature, i.e., ever since the fall in Eden, not all human beings allow themselves to be controlled by the highest Law of Love. Sinful human beings must have God's law spelled out to them in its order of significance. A very momentous law of God is the sanctity of human life. One has only to read Genesis 9:1-7 to see this. When God began the human race all over again with Noah, that is the first law God ordained! The law of Sabbath observance has to give way to the preservation of human life. Jesus referred to the incident when David and his "troops" were starving for bread and he went into the Tabernacle and got the Bread of the Presence ("Shew Bread") and he and his soldiers ate it

(1 Sam. 21:1-6). That is clearly a violation of one of the laws given to Moses (Lev. 24:9). Human need for life-sustaining takes precedence over any ritual---even over a specific law of God. The very spirit and essence of the law of God for mankind in any dispensation is to supply the highest good for the individual. God's highest good to man is mercy. Man's highest good to a fellow-man is mercy. Whatever is truly merciful is the fulfillment of the law (Rom. 13:8-10; 1 Jn. 4:20-21). And God-sanctioned mercy certainly supersedes any human tradition! But this mercy is extended only on an individual basis. Mercy is not a function of civil government. God ordained civil government to "be a terror to bad conduct" "to execute God's wrath on the wrong doer" (Rom. 13:7-10). When David violated the law about the Bread of the Presence, there was no civil crime involved. No human was harmed, no private property destroyed. Besides, it was not "bad conduct" to save his soldier's lives by feeding them. Society in a fallen world must be governed by civil laws. There must be penalties for breaking those laws which are destructive of social order. Those penalties must be executed or the law is useless! You will notice that in the case of David he first asked the high priest for common bread, since there was none, the priest offered him holy bread. David did not steal the bread nor did he have to force the priest to give him holy bread. The same ethical sanction would apply today to anyone starving who first asked for help---if an authority of the church or any other institution offers what is holy to help sustain life it certainly would be no crime or sin. We clearly have precedent in the Bible for a "hierarchy" of ethics. Rahab deceived the Canaanites about the spies to protect their lives. Joshua deceived the citizens of Ai (military strategy) to take the city without having to harm innocent civilians---God even told him how to deceive them (Joshua 8:1ff). If a murderer sought to kill your children or wife, would you not try to deceive him concerning their whereabouts? Deception (lying, stealth, false information) occurs with police {undercover agents} and with the military all the time to achieve a "higher good." In fact, deception occurs in most athletic contests with hidden plays, signals, etc., etc. These "nit-picking" Pharisees were not all that righteous about keeping God's laws. Furthermore, they would go get one of their animals out of a ditch on the Sabbath to keep it from being harmed or dying! They would take a newborn child to the priests to be circumcised on the 8th day even if that fell on a Sabbath. The doctrine that the sanctity of life is of first importance applies to modern controversies about abortion, capital punishment, etc. Man's governments are incapable of guiding themselves in this matter. They need to seek the revealed (only in the Bible) mind of God about it and DO IT!

Jesus has given no commandments against "fun" if one puts the right definition on "fun." Proverbs encourages, "A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones" (Prov. 17:22), and "A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken" (Prov. 15:13). In Ecclesiastes we are told that "there is a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance." Solomon wrote, "I commend enjoyment, for man has no good thing under the sun but to eat, and drink and enjoy himself..." (Eccl. 8:15) and Solomon said this was from God (Eccl. 2:24; 3:12). It is true, however, that Christians are warned against "filthiness, silly talk, and levity" (i.e., absurdity, foolishness) Eph. 5:4. And Proverbs has a lot to say about "prating fools," and "mockers." So the wise know that life is short and filled with sorrow in this world and for the believer soberness and seriousness should be the prevailing attitude while preparing for the JOY that shall come in the next life. The apostle Paul evidently attended the athletic games

in his day. For Paul, "fun" was traveling, talking to people about Christ, and gaining beloved brethren all over the world. So, the warning of Jesus in Luke 6:25 that woe shall come upon those who "laugh now" is for those who were "scoffing" at and "mocking" those humble, faithful, multitudes of poor people who were desiring to become "citizens of the Messiah's kingdom." The sophisticated, erudite, "politically-correct" crowd of Jesus day "reviled" and made fun of him and his disciples about their "kingdom." The day was coming upon impenitent Judaism when it would mourn long and loud---A.D. 70 and the destruction of Jerusalem (see Matt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21).

Jesus said, "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return...." How does he expect us to love our enemies? Does he expect us to do good to enemies? How are we to interpret those verbs, "love" and "do good"? Literally? Are we to interpret "lend, expecting nothing in return" literally? The Law of God in the OT legislated against usury—lending to obtain gain (Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:36ff; Deut. 23:19ff). Nehemiah (5:3-10) condemned wealthy Jews for charging interest to their less fortunate brothers. The Israelites could charge interest to foreigners (Deut. 23:19-21). If the OT law was fulfilled in Christ wouldn't it mean an even higher level of conduct toward brethren in the Christian family than the Law of Moses? Wilbur Fields writes "In modern times money is usually loaned for commercial purposes, to increase a man's capital, increase his business, or enhance his comfort. It is proper that a reasonable interest or payment be collected for this service. Thus Exodus 22:5 does not mean we should demand that our banks stop charging interest. Jesus himself approved the taking of interest from a bank (Mt. 25:27; Lk. 19:23). But this is quite a different thing from making exorbitant gain out of a neighbor's need or being callous to the destitution of a brother in the Lord. If a brother is in dire need and a personal loan may be given, there should be no interest charged by the brother offering help Exodus, pub. College Press, pg. 494. This may be the best answer we can have to what Jesus means in Lk. 6:35. The problem then is determining when it is lending to the needs of a brother (or brothers plural). And, should a Christian loan money at interest to non-Christians who are in need. If we are to be sons of our heavenly Father we should emulate what he does about demanding from us "interest" on his investment in us. How could we ever pay interest on divine grace? But on the other side of the coin, we could not have much of a "free enterprise," "market economy" in a sinful world without those who have accumulated capital willing to lend (at interest) thus allowing that economy to grow.

Jesus does not forbid all judging! In the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 7:1ff) he says the same thing, "Judge not that you be not judged." But he immediately follows that with the commandment, (Mt. 7:6) "Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine." And next, he commands (Mt. 7:15-20) "Beware of false prophets....You will know them by their fruits..." Now, pray tell, how is a Christian to not give what is holy to dogs and pearls to swine without making a judgment as to who are dogs and hogs? And how is a Christian to beware of false prophets who come in sheep's clothing without being able to make a judgment as to who is a false prophet? Jesus also commanded "righteous judgment" in Jn. 7:24. The judgment Jesus is prohibiting here is a hyper-critical attitude that makes judgments without gathering as many facts as possible. He is also prohibiting the

judgments that are made from bias, some personal grudge or a malicious motive to gain an advantage, etc. Jesus commands us here to rid ourselves of bias, grudges, and malice. He does not order us to stop judging. Remember, the church in Corinth was ordered by Paul to judge and excommunicate an immoral member (1 Cor 5:1ff). Paul also told them they should make righteous judgments between one another when disputes arose and not take their disputes to heathen (civil) courts (1 Cor. 6:1ff). Numerous judgments must be made within the kingdom; between what is an article of faith and what is opinion (Rom. 14, 1 Cor. 8,9,10); who might be creating dissensions (Rom. 16:17); who deserves to be supported by the church and who doesn't (1 Thess. 4:1-12; 5:12-22; 2 Thess. 3:1-15; 1 Tim. 5:17ff; 2 Tim. 3:1-9, etc.). If there is evidence that someone is a false teacher, is behaving immorally, is not thinking logically, or is guilty of a crime, and someone else dares to say so in public, there are always a host of people ready to intimidate the one who speaks out with the old saw, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." Or, "those who live in glass houses should not throw stones." The first saying is from the KJV of the story of the woman caught in adultery and is attributed to Jesus (John 7:56-8:11). However, this "story" was some kind of later emendation (insertion) into the original Gospel of John and should not be there at all! The best, and most ancient manuscripts of the Gospel of John (especially Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Washingtonianus, Coptic, and Bodmer II Papyrus--P66) do not have this "story" but go very smoothly from John 7:52 to 8:12. So those who think they are quoting the Scriptures when they say, "Let him who is without sin..." are not quoting scripture. Furthermore, if anyone who lives in a glass house cannot throw a stone, we would have to exclude police, judges, and juries from functioning for they are all "sinners" who live in glass houses. We would have to censure the apostles for "judging" one another (see Acts 1:15ff; Gal. 2:11ff, et al.). It should be well noted that those who cry, "Let him who is without sin...", are doing the very thing they are crying against! And they usually reserve the judgment to themselves as to which cases someone else is not to "judge." If there is anything at all taught in the Bible it is that a believer in God and Christ has to be discriminating! Why has the word "discriminate" become so "politically-incorrect"? Every single human being with any intelligence at all "discriminates" at least 500 times a day! That is the primary reason the Bible was given by God to man--to tell man that he should discriminate and to tell him what he should discriminate! Any person that wont discriminate between good and evil, right and wrong, truth and falsehood, is not only vulnerable to the devil, he is on the side of the devil! See Matt. 12:22-32 and esp. 12:30. In making judgments, it is the motive that is supremely important. "Love for the Truth" (God/Christ/The Word) is number one! Love for one's fellow human being is number 2. Love for oneself is number 3. Those who have no love for the truth will be given permission from God to be deluded (2 Thess. 2:9-12).

Believing in Christ will bring stability to life! He said so! Did he ever say anything that did not come to pass? Jesus is not inviting people here to "try" Christianity to see if they think it works. He is inviting people to believe in him and his authority to tell (or promise) them it will work! You see, man is not permitted the sovereignty and authority to make the judgment as to whether a command of God and Christ will "work" or not. Man doesn't have the wisdom necessary to make such a judgment. "For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Heb. 12:11). Pragmatism as a basis for becoming a Christian says,

"I'll try what the Bible says, but if I determine it doesn't work I'll try something else." Who is man to dispute what God says is good and right for eternity? In the ultimate sense, God alone says what "works." As Dr. Sidney Cave wrote, "The Bible is not true because it works----it works because it is true!" Jesus proved by his miracles and fulfilled prophecy that he was God in the flesh and died a vicarious death and arose from the grave and is alive forever more. Therefore, whatever Jesus says is the ultimate truth. And he has said that being a Christian will demand subservience to him, faithfulness to his word, necessitate sacrifice, and probably bring persecution. The non-Christian would say, "That does not work---and I will have none of it!" The non-Christian would say "That certainly is not what I classify as stability in life!" The non-Christian would say, "Giving up, giving in, being persecuted, letting someone (Jesus) dictate to me and run my life sounds like a miserable life to me." Stability to the non-Christian is having all the money he wants, having no critical health problems, having no one angry with him, having no family problems or worries, and having all the fun and leisure time he wants. Pragmatism is unrealistic even in the secular world. Because God is the Sovereign of the secular world also, he governs it according to his "natural" laws (see Rom. 1:18ff; 2:12-16; Acts 17:22-32). Therefore, even the secular world is sustained or upheld by divine principles which are absolutes. Pragmatism would have us believe that "truth is in the process of becoming---nothing is 'immutable'---truth keeps changing so we have to experiment every day to see if a thing works or not---improving after each experiment as we learn how and if they work or not." That's PRAGMATISM. And it is of the devil! The devil used pragmatism on Eve in the Garden of Eden—"Taste it and see—you will not die."

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 7:1---8:56

The Bible states (in both OT and NT) that many military men were God-fearers (believers). In the NT there is this centurion in Lk. 7:1-10; Joanna, wife of Herod's steward, Lk. 8:1-3; Cornelius the centurion, Acts 10:1ff; Sergius Paulus, Roman proconsul of Cyprus, Acts 13:7-12; the Philippian jailer, Acts 15:25-40; Erastus, city treasurer of Rome, Rom. 15:23; some of the Praetorian guard, Phil. 1:13; some of Casar's own household, Phi. 4:22; Zacchaeus and Matthew, Roman tax-collectors; Jairus, a ruler of the Jews, Mt. 9:18-26; a nobleman, Jn. 4:46ff; Zenas, lawyer and co-worker with Paul, Titus 3:13; and Archippus, soldier, Philemon 2. A Roman army officer fraternizing with Jewish elders was rather unique! (see Matthew's account of the same incident in Mt. 8:-13). Normally Jews despised Romans and Romans held Jews in contempt. To most Roman officials it would be lowering themselves to have any personal relationship with Jews. Romans considered Jews to be filthy, ignorant, bizarre and untrustworthy. For the Jew the Roman was an oppressor and "unclean" thus, hated by Jehovah. Racism is not new to the 20th century. History shows that Pontius Pilate was despised by the Jewish authorities for his meddling in their affairs and for his extortion from their Treasury to build Roman fortifications and other public works. But there were centurions who were "good" men. Every centurion in the NT appears to be a man of good character (Mt. 27:54ff; Lk. 23:47ff; Acts 10:1ff; 27:43ff, et al.). The centurion in our lesson had "built" a synagogue for the Jews in Capernaum. There was usually a synagogue for each neighborhood in a large city like Capernaum. Some think the ancient ruins uncovered in the 20th century in Capernaum are those of the synagogue built by this centurion. Normally, "slaves" or "servants" to Roman officials were nothing more than chattel (property) like their horses or chariots. A Roman of high social standing could even execute his slave or servant for any misdeed the owner deemed serious enough. But this centurion was different. He "loved" (Gr. agape) the Jewish nation; his servant was "dear" (Gr. entimos, "valued, honored") to him. The centurion probably found the Jews because of their belief in one God and their moral Law much more compatible with his own "goodness" than his Roman associates! Many heathen were attracted to the godliness of the Jewish faith even in OT times (see the book of Ezra 2:59-62; Esther 8:17; 9:27). Cornelius (Acts 10 & 11) was probably a "proselyte or sojourner." This centurion unquestionably knew of Jesus' compassion for the oppressed and sick. Jesus had already done many miracles of healing in and around Capernaum (Mk. 1:21-28; 1:29-31; 2:1-12. Jesus had also taught his Sermon on the Mount in that general vicinity. Word would get around as to what Jesus taught and did

Compared to the Jewish nation, the Roman centurion was quick to believe in Jesus because: (a) he knew Jesus had no problem associating with sinners and publicans (Lk. 5:27-32); (b) he was humble and said he was not "worthy" (Lk. 7:6) for Jesus to come into his house; (c) he undoubtedly had some evidence of Jesus' divine power---Jesus had already done "many" mighty works in Capernaum and surrounding area (see Mt. 11:20-24) and this

centurion quite possibly had been an eyewitness to them or knew someone personally who had; (d) this centurion knew that when evidence showed superior power was present, everything and everyone was obedient to it (Lk. 7:7-8)---he recognized POWER when he saw it and believed Jesus could say or do whatever was necessary to heal his beloved servant. This centurion was a "Class A" prospect! He was "good soil" that would "hear the word (seed), understand it, accept it, hold it fast, in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit a hundredfold." (see a synoptic composite of Mt. 13:23; Mk. 4:20; Lk. 8:15). Only twice in the gospel records is Jesus said to have marveled. Once at the unbelief of the Jews (Mk. 6:6), and second, at the belief of a Roman centurion (Lk. 7:9; Mt. 8:10). It is no wonder Jesus marveled at the centurion's faith since it was so much deeper and more alive than that of any Jew---including even the 12 disciples at this point in their experience! Jesus said he had not seen "so great" (Gr. *tosauten* "extensive, large") a faith in all of Israel!" Faith is measurable! But the Lord measures it by quality not quantity. "Faith as a grain of mustard seed" has nothing to do with quantity; it refers to the vitality or life-force that is in the seed. Faith is not a question of "how much" but "what kind!" What little this centurion knew about God and the Messiah (compared to the Jew) gave him a vital, powerful faith which would produce the proper actions. Jesus was thrilled by it! Self-discipline or self-control is absolutely essential to learning. Learning is absolutely essential to Christian faith (Rom. 10:17, et al.). True Christian belief cannot be had apart from learning. Learning is absolutely essential to Christian sanctification (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:1-2; Matt. 11:28-30; 2 Thess. 2:13-15; 1 Thess. 2:13; Col. 2:24-29). Centurions were men who earned their officer's commission by coming up through the enlisted ranks. This centurion his did not receive his "commission" by social status, money, or senatorial appointment. He knew discipline. He knew reality. A MAJOR REASON FOR SO MUCH UNBELIEF THROUGH THE CENTURIES IS THE LACK OF SELF-DISCIPLINE IN SO MANY PEOPLE and an unwillingness to accept the reality of history!

Jesus wanted every human being to be persuaded to faith and repentance and make them citizens of the Messianic kingdom of God. That included Pharisees. A few did---the most famous one was Saul of Tarsus, later known as the Apostle Paul. Jesus took advantage of this Pharisee's invitation in Lk. 7 because people are usually at their peak of receptiveness in a pleasant and genial fellowship around a meal-table. People relax and usually drop any hostility or caution when they sit down to a meal together. There would be many different kinds of people in the house of a Pharisee at meal-time. The Pharisees were ostentatious and loved to have their servants go out and bring into the house people from the streets to line up against the walls of the dining room to "see" how the rich and famous lived and ate. They were probably allowed by this "magnanimous host" (at least he probably thought he was being magnanimous) to clean up the "left-overs" when the dinner party left the table. This is how the "woman of the city" (probably a prostitute) got into the Pharisee's house unless she was a secret "guest" of the Pharisee. Evidently the woman had known of Jesus's holy and compassionate nature before, or she was able to determine it during the dinner, for she had a jar of ointment with which she intended to anoint Jesus' feet, but as she approached him to do so she began to weep and her tears ran down and wet Jesus's feet, so she ashamedly and apologetically began to wipe her tears from his feet with her hair. Then she began to kiss his feet and anoint them with the precious ointment. Why did she do

such a thing? Isn't this a little bizarre? People wouldn't do that today, would they? As the text will later show, Simon the Pharisee neglected the most basic amenities of a caring host---he did not have a servant wash the feet of his special guest, Jesus. It was as customary to have a servant wash the feet of people in that day as it is today to invite someone to "freshen up" in your bathroom when they come to visit for dinner. Simon had been uncouth, rude and discourteous toward Jesus. The woman evidently knew Jesus deserved courtesy and concern. Simon thought the woman was unworthy to get near Jesus, let alone have her tears fall on his feet and wipe them with her hair. And Simon's opinion of Jesus was one of contempt because he thought Jesus should not have let a "sinful" woman touch him.

But why did the woman begin crying? She knew she was in the presence of someone who was innocent of sin, who was glorious (she probably knew of his miracles) and someone who was especially a "friend of sinners" like herself. Nobody else was friendly to her, especially Simon. He had nothing but contempt for her. Everyone else had "used" her and exploited her. Jesus had proved himself a person who really cared for lost souls and helped them. In the presence of such a divine person one becomes overwhelmed with one's unworthiness! In the boat, when Jesus calmed the sea, Peter said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." And that is just where Jesus wanted her (and us)! Until we face up to and admit our unworthiness, God cannot bless us with his grace. Simon sat there contemptuous of real deity and holiness. Simon did not think he needed the grace of God (esp. not the grace of this rabbi who let sinners touch him). Most of us will cry over the loss of a loved one, but few of us ever cry over the loss of innocence. The woman considered her sins more than those of Simon or anyone else. She was like the apostle Paul who called himself "chief of sinners." Simon, however, thought her sins were more than his. In fact, Simon probably did not think he was a sinner at all (remember the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, Lk. 18:9-14). As God catalogs sin, her sins were not greater or less than Simon's. Sin is sin with God. If there is greater sin it probably is the sin of self-righteousness (Pharisaism, self-blinding-hypocrisy). And, it was Pharisees whom Jesus warned about committing the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:30-37), i.e., having such a hatred for good and righteousness that one attributes the goodness of Christ as the work of the devil (see Mt. 12:31-38). The main difference between the "sinful woman" and Simon the Pharisee was not the degree of sin but the attitude of the heart. Simon's heart was calloused by self-righteousness so that he was discourteous and uncaring; the woman's heart was tender from awareness of her sin and the presence of One who cared. Jesus could forgive the woman because she wanted to be forgiven, he could not forgive Simon since Simon believed he needed no forgiveness. Simon was looking at the woman but he did not see her! His mind and heart were blinded by smugness. Jesus said, "Do you see this woman...." and he told the parable of the debtors. Jesus forced Simon to examine himself. Simon answered the question correctly, that the debtor who was forgiven the largest debt would love his creditor the most. By this Jesus was trying to reveal to Simon why the woman was so whole-heartedly and worshipfully courteous to him by anointing his feet with tears and ointment. No doubt she had heard that Jesus claimed sovereign authority to forgive sin. Jesus had already demonstrated his authority to do so (see Lk. 5:20ff). She considered herself in need of release from a huge debt---a debt that she could never pay. She was like

the penitent, confessing Prodigal Son, who owed the Father what he could never pay so he asked to be permitted to return home and be only a servant in the house. Those who love Jesus as they should are not necessarily the most prolific sinners in the number of times they have sinned, or in the heinous nature of their sin (as men categorize sin). Those who love Jesus most are those who see THEIR OWN SIN in its realistic awfulness as having offended an Absolute, Perfectly Holy, Just, Loving, Caring Father. Each sin, no matter how human beings classify it is black enough to demand that the Perfect Jesus die the second death to atone for it. If we can't outwardly weep contemplating our sin, we at least ought to be utterly ashamed and remorseful that our sin caused The Perfect Man to suffer the "second (eternal) death" for us.

This is the 64 billion dollar question! Is it the responsibility of the word of God to make the human heart honest and good, or is it the human being's responsibility to do so prior to receiving the word? I have spent a lifetime pondering this question. After all these years studying the Bible and observing human nature, I have come to a tentative conclusion that the responsibility lies with both man and God. I'm sure God has met his responsibility, but, as the Bible says "few" (Mt. 7:13-14; Lk.13:24) human beings have fulfilled their responsibility. It is my observation that God works on people to have honest and good hearts through both his propositional revelation (the word of God written down by prophets and apostles, the OT & NT), and in his "natural" revelation through the majesty and providence he reveals in "nature," (i.e., creation) and through human conscience (read Rom. chs. 1-2), which he dispenses directly from the throne of grace. Those humans who have the written word and will allow it into their minds may have that word produce honesty and goodness so further "seed" may be sown. Then, God works on all humanity through "chastening" (troubles, tribulations, transitoriness of life, etc., etc.) to make them "face up" to reality in honesty and goodness so that the "seed" (word of God) can take root once it is sown. David confessed that he believed it was "good for him that he was afflicted so that he might learn God's laws" (Psa. 119:67-75). Actually the Greek word *kale*, is translated "honest" in KJV and RSV and "noble" in NIV. The Arndt & Gingrich Greek Lexicon emphasizes that the word means, "morally good, free from defects, blameless, excellent." The problem, therefore, is the moral responsibility God has granted every human being. All have been granted the awesome power to absolutely reject any of God's attempts, whether by written word or chastening, or to have an honest and good heart (see Rom. 1:18-32; Heb. 3:7-13; 2 Pet. 3:5; Prov. 21:29; 28:14, 2 Thess. 2:11-12; 2 Tim. 4:3-5). Mankind has the option to be honest with itself or allow itself to be deceived. That our Creator has permitted human free-will is awesome. God has given man the ultimate responsibility for responding to his gracious desire to redeem him. To hear or not hear is the ultimate decision for every human. The sowing and the seed are not ultimate....the soil (the human mind/heart) is the ultimate decision-maker. Sowing the seed (the word of God) is to be done everywhere. But truth is perceived only to the degree of honesty, and goodness which the human mind has toward it. The truth of God's sovereignty and love may be widely disseminated but it will have limited reception---not because the truth has no germinating power nor because the proclaimer is inept but because the hearts of the majority of people refuse to receive it! Jesus used the word "hear" in this parable to mean more than merely acknowledging that a tonal noise is occurring. He undoubtedly spoke the Hebrew word *shema* which is synonymous with obey.

The truth of God about kingdom membership and salvation has been completely revealed in the Bible. God has no more revelation about the kingdom and salvation than what the NT reveals. It is now up to mankind to obey it! One of the most important lessons of the parable of the "soils" is that, realistically, "sowing the seed" will be difficult and will not produce as prolifically as disciples of Christ may speculate. Jesus told this to reveal to the 12 just how his kingdom would be established. Slowly, in fact only a minority (1/4th) of the seed will fall invisibly on good (morally upright) ground. Three fourths (3/4) of the seed will be contaminated with "weeds" or die from lack of "root" or be smothered by cares of the world. LET'S GET REAL ABOUT SEED-SOWING! IF WE DON'T WE MAY GET DISCOURAGED AND GIVE UP! In all the "seed-sowing" Jesus did he produced only a dozen apostles and a few women, but what tremendous "fruit" those few seeds produced.

Jesus had every right to question the faith of the disciples at any time he wished. He never, never gave them any reason to not believe in him. He gave them plenty of evidence from his miracles, from his fulfilling of prophecy, from the holy life he lived, from the truth he taught. They had sufficient evidence and could utterly and totally depend on any promise he ever made! It was not "mean-spirited" but with a hurting heart Jesus questioned their faith. God hurts when his creatures are unfaithful toward him. Even the OT (Hosea, et al.) teaches this! That is why the OT prophets were so adamant in challenging the unbelief of the Israelites. God had never given the Israelites any thing but evidence of his total sovereignty and grace. And yet they complained, doubted, and went after other gods! With a broken heart, Jesus might very well question our faith when we are caught in the storms of life and we cry out "Master we are perishing, do you not care?"—he may ask "Where is your faith?" Or, when we are caught up in the pursuit of our ambitions for this life and we forget he has sheep that we should be tending (Jn. 21:15,16,17), he may ask, "Do you love me?" He is there during the storms and he is there during the calm times---he is there to save us from our fears and selves.

The woman who touched the fringe of Jesus' garment did so in desperate faith. She had her infirmity for 12 years and no physician could help her. Mark reports the woman had "suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse." (Mk. 5:25-26) Her illness (hemorrhage of blood) made her ceremonially "unclean" (Lev. 15:19-31) as well as terminally ill. As such she was banned from the public, banned from the temple worship services, and should she touch anyone else she would make them "unclean." She believed Jesus could help her if only she could touch the "fringe of his garment" and not him. She did. And he did! However, what Jesus did for her body ailment was only temporary. She would get sick at some other time and die. So shall we all. Knowing that she had been instantly healed, she came (Mk. 5:33) in fear and trembling and fell down before Jesus, and told him it was she who had touched his garment. She probably expected a rebuke for being unclean and having touched a rabbi. But Jesus spoke to her gently. He told her, Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace." The word "well" is a translation of the Greek word *sesoken*, from the word which means, "saved." He sent her away in "salvation and peace." Her daring faith in Jesus had healed not just her body, but her soul. And that was most important. She was no longer "unclean" but was

restored to communion with God and her fellow-man.

Jesus ordered the mourners out of Jairus' house for a number of reasons: (a) if you've ever seen Middle East people mourn a death (on T.V.) you will know the amount of confusion, loud wailing (Gr. ekoptonto used only one other time in the NT Lk. 23:27), bodily gyrating, and near pandemonium. That was going on here----and these were all packed into Jairus' house---Jesus demanded some order and quiet for the sake of the parents and his disciples; (b) what he was going to do (raise the girl from death) needed to be done as privately as possible lest more thousands be attracted to him only for healing and resurrection; (c) Jesus wanted the 3 disciples as eyewitnesses to the resurrection whose testimony might not later be challenged as might that of the girl's parents and scores of mourners. Jairus' daughter was dead. There was no doubt about that as both Luke and Mark noted (Lk. 8:49 & Mk. 5:35). When Jesus entered the house the mourners were raising a "tumult," and he said to them, "Why do you make a tumult and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And the mourners laughed at Jesus because they knew the girl was dead. It was a scoffing kind of laugh (Gr. kategelon, "laughed-down"). That would seem to be a normal reaction toward anyone who said a clearly dead corpse was "sleeping." But Jesus knew what he was talking about. The girl's physical body was dead, alright, but her spirit was alive, somewhere. We do not know whether the girl believed in God or not. That would be irrelevant as to the purpose of Jesus demonstrating here his power over life and death. Jesus was using a figure of speech to describe the state of her present existence. When Jesus spoke to her she heard and obeyed. Jesus has the keys to death and Hades (the place of departed spirits). Now when the little girl sat up, alive, everybody in the room was "flabbergasted." Mark's gospel in the original Greek text is emphatic. It reads, kai exestesan euthus ekstasei megale, literally, "and they were astonished immediately, astonished greatly." Those who saw this miracle were "beside themselves with amazement."

Can you imagine this happening to you and one of your children or some family member you loved so dearly---and then be told not to tell anyone? Matthew wrote that "the report of this miracle went through all that district" (Mt. 9:25), so someone told! But in the very next chapter of Luke we see that Jesus's great popularity as a miracle-worker precipitates an official inquiry by the murderous Herod Antipas (Lk. 9:7-9) and poses problems for the future conduct of a public ministry by Jesus (Lk. 9:11-17); Mk. 6:31-44; Mt. 14:13-21). This was exactly what Jesus wanted to avoid. He did not want to be known primarily as a miracle-worker. He did not want people seeking him for that alone (as they will do for bread and fish at the beginning of his third year of ministry, John 6). His mission was not to heal everyone, feed everyone and raise all the dead people from their graves. His mission was to so demonstrate his divine power that he might persuade people to repent of their rebellion against God and accept his marvelous grace which would be made possible by his vicarious death and resurrection from the dead. More than once Jesus called those who sought miracles, "an evil and adulterous generation which seeks a sign." The primary sign to be given in Jesus' earthly ministry was "the sign of Jonah" (Jesus's 3 days and nights in the heart of the earth). The men of Nineveh will stand in the judgment of God and condemn all who do not accept Jesus's greatest of all signs—his bodily resurrection.

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 9:1-62

According to Matthew's account of this same event, the disciples "received without pay and were to give without pay." But that does not mean they were not to receive any financial or logistical support whatever in their ministries. In fact, Jesus concludes by instructing them to receive graciously and courteously any "room and board" offered them during this evangelistic tour (Mt. 10:11-14; Mk. 6:10-11; Lk. 9:4-5). The NT is clear that those who preach the gospel should have their livelihood supplied by those who receive the preaching (1 Cor. 9:1-14; Gal. 6:6; Phil. 4:15-17). And Jesus says at this point, "the laborer is worthy of his hire." This evangelistic tour is going to be intense and rapid! Jesus does not want them to make elaborate preparations and be encumbered by lots of "extras" they will not need. (1) They need to learn to trust in God---in later years there will be times when they will have to experience all kinds of deprivations (see 2 Cor. 11:24-29) so they must "learn, in whatever state they are, to be content" (Phil. 4:10-13). (2) They will encounter good people eager to hear about the kingdom of God, and these will support the apostles logistically (Mt. 19:27-30). (3) They must learn to manage the limited time they will have, not only on this tour, but for the rest of their life---we must work while it is day for the night comes when no man can work and "make the most of the time" (Eph. 5:15-16; Col. 4:5). The gospel message is a deposit from God to man over which men must exercise good stewardship. It is significant that the Lord told the 12 they should make expressions of their gratitude to their hosts, both verbal and physical. God does not wish to have ingrates and tactless people in his service. Thankfulness is probably the most beautiful characteristic of a human life and ingratitude the most heinous sin (Rom. 1:21). (4) Jesus is going to give the 12 their first realistic experience of the tension between God's kingdom and the mind of the flesh in human beings. There must be no sheltering of these 12 from the antagonism of unbelief---they must not be nurtured on any illusions that discipleship to Christ would be tolerated by the worldly-minded. They must learn that gospel proclamation is a life-death struggle (death to ego, to self), and the disciple is not above his Master. So, Jesus was testing both the 12 disciples and everyone to whom they would proclaim the kingdom message.

Evidently the 12 had some successes. But they do not seem to have reported back with the same enthusiasm as the 70 disciples did (see Lk. 10:17). Apparently they stirred up the multitudes so much by preaching the "kingdom" and doing miracles that some were saying John the Baptist had been raised from the dead. People thought the hairy, grasshopper-eating "prophet" of God was on the loose again! Now that shook Herod to his toes! Herod had just recently seen the Baptizer's severed head on a platter. So the 12 reported all that was being said to Jesus, and Jesus "took them and withdrew apart to Bethsaida." This was to get them as far away from Herod as possible. Herod would send some of his underlings to "look into the goings-on" of these men who were traveling throughout his bailiwick (Galilee) proclaiming that "the kingdom of God" is about to come into

existence. The Herods were extremely paranoid about any threat to their "thrones." They did not hesitate to kill their wives, their sons, their friends, their enemies or anyone who seemed to present a challenge to their rule. The Herods, of course, were not Jews. They were Arabs descended from Abraham's other son, Ishmael. Herod the Great got himself appointed "King of the Jews" by kowtowing to Roman emperors and when he died his "kingdom" was divided among four of his sons. The Herod on the "throne" at this point in time is Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great by his Samaritan wife, Malthe. So Antipas is part Arab and part Samaritan. A more unwelcome ruler over the Jews could hardly be found anywhere. Antipas knew Jewish apocryphal (i.e., fictitious) tradition and its belief that Elijah was supposed to be resurrected and return to earth to announce the coming of the Jewish Messiah. So he wanted to see this man who had disciples going out to preach the "kingdom of God." It was not time for Jesus to confront the enemies of God in a final showdown. There was still much work to accomplish in teaching the 12 and preparing them for the shock of his death. So he "withdrew apart." There was no fear or cowardice involved in the Lord's actions—just expediency.

There are numerous reasons Jesus told the 12 to do an "impossible" task of feeding 5000 hungry people when there were no visible means of being able to do so. (1) He wanted to put a damper on their enthusiasm at having just recently used his power to cast out demons and cure diseases and heal---they were in danger of thinking they were the source of these powers--- they must learn to rely absolutely on Jesus for such powers. (2) He wanted to demonstrate to them just how carnally-minded the majority of the Jews were who would eat the bread and fish and follow him over to Capernaum for MORE bread and fish. But they followed him no more when he preached on his deity and the "Bread of Life" (see John's account of this miracle, John 6). His apostles will have these materialistic Jews to preach to when he ascends back into heaven. (3) He wanted to take another step in solidifying the 12 disciple's commitment to him (see Jn. 6:66-71)---they must depend totally upon him. (4) Immediately after this incident Jesus will announce for the first time that he must go to Jerusalem to be crucified (Lk. 9:18-27) and raised from the dead---they must learn that the "impossible" is "possible"---they will be tempted to give up all their hope in his promises when they see him crucified as a criminal. (5) This would be another sign (miraculous) signifying he was, indeed, who he claimed to be---the apostles would remember all his miracles after his resurrection and preach them as evidence (Acts 2:22) of his Messiahship. As the great Restoration Movement preacher, Walter Scott, said, Jesus' Messiahship is founded on evidence—his doctrine is founded on his Messiahship.

When Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" it wasn't because he didn't know who he was. He knew he was God's Anointed (the Messiah, the Christ). But everyone around the disciples was confused about Jesus's identity. They were saying he was John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, "the" prophet, or one of the old prophets risen from the dead. And, of course, the Pharisees and Sadducees and their coterie were saying Jesus was an imposter, a bastard, a son of the devil, a blasphemer, and a seditionist. These disciples must crystalize (get clearly in their minds) their perception of who Jesus was. There can be no doubts as to his identity. They will still have misconceptions about his mission and

his "kingdom" but they must not be ambivalent about who he is. Isn't it interesting that while Peter emphatically declared he believed Jesus to be the Christ (Hebrew, "Messiah" Anointed) of God, Peter at that moment did not understand what Jesus was "Anointed" to do! Peter, and the other apostles, at that time had no conception of the vicarious death and justifying resurrection Jesus was sent to accomplish! They (esp. Peter) will say even after this they will not permit Jesus to die. At the Last Supper, Peter tried to refuse to let the Lord humble himself and wash Peter's feet (a signal from the Lord that he must be Peter's humble servant if he is to cleanse Peter of his sins). Jesus must repeat, time and again, that he was sent from God to be killed and be resurrected. They will not believe it until it has happened! Shortly after the feeding of the 5000 Jesus took them up on a mountain where he is transfigured with Moses and Elijah and discussed with them his "exodus" or death. Still, the disciples would be so wrapped up in their own earthly concepts of a "kingdom" of God, the message of the cross could not penetrate the fog of misconception that totally obscured the real mission of the Messiah. So, really, is Peter's confession here "the good confession?" What a person "confesses" (or believes) about Jesus Christ today should go beyond what Peter confessed there. Anyone who wishes to be a disciple of Jesus today must believe that he died an atoning death for their sins and that he arose from the dead, and that he was none other than God in the flesh (cf. 2 John 7-11). Think about it!

The Greek word for "appearance" is *prosopou*, and literally means, "face." The Greek word for "altered" is *heteron*, meaning, "other." In other words, he looked different than he had ever looked before! In addition to his "countenance" being altered, his clothing was blinding-white (Gr. *exastrapton*, flash of "lightning"). The disciples beheld two men, Moses and Elijah who also appeared in "glorious splendor" talking with Jesus about his "exodus" (Gr. *exodon*, "departure"). The disciples were in the immediate presence of heaven-come-down-to-earth. Jesus was *metemorphothe*, "metamorphosed, transfigured" according to Matt. 17:2. Jesus was "transfigured" into some measure of the heavenly glory and majesty he had before he took upon himself the fleshly body of a human. Moses had been "out of this world" for some 1400 years and Elijah for some 800 years. It frightened the disciples. It would frighten you, too, if you were suddenly in the presence of deity and people who had been dead for hundreds of years. We glibly expostulate on how we'd like to be in the presence of God right now. But if we were, we would be falling on our faces (see Lk. 5:8; Rev. 1:17; 5:8; 7:11; 22:8; Ezek. 1:28; 3:23; 43:3; Dan. 8:17,18; Acts 9:3ff). Men cannot look upon the face of God and live (Ex. 33:20). Only because we have been made sinless through the blood of Christ will we be able to stand in God's presence. No wonder the disciples were terrified. Moses and Elijah are representatives of "the Law and the Prophets" all of which were brought to their fulfillment in the incarnation and redemptive work of Jesus Christ. All the types and prophecies of the OT were fulfilled in the first coming of God's Anointed and the establishment of his church on earth. The OT has nothing to say about Christ's second coming. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10). Jesus and the apostles predict his second coming but never give times or dates. It was difficult enough to convince the Jews (and the rest of mankind) of the Messiah's FIRST coming--through the Law and the Prophets. To have said anything about the Messiah's second coming in the OT as is alleged by some today would be irrelevant to those who needed all the types and prophecies possible to convince them of his FIRST coming. That is

the very point of the voice of God from heaven, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" Lk. 9:35. God was showing the disciples that Jesus was sovereign over the Law and the Prophets! They must not make Jesus secondary to their OT. It must be impressed upon their minds in no uncertain terms that Jesus is God's "Chosen." The disciples wanted to build "three" booths. One each for Moses, Elijah and Jesus. Their perception was that Jesus was equal to Moses & Elijah. But God's revelation was that Jesus was sovereign over Moses and Elijah. So, when they said they wanted to build "three booths" for each of the illustrious persons there, God spoke from heaven, "This my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." (Mt. 17:5). Later, Peter would proclaim, "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12). But up on the mountain Peter wanted to make the names of Moses & Elijah of equal importance to that of Jesus. Peter ultimately came to the right understanding of the transfiguration (see 2 Pet. 1:16-21). A missionary for the Disciples of Christ once said she believed that if Jesus were to be transfigured in the Orient, Buddha and Confucius would be with him since they were founders of great world religions like Jesus was. WE MUST NOT "BUILD BOOTHS" FOR ANYONE BUT JESUS!

Coming down from a "mountain-top experience" where the disciples saw Jesus transfigured into his former glory in heaven, having seen and heard Moses and Elijah speaking with Jesus about his "exodus," and having heard the voice of God audibly pronounce his Almighty confirmation of Jesus' deity and divine mission unto death, Jesus was confronted with people clamoring for physical miracles and with a hesitant faith from the disciples. There is nothing insensitive at all in Jesus' rebuke to that generation. They deserved his rebuke! SO DO WE! How long must a patient and longsuffering Lord bear with a world of creatures who will not put their minds and hearts above their fleshly cravings? WE ARE TOO MUCH ATTACHED TO THIS WORLD OF FLESH! To those who constantly demanded a "sign" (miracle) from Jesus he said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." Mt. 12:39 Jesus had given more than enough "signs" (miracles) to those people. SO WHAT OF A MODERN GENERATION THAT DEMANDS MORE MIRACLES BEFORE IT WILL BELIEVE IN JESUS?! It, too, needs the rebuke, "an evil and adulterous generation"! The resurrection of Christ is ENOUGH...THAT IS THE LAST "SIGN" OF JESUS'S MESSIAHSHIP. This is especially true of America. A people which has been given so many extra-ordinary opportunities to know the truth, and still hesitates to make full, total commitment to it, deserves quick and firm correction. May God have mercy upon us for wasting so much of the Master's time and property. America's stewardship of the gospel has not been commensurate with its privileges and opportunities! Oh yes, I know, America has done more than any other country about missions, etc., but we are not going to be judged by what "others" have done. We are to be judged by the Master's criteria. And that is, "Unto whomsoever much has been given, of him shall much be required." And "when you have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty." If you think Jesus doesn't rebuke churches and individuals within churches, read Revelation chapters 2 and 3! Paul was very adept at giving the Holy Spirit's rebuke to churches and individuals (Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Colossae, et al). Paul wrote to those ritualistic, carnal-minded Hebrews, "But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called

'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." (Heb. 3:13). Paul said the word must be preached, urgently, in season and out of season, convincing, rebuking, and exhorting unfailingly by endurance and teaching (2 Tim. 4:2).

At least three separate times the disciples were caught arguing who would be greatest in the kingdom. This time in Lk. 9:49-56; later as they were headed for Jerusalem and the last week of Jesus' ministry, Mt. 20:20-28; and, would you believe it, at the Last Supper they were disputing as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest, Lk. 22:24-30. And this was AFTER Jesus had humbled himself and washed their feet! How thick-headed were they?! About as thick-headed as some of us are! And here, in Lk. 9:43-48, the disciples argue about who will be greatest RIGHT AFTER Jesus had said, "Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men." It almost appears the disciples were glad to hear that Jesus would be "delivered into the hands of men" so they can take the highest positions in the kingdom!!! But, of course, they did not want him to die---just to get out of the way so they could run the kingdom as they think it should be. THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST IS NOT TO BE OPERATED LIKE A HEATHEN CORPORATION OR KINGDOM! Test your spirituality and fitness for citizenship in Jesus's kingdom by your childlikeness. Children are not concerned with human power and grandeur. They know they are weak and gladly look to others for help and sustenance. There are no false facades or veneers with them. They know how to love and be loved. There is only ONE King, Jesus. Everyone else is a servant and a child. "Leaders" are leaders in order to "serve" Jesus said, Lk. 22:21. C. S. Lewis said our ultimate reward, our "eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17), is when we shall hear God say those words we in no way deserve, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joys of your rest." Let us not be caught, like these bone-headed disciples, in disputes over who is the greatest in the kingdom. It is unbecoming sinners saved by grace to even think it, let alone verbalize it!

First, the disciples must have been carrying on their bone-headed dreams of greatness in the kingdom as "leaders" when they came across a man casting out demons in the name of Jesus (by Jesus' authority) but this particular disciple had not been traveling with the "elite" 12! So, they justified their egomania by forbidding this man to call himself a disciple of Jesus. Only those who had first-hand access to the King should be doing the king's business---they thought. So they told the man to stop doing what he was doing. Only they, the inner-circle 12, were allowed to exercise the prerogatives of power! They had followed Jesus FIRST. They had "been over the road" with him, suffered whatever he suffered, ate what he ate, slept where he slept. So they assumed they had the right to regulate the kingdom of Jesus! WRONG! Only Jesus has the right to permit and forbid! To do something "in the name of Jesus" is to acquiesce to the authoritative word of Jesus. Jesus's statement here does not bid us accept everyone under the sun who claims to be doing what they are doing "in the name of Jesus." We still must discriminate as to false teachers and true teachers! There are scads of people in the world today claiming to be doing things "in the name of Jesus" but they twist, pervert, and disobey his plain teachings in the apostolic word of God. THOSE ARE AGAINST US AND THEREFORE, NOT FOR US! They must be exposed (Eph. 5:11, et al.)! But anyone doing the will of Christ as revealed in

the NT is to be counted as a brother in Christ whether he travels in our circles, likes our culture, uses our traditions, or not! Second, as Jesus and his disciples traveled through Samaria to Jerusalem, the Samaritans were hostile instead of hospitable (Lk. 9:53). The Lord and his men were not welcome in Samaria and the Samaritans made it known. The disciples wanted to bring down fire from heaven and consume them (ala-Elijah and the prophets of Baal). The disciples wanted to teach the Samaritans a lesson they wouldn't forget. They would not have their Master spurned and humiliated. But Jesus rebuked his disciples telling them, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of; for the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives but to save them." In the Upper Room, Jesus told his disciples to arm themselves with swords against the vigilante mob that was coming to do him and them bodily harm. But rudeness and inhospitality must be endured. They should simply say, as he instructed 70 other disciples (Lk. 10:10-12), "Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you...." The Samaritans brought God's judgment upon themselves by being inhospitable to his Son. Anger and jealousy are legitimate emotions. The Lord created us to have these emotions for a holy purpose. We must be jealous of the Lord's sovereignty over our lives, jealous for his honor being upheld in our lives. We must be angry at evil so that we abhor even the appearance of it. But both must be under the control of the revealed will of God. SO, DO WE KNOW WHAT SPIRIT WE ARE OF? We must not let jealousy and anger rule our lives. It is the "peace of Christ" which is to "rule" (arbitrate) in our hearts (Col. 3:15).

Jesus never "psyched, politicked, or entertained" anyone into following him. He preached the truth, straight from the shoulder, with compassion and persuasive logic, but he never manipulated people with emotionalism. He always insisted that those who wished to follow his way should count the cost (see Lk. 14:25-35). This first unknown person who came to Jesus was audacious, rash, hasty, over-confident and ignorant of the personal cost involved in discipleship to Jesus! Jesus never smooth-talked anyone into following him. He was never hesitant about laying bare the dangers, responsibilities, and privations that would accrue from becoming a believer. The next two unknown persons who answered his call to discipleship quickly found excuses they deemed of higher priority than immediate and total commitment to Christ. What they wished to do seems innocent enough (go to a father's funeral and say farewell to a family). But nothing and no one is to come before obedience to clear, implicit commands from the lips of Christ and his New Covenant scriptures. Clinging to or looking back to earthly ties and longing to return to them makes anyone unfit to be his disciple. Jesus is the Absolute Lord or he is not Lord at all (Mt. 7:21; Lk. 6:46). Remember, the aged Simeon called the Lord a despota, English, despot in Lk. 2:29. There will always be, until he comes again, those who show no interest in following Jesus. Let them take care of secondary issues. Those wishing to belong to Jesus must surrender all thoughts (2 Cor. 10:3-5), all viewpoints (2 Cor. 5:14-21), as well as their bodies (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 6:19-20); families (Mt. 10:34-39; Lk. 14:25-27); and possessions (Lk. 14:33). These must always and ever take second place to Jesus. None of what we are or have belongs to us anyway! We are merely stewards of it for it all belongs to God who created it. THAT WE ARE MERELY STEWARDS AND SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT FOR HOW WE USED IT TO GOD'S GLORY IS THE BURNING ISSUE! Let us be very careful to inform anyone wishing to become a disciple of Christ what it will COST! We dare not withhold this information! Jesus never did!

The apostles never did! (see Acts 14:22). If we give people the impression that following Jesus will be easy or that it will demand nothing of them except church attendance, we are endangering their eternal souls! For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world...they are again entangled in them and overpowered, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them." (see 2 Pet. 2:20-22).

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 10:1---11:54

Jesus had 70 "other" disciples (other than the 12 he called to be apostles) who were fully capable of evangelizing or preaching the kingdom of God. He may have given instructions or powers not mentioned in the text but most of the instructions in this text could very well apply to doing evangelism today or any age. Notice, while they apparently did cast out demons (10:17) in the text no instructions, as such, were given. They were told to "heal the sick" (10:9). It is pretty evident that we do not have the power to cast out demons, tread on serpents, etc., and miraculously heal the sick, nor do we need it. Miracles were to validate and substantiate the message of the first century. Once the validation was accomplished it need not be repeated! But---(a) the harvest it always plentiful; (b) the laborers are always few; (c) we always need to pray for laborers; (d) we will always be lambs in the midst of wolves, if you don't think so, you don't know the real world out there; (e) we still do not need a lot of self sustaining trappings---those who hear the word will support those who give full-time to proclaiming it; (f) we should accept with gratitude the hospitality of those who hear our preaching; (g) if people will not hear, but manifest they are not interested, then we should "wipe off against them their own dust," (be rid of them) for there are too many places in the world still waiting who will hear; (h) it is still true that those who hear true messengers of Jesus are hearing Jesus! (i) and it is still proper that we do not glory in our own accomplishments but in our redemption! The methods of evangelism as practiced in the NT are never outdated. It is still necessary for people to hear the evidence for and the message of Jesus in order for them to believe. It is still necessary that we let the word do its work and not try to do the work for the word. It is still necessary that those who preach and teach the gospel should receive some instruction and training. It is still necessary to demand what the gospel demands and to warn about the cost of discipleship. It is still necessary that the truth be communicated (either orally or on the printed page) lovingly, firmly, plainly, unequivocally, often, and everywhere. The results of evangelism as experienced in the NT will be pretty much the same today. The kingdom still begins "small" like mustard seed; it still demands sowing; it still demands honest and good hearts who will accept it and understand it; realizing it still grows slowly, gradually but of itself (first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear); it still works like leaven, silently, unobtrusively, unspectacularly; it is still a fact that, while sowers for Christ are sowing good seed, the enemy is sowing tares and we are not sent to pull up tares but to sow God's "seed."

As mentioned above, if the gospel is rejected, there is nothing to do but go with it to someone else. We cannot force, trick, manipulate, or bribe people to become followers of Jesus. He doesn't want it to be done that way, and it wouldn't work if we tried. Look at Jesus's example (the rich young ruler, the Pharisees, the hungry multitudes, the nine lepers, etc.). Jesus did not hold himself responsible for those who refused to hear him. It was their responsibility to hear. There is no such thing as "universal salvation." God is not going to

save everyone in heaven, regardless of whether they wish to be saved or not. The OT and NT both indicate that rebel, lawless, sinners will be cast into outer darkness or hell where there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth--or as Revelation 14 puts it, "the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever and there is no rest day or night." If sowers sow and the seed has life in it, and no fruit of repentance is produced, it is the fault of the soil. It certainly isn't God's fault or that of God's word. Parents often have guilt complexes when their children grow up, leave home, and stray from their Christian moorings. But if the parents have sown, and the seed is the deposit of the word and a godly life, when the adult child strays, it is because the soil has become hard, rocky, or full of weeds on its own. And there is very little the parent can do but pray and live the life of Jesus in their daily walk, being ready always to give a reason to anyone who asks concerning the hope that is within them. Jesus was not able to save Judas, Paul was not able to save Hymenaeus, Alexander, (1 Tim. 1:20) and Demas (2 Tim. 4:10). Jesus came not to cast peace upon the earth, but a sword and fire (Matt. 10:34-39; Lk. 12:49; 14:26-33, et al.).

Luke 10:21-24 is similar to Matt. 11:25-27, however the incident in Matthew 11 is in Jesus's second year of ministry, and Luke 10:21-24 in his third year of ministry. Jesus, repeated himself at different places and at different times. Anyone who teaches knows that the fundamental approach to all teaching and learning is repetition! There is no mistake or contradiction between the gospel writers here. Jesus thanked God that his truth is of such moral constitution and God's kingdom is of such childlike, unworldly, unaffected nature that the smart-alecks, know-it-alls, immoral and wicked people will be unable to understand it until they have a change of attitude and their values are redirected. The kingdom of God is no place for those who believe they are so smart they don't need God revealing anything to them. It's not for those who think that if they don't already know it or can find it out by themselves, it isn't worth knowing. The kingdom of God is no place for those who have no love for the truth and no love for goodness. That is the big issue between the world of unbelief and the kingdom of God---ULTIMATE TRUTH BY REVELATION FROM DEITY vs. SUPPOSED ULTIMATE TRUTH DISCOVERED STRICTLY THROUGH HUMAN CAPABILITY. Or, to put it another way, TRUTH RESIDENT IN AN ABSOLUTE GOD vs. TRUTH RESIDENT IN AND RELATIVE TO HUMAN PERCEPTIONS & DESIRES. In the kingdom of God TRUTH RESIDES IN A PERSON, JESUS CHRIST (Jn. 14:6; Col. 2:3). HE is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Truth in the kingdom of God is NEVER relative to human perceptions and desires. Truth is the will of God as revealed in the Bible. Truth about you, about me, about all of creation both on earth and in heaven, is revealed in the Bible. And those who are too smart to let God tell them the truth are those who will never find it. That's not only fair, it's something for which we, too, should be thankful. Heaven is no place for arrogant know-it-alls.

It certainly does apply to us! Jesus said to his audience, "Go, thou and do likewise." Both the RSV and the NIV have left the Greek personal pronoun, su, or "thou" out of their English translations. The personal pronoun is part of the text. Leaving it out makes the teaching of Jesus lose some of its impact. It should have been made a part of the English translation. The Greek verb, poreuou, "Go" is in the Greek imperative mood

meaning it is a command. That every disciple of Jesus is to behave like the Good Samaritan is more than a suggestion! It is an order from the King! Of course, we are not to be foolhardy and endanger our lives to help those in distress if it is apparent that would be the case. Jesus told his disciples when they went out to preach, be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. He said we were not to throw our pearls to the swine or bread to the dogs. He does not want us to be "dare-devils" or to be rash and reckless. When he knew the mobs coming for him in Gethsemane would be armed and precipitous, he told the disciples to arm themselves for protection with two swords. On the other hand, we must not be so concerned about ourselves that we are afraid to help someone who needs help. There are risks to life and limb just driving down-town doing things for ourselves so why should we be paralyzed by fear of being hurt that we will not help someone else in real need. I do not believe being a Good Samaritan applies to giving hitch-hikers rides when transportation is so abundant and inexpensive today, or to letting a stranger into your house who wants to borrow a phone or something similar (there are lots of pay-phones and today everyone has an "I Phone").

Most of us would have been offended if we were rebuked for doing what we thought was proper service to the Lord. Martha had taken it upon herself to rebuke the Lord. She was "distracted" (Gr. periespato, "agitated, wheeling about, twisting and convulsing"). She was running around in circles, upset, fretting and "she came upon him" (Gr. epistasa, "pressed upon, assaulted") saying, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." She not only rebuked the Lord, she set about to instruct Jesus on getting his priorities straightened out. She was, trying to be a "good Samaritan" and show hospitality to Jesus in a situation where otherwise he was most unwelcome, inviting him into her home and preparing a good meal for this hungry, itinerant rabbi. This was going the second mile, observing the golden rule, etc. etc. But the Lord had the last word. He rebuked Martha. We must not rationalize that what Jesus said was not a rebuke--- it was a "correction" and few of us consider "correction" anything but a rebuke. He informed Martha that it was her priorities that were wrong. There's nothing wrong with hospitality and taking care of people's bodily needs (Heb. 13:2; Mt. 25:35; Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9, et al.). Jesus did not say Martha's service was bad. But hospitality that gets in the way of making spiritual things first priority is superfluous. Some good things are bad and wrong when they supersede the best. What Martha needed to learn was that in discipleship to Jesus, you must not only give to him, but receive from him. And when it comes to a choice between giving Jesus some physical thing or listening and learning what he has to teach, the teaching and learning must supersede the physical! The kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17; see also Rom. 13:14). The primary mission of the church is preaching the word of God and must never be second to ministering to the earthly body (Acts 6:2). After all, fish and bread are of no avail for eternal life, the words Jesus speaks are the Bread unto eternal Life (Jn. 6:63). Mary knew the secret that love cannot finally express itself in physical things. Love must ultimately cling to the things of the spirit. Martha chose to do what was good, but Mary chose to do what was best!

God never changes his mind or his will. There is no variation in God (Jas. 1:17).

God does not repent (change his mind) (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29). God's word stands forever (Isa. 40:8). The Lord does not change (Mal. 3:6). Man changes his mind. INDEED, MAN MUST CHANGE HIS MIND. God changes his actions toward people who change their minds. IT IS HIS WILL TO CHANGE HIS ACTIONS TOWARD THOSE WHO CHANGE THEIR MINDS. That is the primary reason God has asked us to pray to him. It develops that mind-change from independence to child-like humility and utter dependence upon him so absolutely necessary to even see the kingdom of God. We don't convince God of what we need by prayer---he already knows what we need before we even ask (Mt. 6:8). We do not persuade him when we need something by the urgency of our prayers---he will give us what we need when we need it. God vindicates his elect speedily (Lk. 17:7-8). Our problem is that we think God's "speedily" is not fast enough by our standards of speed! Persistence in prayer is not to change God's mind. He has always wanted to give his children everything good and to withhold from them nothing that is bad. So, our faith, expressed through persistent prayer, puts us in the right attitude to receive or not receive what and when a loving Father has chosen to give or withhold! What God really intends for us through prayer is faith that causes us to put what God gives to its intended use. Persistence in prayer (1) shows who God is; (2) gives us time to learn that some things we pray for are wrong; (3) creates single-mindedness in us and a passionate desire to conform to his will, not ours. A flippant, half-hearted relationship is unacceptable to God. He does not wish to hear that which we do not care whether he hears or not. God wants to bless all men and does so through (1) his propositionally revealed (written) word; (2) his direct providential actions upon things and creatures; (3) the free actions of free men, created with free wills and freedom to act as they choose. And even when free-willed people's actions are evil, God can use that evil to bless others. How God blesses in his word, we know. How God blesses through the actions of free-willed people depends on those actions and how we interpret them by the word of God. How God blessed providentially (or miraculously) in past history we know from the Bible. How God blesses TODAY through his own directed providential actions, WE DO NOT KNOW. He stopped revealing how and when he does this when the Bible was completed. How he does this is according to his sovereign will and if there is to be an explanation we will just have to wait for heaven to hear it. R.C. Trench said, "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of his highest willingness." Prayer is not a panacea, it is not an escape. Sickness will still visit the members of a praying family. Hardship will not pass their door. Temptation and trial will still beat a path to the door of every praying home. Paul prayed 3 times for his thorn to be removed; each time he was told, NO! Christ prayed, and was tempted and suffered! His ways are sometimes difficult to understand, or to accept. Often, his ways hurt, temporarily. One thing we must trust---he will act when we call. We do not always know how he will act, but we do know he will act in our best interests, for our salvation and growth.

The answer to this question is, YES, unequivocally, indubitably, inevitably. Human beings may have multitudes of categories by which to classify degrees of "goodness" or "badness," but whoever is not with Christ, is against Christ. All human beings are either sons of light or sons of this world, sheep or goats, wise or foolish, saved or lost, sons of God or sons of the devil, servants of righteousness or servants of sin, those who have the mark of God upon them, or the mark of the beast; wheat or tares; good fish or bad fish. There are

many other such metaphors used in the Bible designating the TWO categories of humankind as seen by God. However many there may be, we must get it into our minds that this is the way God sees the whole human race, and we must see humanity just like he does (2 Cor. 5:16). Isn't it interesting that God does not divide humanity by "haves" and "have nots," "erudite" and "ignorant," "black" or "white,"-----just "saved" and "lost."

Yes, it is evil to seek a sign from the Lord when the Lord has determined that he has given enough signs that the whole world who has been informed of them may believe and be saved. AS OF THE DAY OF HIS RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD, ENOUGH SIGNS HAD BEEN GIVEN TO MAKE THAT POSSIBLE (see Jn. 20:30-31). That is exactly what Jesus meant in this text when he said, "...no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah." Of course, he had already given numerous "signs" (miracles, fulfilled prophecies) to that generation. So many that he said, "The men of Nineveh will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it..." Nineveh repented with a lot less opportunity than the Jews had by being privy to Jesus' miraculous ministry. Yes, the apostles and a few other first century Christians did miracles. But those were to authenticate and validate them as credible eyewitnesses of THE BODILY RESURRECTION OF THE LORD and to authenticate them as the Lord's SPOKESMEN in regard to the doctrines they preached which the Lord himself had not preached (i.e., matters contained in the epistles). "Jesus' Messiahship is proven by evidence; his doctrines are to be believed on the basis of his Messiahship."---Walter Scott. No more "signs" are needed for either the Deity and Lordship of Jesus, or the apostolic doctrine. It has been "once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). It therefore seems to me that Jesus' condemnation, "...an evil generation seeks a sign" applies today just as certainly as it did then. Seeking more signs to confirm one's salvation, to confirm that God has spoken completely and finally in the Bible is not only unnecessary, it is evil (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3-5; 1 Cor. 13:8-13; Jude 3). MODERN DAY ALLEGATIONS THAT "SIGNS" HAVE OCCURRED PROVING NEW REVELATIONS FROM GOD ARE UNSCRIPTURAL, AT BEST, AND PROBABLY VERY CLOSE TO "EVIL!"

That generation could be held responsible for all the blood shed from the foundation of the world because that is the generation that actually, literally, physically, killed the Son of God! They killed God in the flesh! By doing so, they killed the One whom their prophets had predicted they would kill (Isa. 53; Dan. 9:26, Zech. 12:10, etal.), the One who was the fulfillment of God's redemptive overtures to humanity. Their forefathers had killed the prophets who were predicting that God's last overture to man would be through his Anointed (Messiah). All crime is ultimately crime against God. Any crime against an individual, or against a civil government, is, in the final analysis, a crime against God. God is the Absolute Point of Reference for all that is moral, good, legal, and true. So, to kill God (in the flesh) is to be guilty of all the crime in the world from beginning to end. But the astounding thing is, those who committed the crime of killing Jesus (God) could be forgiven---and in fact some of them were (Acts 2:22-42)! Rather sobering also, is the fact that any crime or sin, unforgiven, is enough to send a person to hell! Killing the Messiah was what Daniel called, "finish the transgression" (Dan. 9:24-27). The killing of God's Anointed was the ultimate murder, the crowning crime of all hatred against God's sovereignty (Mt. 21:33-

44). Outwardly, these Pharisees "honored" the old prophets by "building their tombs" (memorials), but inwardly, because they were even then plotting how to kill Jesus, they indicate they would have murdered every one of the old prophets who spoke of Jesus, including Moses and Abraham (whom they so glowingly venerated). The "Wisdom of God" (11:49) is apparently a Messianic title which Jesus applies to himself. In the passage in Matthew 23:34, where Jesus indicts the Pharisees in a similar, but later and more extensive way, Jesus says, "Therefore I send you prophets...." "Wisdom" is personified in the book of Proverbs (8:1f) which is undoubtedly a Messianic prophecy in itself. Also very sobering is the fact that whoever renounces Christ as the way of salvation and tries to be saved (or "repent") through any other way, whether it is their own or some other religion, CRUCIFIES THE SON OF GOD AFRESH AND PUTS HIM TO AN OPEN SHAME (Heb. 6:4-8).

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 12:1---13:35

Who knows for sure what will be published at the judgment day for everyone to know? Maybe God will arraign us before his judgment seat on an individual basis. One thing is certain, Jesus Christ, our Advocate (Rom.8:26-27; 8:31-35; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; 1 Jn. 21-2) has, and does continually, make intercession for us. The one who was here in the flesh and knows our predicaments and weaknesses, has already paid the penalty for our crimes. If God chooses to reveal to us individually, or to all mankind, all the past sins (deliberate and unknowing) we have committed, it will make it all the sweeter to hear Jesus say, "I paid his penalty, he has accepted it by faith, he is our prodigal son (daughter) come home---put a robe upon him and shoes, and give him a ring with the seal of God upon it, and come, let us be merry, this our lost son (daughter) is found!" If we are embarrassed or ashamed should God recount all our miserable failures at the judgment, so what? We should be. We need a lot more awareness of the grace of God than we currently have! Remember the Prodigal Son was determined to say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants." Jesus said, "...when you have done all that is commanded you (and which of us has?), say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty." (Lk. 17:10). I believe, however, (i.e., it is a my opinion) that when the great judgment day arrives, God's "elect" will not even have their sins remembered by God. Micah the prophet wrote, (Micah 7:19) "He will again have compassion upon us, he will tread our iniquities under foot. Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." We are told in Jer. 31:34 and Heb. 8:12 that God will be merciful toward our iniquities, and remember our sins no more! see also Heb. 9:14; 9:26-28; 10:11-25. And remember those blessed words in Rom. 8:31-39... "Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?" It is amazing, isn't it, that God has every hair of every individual man or beast who's ever existed, numbered! He also has names for all the stars (those now shining and those gone out). He sees every sparrow that falls! He knows our goings in and goings out, our lying downs and getting ups, our thoughts, our dreams, our secrets, how many days we shall live, where we live, our motives. One person knows all that! WHAT A PERSON!

Everyone will be wanting to discuss the "sin against the Holy Spirit which will not be forgiven" in this text. Well, precisely put, that is very clearly the sin of rejecting the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised (John ch. 14,15,16) that upon the completion of the work of the Incarnate Son (the work of redemption), He (Jesus) would come back to the world in the invisible Person of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 17:14-24) to empower the apostles to inerrantly proclaim the final truth of salvation to mankind through their communications in human language (spoken and written). In the spoken and written words of the apostles, the Holy Spirit would "convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment" (Jn. 16:5-11). Anyone refusing to be convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment by the apostolic word is committing the sin for which there is no forgiveness. God has made his final revelation to the

world in the New Testament. There will be no further revelations. No further redemptive efforts (Heb. 9:23-28) will be made. Those who reject the NT have no forgiveness. Today is the day of salvation. Today is the day of repentance! Now to the question! Indeed, it is possible to acknowledge Christ with our mouths and deny him with our finances. Ananias and Sapphira did so (Acts 5:1-6). We may deny Christ by giving too little in comparison with our prosperity, or we may deny him by giving large amounts in order to be "seen by men." (Mk. 12:41-44 & Matt. 6:2-4) or to impress God. The apostle Paul has written the Holy Spirit's instructions for Christian giving primarily in 2 Corinthians chapters 8 & 9. We are to give cheerfully, as we have been prospered, sometimes beyond our means when great need arises, not by compulsion, each one as he/she has made up their minds to give, not reluctantly, not as an exaction, and God does not expect a person to give what he does not have to give (2 Cor. 8:12). Whatever we have we must not count it as ours to do with as we please. What we have is to be consecrated for use as it pleases God! And God has not left us without objective information on how to please him with our possessions----the information is in the Bible! Whatever we have, temporarily, it is a trust, a stewardship, for which we shall give account. All we possess may be taken from us, or we may be taken from it (like the foolish farmer Lk. 12:13-21), in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Why does God want our money? He doesn't need it---all the cattle on a 1000 hills are his, if he were hungry, he would not ask us (Psa. 50:10-12)! God wants our money because God wants our "hearts" (our souls, our selves), for where our treasure is, there will our heart be also. Our earthly treasure is our spouses, our children and grandchildren. They have a vise-like grip on our hearts! We'd do anything for them! Lay down our lives for them! GOD WANTS AN EVEN GREATER VISE-LIKE GRIP ON OUR HEARTS! The rich farmer was not a fool for "saving"---he was a fool for trying to save everything for himself! He had much more than he needed, but he wanted it all and refused to share it with God. How does one share what one has with God? THROUGH GIVING IT TO OTHER PEOPLE! We love God through loving others---we give to God by giving to others! But we are reticent to share with others---we're afraid we might not have enough "laid up for many (retirement) years." Who will take care of us if we don't keep it all for ourselves? See the next question!

Anxiety is from the Greek word that literally means, "a divided mind." In other words, anxiety is a state of mental agitation attempting to reconcile two opposing ideas. One of the fundamental rules of logic is that two contradictory propositions cannot both be correct. They may both be false, but they cannot both be correct. It is illogical to think that we can serve God and serve Mammon both at the same time. To try to do so produces anxiety, or angst, as the Germans call it. God did not make us to be illogical, anxious, ambivalent, equivocal. He made us to think clearly, precisely, correctly, and thus, honestly. Only an honest mind can be a mind at peace. Only a mind that has "learned, in whatever state it is, to be content," can have the peace which passes understanding. "Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad." (Prov. 12:25) One repents of anxiety by faith and obedience to the word of God! That sounds easy. But who said being a Christian was easy? Jesus never said it would be easy! To keep from fretting and worrying over money is simply a matter of believing with all one's being that Jesus meant what he said: "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him." (Matt.6:8).... "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or What shall we wear....your

heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well." (Matt. 6:31-33). Being content with what we have is something that is learned (Phil. 4:10-13). We should pray, "give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God." (Prov. 30:8-9). On the other hand, the Lord does not want us to be lazy, indifferent about our finances, or always dependent on others to take care of us (e.g. Eph. 4:28; 1 Thess. 4:9-12; 2 Thess. 3:6-13---and Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:4; 19:15; 20:4,13; 23:21; 24:33-34).

One repents of poor stewardship by getting one's house in order! The word for "steward" in Greek is, oikonomos, literally "house-manager." The English synonym for "steward" in Webster's Dictionary is "manager." The NT Greek word is a compound of a prefix, oiko, "house," and nomos, "law, distribute, arrange, divide-out." You see, stewardship means being "organized, systematical, careful." Repenting over one's stewardship is a matter of right thinking about it and right actions with it! Stewardship does not come with birth. Again, stewardship is something that has to be learned. One of the most important tasks associated with parenthood is teaching children to be "good stewards" (managers, systematizers, organizers) of their toys, time, clothes, rooms, and other possessions. Many parents neglect this task by simply doing for their children what they should make their children do for themselves. Could that be why we have poor stewardship in the Lord's kingdom? Life is short. We do not have much time on this earth. It well behooves us to learn to get ourselves organized and systematized as we manage that over which the Lord has appointed us stewards. We are warned over and over by the Bible that we shall give account to him for our stewardship (Matt. 18:23; Lk. 12:32-48; 16:1-13; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 4:5). In Christian stewardship it is not how much, but how. It's not what one would do with the million he does not have, but what one does with the \$3.69 one has. "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true riches?" Lk. 16:10-11

This life is our "probationary period." We must repent NOW! There is NO opportunity to repent in the next life. Apparently God is aware that those who do not repent in this life would not do so in the next (see Lk. 16:19-31). The rich man in Hades was sorry, but not penitent! Neither were his brothers, and he was told that if his brothers did not believe the word of God they had on earth, they would not believe an additional word from God after departing earth. Being sorry one has been caught is NOT repentance. Repentance is when a sinful human being CHANGES HIS MIND, WILL, MOTIVES, AND ACTIONS TO CONFORM THEM TO THE MIND, WILL, MOTIVES AND ACTIONS OF GOD! The Greek noun metanoia literally means "another-mind." It was a Greek military word meaning "about face, or to the rear march." It means "marching" to the mind of Christ. "When once the householder has risen up and shut the door...." those who have rejected God and Christ and used up all of this life for themselves, will get what they have wanted and planned for---THEMSELVES. They would not want to be where people "count others better

than themselves" Phil. 2:3 and where people "outdo one another in showing honor" Rom. 12:10, and where "each does not please himself but pleases his neighbor for his good to edify him" Rom. 15:1-2. They will get to spend eternity with other SELFISH, GREEDY, UNCARING, impenitent people. There is no "second chance." Once a person dies, nothing but the judgment awaits (Heb. 12:27-28). Those who spend their entire lives in this existence defying God, would not be happy in the next existence where God's will is obeyed unquestioningly and with joy. "Purgatory" and "limbo" are not biblical doctrines. The rich man who died and went to Hades, was in "torment" and "in flames" Lk. 16:24. The book of Revelation clearly indicates "torments" in "fire and brimstone" is everlasting Hell (Rev. 14:9-11) Jesus told the believing, repenting thief on the cross that he would, ON THAT DAY, be with him in Paradise Lk. 23:43. People go from this life to the eternal abode of their choice. There is no biblical teaching that the departed the souls of human beings stay in a long state of unconscious "sleep" (see Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9-17; 14:13).

Repentance is succinctly defined by William Chamberlain in his book, *The Meaning of Repentance* (the best book ever written on repentance), as: "A pilgrimage from the mind of the flesh to the mind of Christ." In other words, repentance is a "journey" from the mind-set of carnality or worldliness, to the mind-set of spirituality and heaven (Col. 3:1-17). It is a mind-set that can honestly pray, "Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven," or, "Not my will but thine be done." It is nothing less than a mental and moral metamorphosis! Chamberlain says, "Repentance is not a device for escaping hell; it is a preparation for co-operating with God's will on earth." Repentance is at the forefront of biblical doctrine. Jesus said that everything written about him in the law and the Prophets and the Psalms was to be fulfilled when "repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations" Lk. 24:44-47. Paul said, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent....and he has given assurance to all men by raising him (Jesus) from the dead." Acts 17:30-31. If we are going to restore NT Christianity, we are going to have to put more emphasis on PREACHING REPENTANCE. If you don't believe that, read through the book of Acts again!!! That was the polestar of apostolic preaching. Faith is a sham without repentance; baptism is a mockery without repentance; good deeds are hypocrisy without repentance; observing the Lord's supper is self-condemnation without repentance. We could go on and on. Chamberlain's book is 238 pages of "spiritual meat" on repentance. I strongly urge anyone who can get a copy (OCC Library has copies) to do so and read it! Repentance is an everyday affair! It is not, like baptism, done just once in a life-time. It is not, like the Lord's Supper, done just on Sunday. It is not merely sorrow, though that is a part of it. It is not merely dropping bad habits, though that is a part of it. Chamberlain, again, "Repentance, the transition from the mind of the flesh to the mind of Christ, is cumulative, and lifelong, and should be constantly progressing." In the very last book of the Bible, Christ admonishes the church to repent! The only biblical ongoing "program" for the church is REPENTANCE (e.g. Rev. chs. 2-3). Christ alerted the churches in the book of Revelation that he was allowing them to suffer the "great tribulation" in order to bring them to repentance. The church was to be "nourished" in an hostile environment ("wilderness") Rev. 12:14. That is why God allows towers to fall on people! In a world of implacable sinners and rebels, God must call them to repentance through all means possible. If they will not hear his word, perhaps they will pay attention when trouble comes!

“Pain plants the flag of truth in the rebel soul”—C. S. Lewis in his book, *The Problem of Pain*.

Satan is not the author of disease. God is! When man sinned, God "cursed the earth" for man's sake (Gen.3:17). God's "curses" upon the earth (disease, catastrophes, death) are the "pains" (C.S. Lewis) that plant the flag of truth in the rebel soul. They are a part of God's redemptive program to bring man back to him. Satan chose sometime before our universe was created to rebel against God. Satan hates God. Satan is a murderer and a liar. Satan hates man because man is in God's "image" and God has sacrificed his Only Son to redeem man. God did not redeem rebellious angels or the devil because they did not want redemption. Apparently the devil knows "his time is short" (short in the perspective of eternity) to do his worst upon mankind (Rev. 12:12). God is in control of everything--- disease, pain, trouble (Isa. 45:7), death (Rev. 1:18). Apparently God has given the devil permission to use disease, pain, trouble, and "the fear of death" only so far as God wants him to (Job chs. 1 & 2) in order to put man into the crucible of spiritual transformation. Will man believe God has control, or the devil? Along with "cursing" the earth and instituting physical death, God blessed the earth by revealing himself as a loving, caring, helping, saving Father. The ultimate of God's blessing to the world is his revelation that he is in control of disease, trouble and death, which he demonstrated in time, in history, empirically, in the Incarnation of his Son, his miracles, his death and resurrection (see Heb. 2:14-18). Of course, the devil vents his hatred for God by using God's "curses" against man and creation. But the message from heaven is: nothing the devil does is permanent, nor can it ultimately harm those who have the seal of God upon them (the indwelling of the Holy Spirit). The most important tool the devil wields is FALSEHOOD. To believe his lies is much more fatal than cancer. Believing Satan's lies is eternally fatal. The death of the body is the door opened to Paradise for the believer. One thing is certain. Nothing happens in all existence without God's permission. The devil does NOT have power equal to God's. The devil is a creature made by, and under the dominion of, The Creator. Biblical religion is not dualistic like Hinduism, Buddhism, and other superstitions.

"Few" is, I suppose, relative. The book of Revelation represents those Christians of the days of the Roman empire who "came out of the great tribulation" and were in heaven, as "a multitude which no man could number" (Rev. 7:9). But we must qualify that with Jesus's words, "For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few!" (Lk. 13:24; Matt. 7:14). Jesus also said, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Mk. 10:24-25. One thing is clear. The NT never promises or infers any doctrine of universalism---that everyone will eventually be saved---that no one will go to an eternal hell (Heb. 10:19-31, etc.) Just how many, by human count, will be saved is God's business. It is our business to "be the more zealous to confirm our call and election" (2 Pet. 1:5-11) and, "knowing the terror of the Lord, persuade men" to repent and be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:11-21). Luke reports Jesus used the word *agonizesthe* (from which we get English---agonize). It is often translated, "struggle, contend." It is a word from the Greek Olympic games to describe the "agony" those ancient athletes endured in training and competing to win the victor's crown. It is the word Jude uses (Jude 3) to say,

"Contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints." We do, indeed, have to "strive" to be saved. Paul said, "through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom" (Acts 14: 22). A Christian is not crowned unless he "strives" according to the rules 2 Tim. 2:5. Paul pounded his body daily (1 Cor. 9:24-27) lest after preaching to others he should be disqualified. Paul ran the race, finished the course, and looked forward to the prize. Life is earnest; life is real! Even the Incarnate Son, "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross..." (Heb. 12:2) and learned obedience by the things he suffered (Heb. 5:7-9). Christians should unite and "strive side by side for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1:17). Paul "strove" to warn, and teach every man in all wisdom to present every man mature in Christ" (Col. 1:28-29). We must "strive" against sin (Heb. 12:4).

It depends on understanding who is to do the "forsaking" of Jerusalem. Jesus was predicting that God would forsake Jerusalem. The Greek text uses the word, aphietai, which is a present indicative passive verb meaning literally, "Behold, forsaken to you is your house." While the Jews were not forsaking their house, their house was forsaking them! God was making their house forsake them. The prophecy of Jesus here is fulfilled at his death and resurrection and establishment of the NT Church. He kept warning the Jews of this over and over (Jn. 4:21; Mat. 23:37-39). God forsook the Jewish temple earlier in the history of Israel (see Ezek. 8:1---11:25) when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and took Judah into exile. In Ezekiel's day the Jews had fallen so deeply into idolatry they became more depraved than the heathen around them. After their return from their Babylonian exile, they exchanged the idols of wood and stone for the idol of their "traditions." (see Matt. 15:1-20). And eventually they "finished the transgression" (Dan. 9:24-27) by "cutting off (crucifying) the Anointed One (Messiah), and became apostates (Heb. 6:6). Jesus is God's final overture to the Jews (and everyone else). If they reject the Messiah there is no salvation for them. In order to make that as historically and experientially clear as possible, God destroyed the Jewish temple for good! The last time he did it by the hands of the Jews themselves, and those of the Romans. We will study this in more depth when we come to Luke 21. One only has to read the book of Hebrews to understand that God has nothing left to offer the Jews apart from the Gospel of Christ! To think God is going to send special Jewish missionaries to the present so-called nation of Israel at some future time, with some special offer of redemption is to contradict the book of Hebrews and Galatians---in fact the entire NT. Could any Christian, familiar with the doctrines of the NT, believe that God is pleased with present day Israel?! In the first place, most of them are not of pure Jewish lineage!!! Secondly, most of them do not believe in God or the OT. Thirdly, they have passed a law in their Keneset (Congress) that Christians cannot evangelize for Christ in their country. They are not, I repeat, NOT, God's covenant people anymore unless they come to him through Jesus Christ (Lk. 10:16; Jn. 5:21-23; 14:6; 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:14-16).

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 14:1-35

If we are to follow specifically all the instruction of the NT as to "days and seasons," it is clear that if it becomes a CHOICE between two imperatives (going to church on Sunday---or---helping someone who has a desperate need), then helping someone who has a desperate need takes precedence over attending one worship service. In numerous passages, the OT prophets said, in effect, "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings" Hosea 6:6 (see also Isaiah 1:12-17; Micah 6:6-8, et al.). The NT has a great deal to say about choosing people's needs over lesser requirements of the Lord. We have already studied in Luke 6:1-11 that David literally broke a commandment of the Law of Moses about eating the Bread of The Presence (Shew-bread) in order to feed his starving troops. Jesus told the Pharisees to learn what God said in the Law, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Matt. 9:13). Jesus said in Mark 2:27, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the Sabbath." Harold Fowler, in his commentary on Matthew, Vol. II, discussing Matthew 12:8, points out that in the original Greek mss. of the NT the Gospel writers used all capital letters, so that (S)on the word "Son" in the sentence quoted above does not necessarily have to mean Jesus was talking about himself. Capitalizations in English translations are the result of the translator's decisions about the meaning. Fowler continues by saying that (a) "son of man" is a Hebraism referring to mankind in general (cf. Psa. 8:4; Ezek. 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1, etc., etc.; Mt. 12:31; Mk. 3:28); (b) Mark's context (2:27-28) seems to promote this conclusion by revealing that God planned the Sabbath to be a benefit to man, not a burden. It also makes man, any man, lord of the Sabbath in the sense that any man must decide what he should do with the Sabbath so as to achieve his own welfare and please God. The Sabbath-law was not the lord of man and might temporarily be set aside when its strict observance conflicted with his welfare or hindered his expression of the impulses of God's Spirit within him. But such exceptions only proved the rule and never replaced the rule. Man was not free to dispense with the Sabbath as his caprice led." If you read Romans 14:1-23 seriously, Paul makes it clear that Christians are not to judge one another about holding one day more "sacred" than another. Paul says unequivocally, "One man esteems one day better than another, while another man esteems all days alike. Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day observes it in honor of the Lord...." We should be wary about the attitude that being holy is reserved only for Sunday. We are to be holy (consecrated, dedicated) to the will of the Lord on every day of the week. If someone needs help on Wednesday, we should help them. If someone needs help on Sunday, we should help them—even if it requires (which it seldom does) missing the congregational worship service. Who said we couldn't miss the congregational service and still have our own service at home if the need arises?

Our motive for being humble is that we, by faith in the Bible as God's word,

understand who God is---who Jesus Christ is---and what God and Christ have done. When we understand that, we understand who we are (or perhaps, better put, who we aren't) and that should drive us, metaphorically, to our knees (and even literally) when we pray acknowledging that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father Phil. 2:9-11. We must learn what it means to "out do one another in showing honor" (Rom. 12:10), and "count others better than ourselves" (Phil. 2:3), and "not please ourselves, but please our neighbor for his good, to edify him" (Rom. 15:1-2). We must learn what it means to "not think of himself more highly than he ought to think" (Rom. 12:3). Then, we need to start practicing what we have learned. The Lord will take care of honoring or exalting us in his own good time. If not here---THERE! Humility is from the Greek word *tapeinophrosune*, literally, "lowliness of mind." Paul even speaks of himself as being "humble" (Acts 20:19). The Greek word is translated "lowliness" in Eph. 4:23; Col. 2:12. It is also used of a "false humility" and is translated, "self-abasement" in Col. 2:18,23. For more references on "humility" see Prov. 15:33; 18:2; 22:4; Zeph. 2:3; 1 Pet. 5:5; Gal. 6:3. But to set out to be humble in order that others will exalt us is a "false humility." Love and humility have to be "genuine" (the word in Greek is literally, *anupokritos*, un-hypocritical) as Paul says in Rom. 12:9. Therefore, to pretend to be humble to gain recognition is to be a "play actor" or "hypocrite." When Paul discusses this matter in Romans 12, he admonishes Christians to "...think with sober judgment...having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them...." In other words, we are directed to make a "sober, serious, sensible" judgment of that with which God has endowed us and then use it to his glory. We should not denigrate our own capabilities when we have evaluated them soberly and sensibly. Jesus taught numerous parables in which those "servants" who denigrated their abilities were condemned. We are to take a serious inventory of what God has given us talent-wise as well as possession-wise, and put it to the Master's use. Unconverted people seek honors that do not rightly belong to them. They seek the applause of other humans in this life because they cannot wait for the Lord to honor them in the next life. Many of them seek human praise in order to advance themselves over those who are praising them, i.e., it's a "power thing." The honor that God gives, unsolicited by the Christian, is sometimes given through other human beings (Christians and non-Christians)---and that is alright (1 Cor. 16:15-18; Phil. 2:29; and Paul's honor-roll in Rom. 16:1-24). "Honor to whom honor is due" (Rom. 13:7) is biblical. But too much of it is dangerous, both to the honoree and the honor-er. Too much becomes a tool by which to manipulate people for one's own ends. The Bible says a great deal about "flattery" also!

Now Jesus has "quit preaching and gone to meddling!" This one really hits us in the heart! "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your kinsmen or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just." Lk. 14:12-14. I thought we should read this out-loud, in full. Are there any "poor, maimed, lame and blind" in Joplin whom we might invite to our banquets and feasts? Of course, there are! Do we invite them? Of course, we don't! We invite neighbors, family, friends (most of whom are "rich" comparatively speaking). Of course, we do not invite our family, friends and neighbors in order to be repaid. But that's not the point! The point Jesus is making is that

we should deliberately and specifically make our dinners and feasts for the poor, etc. If we shower our love upon those who love us and "salute only our brethren," what more are we doing than others? Even the heathen do that! Now don't start qualifying or rationalizing away this statement of Jesus. Take it directly and forthrightly just as he said it! Yes, I know we give contributions to feed the hungry overseas and in Joplin. Yes, I know we sometimes go to Soul's Harbor and serve Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. Yes, I know, there just aren't gobs and gobs of poor people in our country. I know, we pay taxes and our bureaucrats provide for the poor through welfare, food stamps, etc., etc. But how many poor, lame, blind people have you had to dinner since you started your own home? Let us remember Matthew 25:31-46!!!

If you've ever done any personal evangelism---or if you even talked to a relative who isn't a Christian, you've undoubtedly heard excuses like those in Jesus's parable, Lk. 14:15-20. Jesus pretty well summed up all the excuses ever heard on earth about refusing God's invitation to his great spiritual "feast." Property, job, family. Those 3 categories sum all rationalizations human beings give, all over the world, for turning down God's feast. But they are not reasons. The Christian life is a feast (Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 5:6-8; 10:1-5; Heb. 12:22-23; Mt. 5:6, etc.). God is reasonable. God is just. God is fair. God is merciful. But God is not a patsy! He knows when people are making empty "excuses." Any field one buys can be "looked at" on another day, at another time---people buy lots of things "unseen" and "untested". Any yoke of oxen one purchases (to work one has to do) can be put off---people put off work all the time for lesser purposes. And who ever heard of a wife that didn't want to go to a party?! What are most people's excuses? "God's feasts and dinners are dull and boring!" "God's feasts and dinners are just minor details in the scheme of life as we have to live it here on earth." "God's feasts require too much participation on my part---why doesn't he just let me be an absent, inactive, non-participating guest?" "I don't like what God serves up to eat at his feasts!" True, what God serves up at his feasts requires "eating" (Jn. 6:52-71) what may be difficult to chew, digest, and is initially distasteful! Babies don't like to grow up to chew veggies. They like to continue to be fed the breast or the bottle and pablum. "...everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a child....but solid food is for the mature, for those who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil." (Heb. 5:13-14). Most people absent themselves from the Lord's Bread of Life because they simply do not want to become what that food would make them----spiritually mature and righteous people. The way such inane, empty excuses should be answered is in the answer to question #5 below.

The Greek word *anagkason*, means "compel, constrain." It may be either by threat, entreaty, or persuasion. Certainly Christ does not want anyone to be "forced" into his "feast" (the kingdom or the church). He does entreat, he does persuade, and he even puts forth threats (of judgment and hell) to persuade people to come to his "feast." And we must do no less! Paul wrote, "knowing the terror of the Lord, he persuaded people" (2 Cor. 5:11). There is no paucity of threats of judgment and hell in the apostolic preaching in Acts or in the epistles of the NT (e.g. Heb. 6:7-8; 10:29-31, et al.). Anyone who has given even a cursory study to the NT will see that it uses every literary device possible (logic, metaphor, poetry,

historical notation) to persuade people to "be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:16-21). Paul went into synagogues and "argued with them from the Scriptures whether Christ were the Messiah." Paul appealed to logic (Acts 17:29-31; Rom. 12:1-2). Paul appealed to historical and natural facts. Paul begged. Paul threatened. Paul went from house to house with tears, testifying both to Jews and Gentiles of repentance to God and faith in Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:17ff). Paul proclaimed Christ, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that he might present every man mature in Christ. For that he toiled, striving with all the energy which God mightily inspired within him (Col. 1:28-29). We must not clutter up the Lord's "feast" with trivia and peripheral nonsense. We don't need to add merriment or festivity or entertainment to the Lord's "feast." How dare we think that something other or additional to "feasting" on his Word is necessary to "compel" people to come to the feast?! Just like the parable points out, if we invite some and they refuse, we are to go out and find those who are "HUNGRY" FOR GOD'S "BREAD OF LIFE"----THE WORD. See John 6:63. The Word is God's Bread! There are people who are starving to spiritual death for the Bread of Life and if we will "go out in to the highways and hedges" we will find them! Of course, they're not going to show up on our doorstep. They don't know where the feast is and how good the meal is! They have to be SOUGHT OUT! Personally, I think it is insulting to people to give them the impression that we are going to entertain them, "buy them," or otherwise "trick" them into coming to the feast of God. I would have been insulted had someone asked me to God's feast to be entertained. I could have gotten entertainment elsewhere. What I wanted was "MEAT!" I wanted to think, I wanted to know, I wanted evidence! WE'VE GOT THE ANSWERS TO UNBELIEF, SKEPTICISM, IMMORALITY, LIFE, DEATH, IMMORTALITY AND EVERYTHING ELSE. WHY SHOULD WE GIVE THEM ENTERTAINMENT?

The Greek word *miseo*, "hate" is used metaphorically for "prefer." It is often used in the NT of relative preference for one thing over another (Mt. 6:24; Lk. 16:13; Jn. 12:25; Eph. 5:29). It does not, in this context, mean we are to hate our families with malevolence and enmity. It does mean no love of self, family, or any other thing must ever come take priority over love for Christ. A man must, if necessary, choose Christ over father, mother, wife, children, brethren and self. If Christ is not absolutely first in a person's life, he is no disciple (Mt. 10:34-39). To the unconverted these are shocking and severe words. To be a disciple of Jesus one must be prepared to choose Christ over every one of life's dearest relationships! The unconverted do not think like this! For them, when a choice must be made between Christ or family, the choice would be family. The Bible strongly advocates love of family so the fact that Christ insists he must have first priority it emphasizes the seriousness of this statement. This statement strikes at the very core of the excuse of the man who said, "I have married a wife...." "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." The apostle Paul's statement in Phil. 3:7-11 pretty well sums it up.

During the American War for Independence (a.k.a.Revolutionary War) and the American Civil War, many commanders, including George Washington, Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee, found they had an army made up of too many "sunshine soldiers." Thousands "joined up" early when the bands were playing and the civilians were cheering.

But when the shooting started, thousands simply deserted "the cause" and their commanders and went home. Washington fought the massive British army with only about 7000 loyal troops at any one time. He never knew from one time to the next how many would show up to fight. If you were a commander, is that the kind of situation you would desire? I think not! Is this the kind of army Jesus wants? No! "Take your share of suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him." 2 Tim. 2:3-4. Faithfulness, steadfastness is the premium with Christ! Remember the seed sown on shallow, rocky soil, that early received it with joy (emotionalism); but had no root, and in a time of testing, the "grain" withered and fell away. And the seed sown in thorny ground, sprang up but so also did the thorns and thistles (unholy things) and choked out the good plants. The seed that fell on good ground was that which heard the word, accepted it, understood it, held it fast in an honest and good heart, and brought forth fruit with patience. Jesus never hesitated to insist that anyone "signing up" to be his soldier should "count the cost." Do we hear any of that kind of straightforward preaching done today? Should we? You bet your bottom dollar, we should! Paul told people, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" Acts 14:22. Jesus said to his disciples, and to us, "I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you....If they persecuted me, they will persecute you..." Jn. 15:19-20. Jesus said, after the rich young ruler had turned away from the kingdom, It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom.... it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God Lk. 18:25. Try pushing a camel through the eye of a needle! In another place Jesus said "...the news of the kingdom of God is preached, and every one enters it violently." Lk. 16:16—the Greek word *biazetai* translated "violently" may be either middle voice or passive. If passive it implies that becoming and continuing to be a Christian is hard, costly, violent! In the Lk. 16:16 context it probably should be passive because Jesus was predicting that Jews becoming Christians would have to renounce the law of Moses which would be a "violent" matter for a Jew. This is all referring to the cost and violence done to human ego---to self. Becoming and continuing to be a Christian is not likened unto a crucifixion for nothing (Rom. 6:1-11; 7:4-6; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; Gal. 2:19-20; 5:24; 6:14)!!!

No! I do not think the church of Jesus Christ is doing enough warning of the unconverted and converted that discipleship is costly, hard, violent. This is precisely what the thrust of all the preaching of Jesus, the apostles, and the epistles of the NT is! Read the book of Revelation and learn what Jesus said to the church of the Roman empire (100-400 A.D.). The church was to be "nourished in a wilderness" (Rev. 12:14). That means the church's nourishment comes from existing in a hostile environment. Read the description of the churches in Rev. chs. 2 & 3. Most churches today would be pleased to be evaluated as "working, toiling, patiently enduring, not bearing with evil men, bearing up and not growing weary" (Rev. 2:2-3), but Jesus was not satisfied with that. The church at Corinth was proud and satisfied with itself, but not the apostle Paul! Even the Philippian church to which Paul wrote needed exhortation and admonition. The church at Laodicea was "rich and had need of nothing." That's what she thought! And if we are to constantly chastise the church for its indifference and complacency, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? If we are to enlist people in Christ's army, we do Christ, the church and the prospect a terrible disservice if we do not admonish them to "count the cost." In the November 2, 1997, Lookout, Russ

Blowers mentioned that Raccoon John Smith used to complain about churches that "dip 'em and drop 'em." Blowers concluded his article, "If our churches would get serious about discipleship, the spiritual revival everyone talks about and prays for would be more than just a dream. It would be a reality." But we're talking about crucifixion of the old life and resurrection to a new life (Rom. 6:1ff) not just religion or reform. And that's costly, hard and violent.

Renounce all that you have" is evidently attainable by all Christians or Christ would not made it mandatory for anyone wishing to become his disciple! Does that mean we have to desert our families, sell all our earthly possessions, and take vows of chastity and poverty? No! The early apostles and disciples did not practice the extremes of a monastic or cloistered life. They lived normal lives, out in the society, permeating every facet of life---they were the salt of the earth and the light of the world. But, they were "of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common." Acts 4:32 When brethren were in need, people gave when they didn't have it to give 2 Cor. 8:1-7. They supported Paul and his co-workers to take the Gospel all over the Roman world of that day. "Renounce all that you have" means to do what Paul did in Phil. 3:8-11; it means that "having food and clothing, with these we shall be content" 1 Tim. 6:6-10. It means to "learn in whatever state we are to be content" Phil. 4:10-13. In effect, it means that we "put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires" Rom. 13:14. I KNOW OF NO OTHER WAY TO EXPLAIN IT THAN THESE SCRIPTURES. Anything more or less would be to try to temper it with excuses and self-justifications.

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 15:1-32

According to the Pharisees, anyone who was not a Pharisee, was a "sinner." Most Pharisees thought that any one other than themselves, individually, was a "sinner." A Pharisee awoke every morning and thanked God in his prayers that he was not a woman, not a Gentile, and not am-ha-aretz, i.e., "people of the soil" (see John 7:49). The Pharisees thought they alone possessed the truth, and they alone were true to the Covenant. The Jewish Talmud says, "There are seven kinds of Pharisee: (1) the 'what do I get out of it?' Pharisee; (2) the 'I look the part' Pharisee; (3) the 'oh my poor head' Pharisee, who walks along the street with his head down so as not to see the women and who bangs his head against the wall; (4) the pestle-Pharisee, who goes about so bent that he looks like a pestle in a mortar; (5) the 'what is my duty so that I may do it?' Pharisee; (6) the 'I do one good deed every day Pharisee' (7) and lastly the only real Pharisee, the one who is a Pharisee 'from fear of God and out of love for him.'" Before his conversion, the apostle Paul was "as to the law a Pharisee" (Phil. 3:5) and a zealous one! The Pharisees were certain their Traditions were superior to the Old Testament, and of more authority. Pharisees were, for the most part, hypocrites (play-actors). Faith and grace had nothing to do with one's relationship to God. Justification was by works. It is certainly necessary for Christians to acknowledge that there are "sinners" who are lost and there are "sinners" who are saved by God's grace. Lost sinners are people who have never accepted God's New Covenant made through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. God's New Covenant is by grace, but it must be accepted by faith and obedience to the terms decreed by God in the NT scriptures. Those terms are repentance {determination to accept the biblical word of Christ}, verbal confession, and baptism, i.e., immersion in water. Those terms are clearly and unequivocally declared in many places in the NT (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:1-5; Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 2:12-15). According to the NT, all persons, regardless of nationality, race, genealogical origin, economic status, political ideology, or intellectual attainment, who have not believed in Jesus Christ as their Savior and have not accepted him on the basis of NT terms, ARE LOST. Everyone else is a "sinner" saved by grace through faith and obedience to covenant terms. No one knows, but God, what shall be the destiny of those who have never had an opportunity to hear the Gospel and respond. The Bible does say, however, that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," and, further, "the wages of sin is death." The Bible also says, "all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:9-13). But how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe in him of whom they have never heard? How shall they hear without a preacher? How can they preach unless they are sent?...faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ! (Rom. 10:14-17). IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SAVED TO PREACH BY WORD (oral and/or written) AND LIFE TO EVERY UNSAVED PERSON WHO WILL LISTEN! What God will do with those opposed to these terms is up to him!

Jesus received every sinner as a person created by God in his own image, with the potential to become a redeemed, regenerated, sanctified son of God. No sinner was too far down or too far up for Jesus to "receive." He cared for and preached to anyone who would allow him to do so. Please note, however, that while Jesus could sit down and eat with "sinners" (both rich and poor) he did not participate in, or condone, their sins and sinfulness. He always rebuked their sin, insisted on repentance, showed the way to reconciliation with God, and promised them eternal life if they believed and obeyed. Jesus almost always quoted or referred to God's written word (law or prophets) when he confronted a sinner to bring such a one to belief. Jesus always gave sinners some evidence and reason to believe. We are around lost sinners almost every day of our lives. We meet them coming out of their houses next door to us, we work with them, we visit in their homes, we correspond with them, we go to school with them, and attend other affairs with them. That is not the question. The question is: Do we ever mention to them the will of God for their lives? Why don't we? Are we afraid of rejection? Jesus was rejected? Are we afraid of being misunderstood? Jesus was misunderstood? LET'S BE BOLD!

The figure of "lost sheep" was a familiar figure to Jewish people (Psa. 23:1-6; 119:176; Isa. 40:11; 53:6; Ezek. 34:1-31; Zech 11:16-17, et al.). Sheep are rather dumb and helpless animals. They "nibble" themselves lost. As the sheep is drawn by one clump of grass to another, the animal just keeps on following the grass without looking up. Finally when he does look up, he finds himself in a canyon far away from the shepherd and night is coming on. The sheep is lost! He just kept on "nibbling" unaware he was becoming lost. He didn't even realize he was straying from the shepherd. Human beings, are much like sheep, ignorant and helpless. They "nibble" themselves lost. Few sheep or humans ever start out to get lost! Hardly anyone begins as a lamb (child) deliberately announcing, "I'm going to get myself lost." Becoming lost is something that occurs almost unnoticed. Getting lost is almost always the result of "nibbling" farther and farther away from the Shepherd and the flock. One little morsel of sin, then another, and another, until suddenly it is night and a person is lost in the canyons of guilt, fear, rebellion and wasted-ness. The Christian's obligation is to warn every "nibbling" human who will listen to the Shepherd's persuasive call in the New Testament.

Looking for the "lost" does not mean we must take an immediate confrontational approach. Expressing and showing care in words and deeds would be best at first. Remember, the shepherd does not find a lost sheep and begin to beat it up. He takes it upon his shoulders and carries it back to the fold. Our problem, however, may be that we show care only for those already in the fold. It should not be too difficult for any Christian to locate a "lost" soul. Lost people are all around us. We rub shoulders with them every day. We may even have some around the house or in our immediate families. Certainly, they are next door to us! If you can't bring yourself to speak to a lost person, perhaps you could write to one. I've known people to be saved through correspondence! If you can't talk to someone about Christ and salvation, perhaps you can introduce them to a Christian who could. Invite the lost and other Christians into your house, have a meal, like Matthew did, and "go with the flow." Remember our lesson on Luke 14. Inviting the "poor, lame, and blind" could very well

mean those who are spiritually poor, lame and blind.

Everybody was a prodigal before coming to Christ. Everyone has sinned and fallen short of the Father's will. Every human being has "wasted" his God-given inheritance in riotous living. The KJV translates the Greek word asotos, as "riotous." Literally, the word means, "without saving any." It does not necessarily have the connotation of lascivious living, although the elder brother later accuses the prodigal of consorting "with harlots" (15:30). Earlier in the text the Greek word dieskorpisen, is translated "wasted" (KJV) and "squandered" (RSV, NIV). It means, literally, "to scatter." It is the same word Jesus used in Matt. 12:30 to say that everyone who does not gather with him, scatters. Every sinner (whether lascivious or not) has scattered and thrown away what his Father-God gave him at creation---perfect innocence, purity, guiltlessness. Every sinner has squandered his perfection. Once the sinner forfeits perfection he can never get it back by himself. Only the Father has perfection to give. The prodigal sinner is left a beggar, starving to death for spiritual perfection. He must humble himself, return to the Father, and beg forgiveness. The prodigal, willing to be an humble servant in the Father's house, finds the Father eager to shower him with grace and the perfection he lost, and make him a son again. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God." "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." Before any prodigal can feast again at the Father's table, he must acknowledge that he is "starving" for spirituality. He cannot supply himself with the Bread of Life. He must depend on the graciousness of the Father for that. Isn't this the most blessed short story you've ever read? In just 20 short verses (514 words, KJV), Jesus uncovers the secret hidden from all the philosophers and scientists who have ever lived. Redemption, salvation, life, joy. What a story. Amazing grace! No matter how low the prodigal fell---even to the level of a hog, the Father was eagerly waiting for him to come home. I have seen adult men who have grown hard-hearted, weep and respond to the invitation when this parable was preached. Maybe we ought to preach it and tell it more often, huh?

All prodigals must come to themselves before they will head for home! The Greek phrasing is interesting here: eis heuton de elthon, "to himself, then he was coming, saying...." The emphasis is put on his "coming to himself." If he was "coming to himself" he must have at some time been absent from himself. In other words, when he was wasting and losing his inheritance, he was not himself---he was not being the son of his Father. Indeed, he gave notice just before he left that he no longer wanted to be the son of his Father. He didn't want to conform to the image of a son. He wanted to be something that he was not intended to be. Isn't that exactly what Adam and Eve decided in Eden (with the devil's prompting)? Paul told the Corinthians, "come to your right mind and sin no more" (1 Cor. 15:34). The prodigal has a mind to rebel against the father! Man gone off in impudent rebellion and wallowing with "hogs" in the slime-holes of sin is not what man was intended to be! Man was intended to be "conformed to the image of God's son" (Rom. 8:29). Man was intended to be just like Jesus!

God is the Father of every prodigal. That is not the question. The question is will

every prodigal let God be his Father! God is just like the father in the parable. The heavenly Father is eagerly, compassionately, peering down the road by which his prodigals have gone into the far country. He is watching, waiting, with heavy heart, hoping he will see his sons coming home. God is has everything ready for a big party for all his sons---if they will only come home. But, of course, if they decided to stay in the slime-holes, all God's marvelous riches can't be theirs. If they don't want to be sons again, the Father will not force them to do so. Or, if like the elder son, in jealous spite, and self-righteousness, they despise their brothers and their Father and refuse to come into the house they, too, will lose their Father's good will and inheritance.

I am sure all of us have known an "elder brother" or two. In this parable I think Jesus was using the Prodigal as a metaphor for publicans and sinners, and the Elder brother as a metaphor for the Pharisees. There are lots of people today, however, who are so self-righteous from counting up their good works (they do lots of charitable things; they are very tolerant of all viewpoints; they are politically correct on environmentalism, multiculturalism, homosexuality, feminism, celebrity-worship, etc., etc., ad nauseam). They despise all Bible-believing sinners who claim to be saved by grace, by faith and obedience to NT covenant terms. These do-gooders (elder brothers) refuse to come into the Father's house when he has made a party for his reprobate prodigal who has humbly confessed and returned wanting only to be a servant in his Father's house. They hate the Father for making that no-good prodigal a son again. Yes, there may even be some "elder brother" in any one of us if we are not careful to read again just how we have been "received back" by the Father's graciousness. The elder brother wanted to be a son, but not a brother. He was envious of his brother and resentful toward his Father. He was unable to enjoy what the Father gave him because of his envy and resentment. And he boasted of an obedience which he really didn't have and revealed his rebellion by his attitude. Welcome the forgiven "prodigals" as Christ has welcomed you (Rom. 15:7)

The elder brother, upon hearing of the Father's graciousness toward his prodigal brother, flew into a rage. The Greek word translated "angry" (Lk. 15:28) is, *orgisthe*, and is the word from which get the English words, *orgy*, *orgasm*, *orgiastic*. The elder brother had a "spasm—a fit" of anger. The elder son's true feeling toward his Father manifested itself when the Father begged him to come into the party. The elder son had stayed home and behaved---but for the wrong reason. He was respectable, but only on the surface. Beneath the veneer of propriety was his self-righteous, jealous, hateful heart. His mask of hypocrisy slipped off and he was exposed for what he really was. He was an ingrate! He should have been thankful that his brother was home safe. He should have been grateful that a celebration was going on and he was invited to enjoy it with his brother. He should have been thankful that he was going to get any inheritance at all. After all, it was all to be inherited---it was not his, or his brother's but given to both! The elder son begins to rebuke his father for being gracious and forgiving toward the wayward son. He rebukes his father for not being aware of his obedient service; he rebukes his father for never rewarding him; he rebukes his father for being wrong in receiving the prodigal who had wasted his inheritance on harlots. He even rebukes his father for thinking he would accept the prodigal as his

brother and sarcastically calls the prodigal, "this son of yours." One perceptive writer asks: "Who is the prodigal after all? One came back---but one got lost at home. He locked himself out of the banquet---when he lost love he lost all." The elder son's status with the father was one of estrangement. The hateful son severed all his family ties himself. He put himself outside the circle of love and care and joy by choosing to be avaricious and jealous.

The elder son was a resentful, petulant hireling. He was only working in anticipation of getting more than his prodigal brother. Doing the right thing for the wrong reason is not Jesus's idea of goodness (see the Sermon on the Mount). Pride, not prodigality, is the chief sin! The elder son could have had what the father wanted to give him if only he had been of the right spirit to receive it as a gift. But as long as he remained self-righteous, hateful, and uncooperative, he would never have it. What the father has to give, he gives to his family. It was "fitting" that the father receive back into the family the son who came in humble penitence, wishing now to be an obedient son and sharing brother. It was also fitting that the elder brother join in the reception and sharing. If he does not he can no longer claim family status. Indeed, our salvation depends not only on sonship but on brotherhood as well (1 Jn. 3:14-18; 3:23; 4:7-12; 4:20-21; 5:1-2, etc.). If today the Father forgives a prodigal son, brethren must also forgive or they lose their own sonship.

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 16:1-31

A "steward" is someone who works for another. A "steward" is usually entrusted with his employer's estate or a part of it. "Stewards" were usually hired servants and not slaves. The original Greek language of the NT indicates a "steward" was a "house-keeper" of some sort. Stewards were expected to be obedient, honest, industrious, and loyal. Stewards were given responsibilities according to their station or job, and according to their performance. Rich employers expected stewards to use that with which they were entrusted to make a profit for his employer. Stewards were usually paid (percentage) according to the amount of increase they made for their employers. And, of course, they were "promoted" up the ladder of responsibility and position according to their productivity and loyalty. We are God's "stewards." We were created to "keep his house" (this world and its people) (Gen. 1:26-31). God expects us to be obedient, honest, industrious, and loyal. Each human being is given responsibilities and tools (talents) to do his job in "keeping God's house." And I believe, from NT teaching (esp. Jesus' parables) that we shall be given responsibilities in heaven according to our faithfulness on earth (see Lk. 19:11-27 and Matt. 25:14-30). But God, being Creator and Owner over everything, does not really need anything we might gain for him. He will still be God whether we gain or lose for him. He will not be diminished or defeated in our defeats. He is undoubtedly hurt when we are less than the stewards we ought to be, but he hurts because we are hurt. So, God is concerned about our stewardship, not because he needs the profit (glory) we attain for him, but we are the ones who need to become expert stewards so that when he rewards us over there in life-everlasting, it shall be according to our faithfulness over what he has entrusted to us here in this, temporary, probationary period of life! One thing is certain---our stewardship will be examined.

It is difficult to think that an employer would commend a wasteful, dishonest, lazy steward. But the employer was not so much approving of his wastefulness, dishonesty and laziness, as he was "giving the devil his due," and ironically complimenting the "prudence" of the steward. The Greek word *phronimos*, is translated, "wisely" (KJV), "prudently" (RSV), and "shrewdly" (NIV). It has to do with "head-smartness." The same Greek word is used satirically in 1 Cor. 4:10; 2 Cor. 11:19. It connotes "prudence, sensibleness, practical wisdom." Cleverly, this cheat-of-a-steward, who considered himself too weak to dig, and too proud to beg, used the last bit of time and tools he had to "make friends" so that he would be taken care of when he lost his job. Before he was "canned" he made the most of his status and shrewdly dismissed the indebtedness of several people who were indebted to his employer. He evaluated his situation and made the most of it. He might have been lazy and dishonest, but he was smart! God does not equate righteousness with stupidity! And, shocker of shockers, Jesus says that the "sons of this world are wiser than the sons of light." Can that be possible? The Lord himself said it so it is undoubtedly true! Another indication that salvation is by grace!

Notice first, Christ again divides humanity into only two classes: "sons of this world," and "sons of light." Believers are supposed to be "sons of light." Men make multiple categories of goodness and evil, but for Jesus, when the final test comes, every man gives allegiance to either God or the devil. Anyone who is not a "son of light," is a "son of this world." The sons of this world are not wise in what they choose! They choose what is temporal. This world and all its substance is doomed to destruction. Every dollar, every monument to fame, every work of art, every "thing" will perish. None of this world can be transferred as it is to the "new earth"---not even this human body. "Things" must be exchanged for a different kind of "currency". That "currency" is people (1 Thess. 2:19-20) transformed into the image of God's Son (Rom. 8:29). Actually, the sons of this world choose what is vain and perishing. That is stupid, from a believer's perspective. A person who is worth only the worldly goods he/she has accumulated is poor indeed! True wealth is in spiritual investments. So, how was this steward wise? (a) He was shrewd to be candid and truthful to himself in facing the facts about his situation. He did not lie to himself or fantasize. Business people know they must be brutally honest with themselves about their profit-loss ledgers. They cannot afford to lie to themselves about whether business is good or bad. They either learn to be realists or they "go under." Christians, on the other hand, are often prone to construct a "fool's paradise" for themselves in the business of stewardship. They fantasize that their spiritual life must be good if they have an abundance of worldly possessions, are in good health, and are well spoken-of. This steward faced the reality that these things were not his---he would have them only for a short time to use---he could use them to show mercy on people and make friends. He did not day-dream or procrastinate about the future and he did not pout about the past---he made the most of the present; (b) This worldly-minded steward was shrewd in the way he planned. He did not allow his emotions to take away his reason. He didn't run away with his employer's money and waste it like the prodigal did. He didn't stash it away like the foolish farmer. He didn't throw up his hands in despair and mental paralysis. He logically and deliberately reasoned out a plan. He decided to invest what was in his charge in helping people in order to help himself. Shakespeare said, "All of life is a preparation for death." Jesus urges his followers to make all this life a preparation for the next life. Cold, lifeless money can be turned into a warm handshake, a smile of gratitude or a cheerful word from someone helped for Jesus' sake. Of course, friendship cannot be bought. But money genuinely used to help others will be rewarded, if not in this life, in the next. Fair-minded people are able soon enough to discern whether an offering of help is genuine or not. If Christians only dared to believe Jesus when he says, "Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, you have done it unto me" (Mt. 25:40), they might be wise in the use of their stewardship; (c) The steward of this parable was shrewd in the execution of his plan. He made straight for his goal. He allowed no obstacle to hinder him. He accepted no compromise and no alternatives. He demonstrated self-control and dedication. He had to sacrifice time, effort, pride and money. He paid the price without hesitation. This steward-son-of-the-world evaluated worldly things as supreme and let no sacrifice stand in his way. Today, some athletes (and they play only for millions of dollars) exhibit more dedication than most Christians. Christians say heavenly things are most important---but too many let everything else stand in their way to obtaining heavenly, spiritual treasure. What is that treasure? PEOPLE IN WHOM CHRISTIANS INVEST THEIR LIVES AND POSSESSIONS; (d) this steward was shrewd in evaluating

priorities. Most "sons of this world" know the incontrovertible axiom of the business world that only the man who can be trusted in small things can be promoted to large responsibilities. Conversely, the man who will be lazy, incompetent and indifferent about small things will be the same way about large matters. This parable is an encouragement from our Lord that Christians should be diligent, industrious and prudent in even the smallest matters of the kingdom of God. Later, the Lord will promote those who have been diligent with the small matters to "large" matters.

No man can live a life filled with contradictions. It is logically (mentally) and spiritually impossible. No employee can divide full allegiance between two employers! It is unacceptable to the Lord and impossible for the Christian to endure such a dichotomy when it comes to God and Mammon (2 Tim. 2:4). Some people attempt it, but they are only fooling themselves. Deep down inside, in the inner recesses of the mind and soul, human beings inevitably give loyalty to either one master or the other. This is truly an "either/or" situation. There is no "middle ground" here. Jesus said it succinctly, "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters." No human being can work both for the devil ("scatter") and the Lord ("gather") Matt. 12:30. Even in the secular life, people who try to hold two "jobs" must sooner or later decide which employer will receive priority when circumstances dictate a choice. Of course, with Jesus Christ, the moment one becomes a Christian that choice has to be made. Whose demands take priority in my allegiance--- Satan's or Christ's—mine or Christ's? Thus, the Christian's responsibility toward God in money matters is not completed with giving 10% of his wages. The Christian is accountable to God for every cent. That does not mean every cent must be given into the treasury of the local congregation for disbursement. It does mean that whatever the Christian uses his money for (and his possessions and his time) it must in some ultimate way serve God. This is resolved in what a Christian uses in providing for a family, helping those in need, assisting others in evangelism, supporting civic governments and institutions which are promoting social order and welfare, etc. The important point is that God not Mammon (i.e., "riches") must be our Master. Man and Mammon are both creations of God and both must both serve God.

The Greek word *biazetai*, is pres. act. ind. pass. mid., and is translated, "violently." It is a passive middle-deponent verb which means it is making a deposition as to ("witnessing or testifying to") the object of the clause. The object of the clause in Lk. 16:16 is "everyone." How in the world do "all who come into" the kingdom do so "violently." Is it possible that there must be some violence that happens to all who enter the kingdom of God? Jesus is emphasizing in this context that when John the Baptist appeared on the stage of history the kingdom of God was imminent. These Pharisees were lovers of money and exalted what God deemed an abomination. Jesus warns of a violence that must happen to them if they are to enter the coming kingdom of God. John the Baptist was a unique "voice" interjected by God historically between the Law of Moses and the Gospel to typify, symbolize, and announce that "necessary" violence. JUST WHAT WAS THAT "VIOLENCE?" It was nothing less than a re-creation, a rebirth, a regeneration. John's ministry was a proto-typical "show and tell" announcement of that re-creation. John commanded that people should be

immersed in water (baptized) "for the remission of sins." Immersion in water for remission of sins contravened the Law of Moses. That would be a "violent" change for the sworn protectors of Moses law. It showed that Judaism was about to be superseded by the Gospel of the Kingdom. It also showed that anyone coming into the kingdom would have to die and be resurrected to a completely new life. An underlying theme here harks back to Jesus's discussion about Mammon. The Pharisees exalted Mammon (money). They would have to die to that mentality. The Pharisees exalted self-righteousness for justification before God. They would have to die to that mentality. If you think dying to those two concepts are easy, remember what Jesus said about the rich entering the kingdom. It would be as violent as jamming a camel through the eye of a sewing needle. Try that sometime and hear how the camel will bawl! The kingdom of God in the New Testament can be entered only when people violently trample down their self-devised human values and accept God's values. Jesus is not saying that men were forcing their way into the kingdom of God. No one will ever be able to enter the kingdom or take over the kingdom by force. The "violence" Jesus speaks of here is the spiritual death to self that must take place. To remain a citizen of God's kingdom a person must cut off his right hand or pluck out his right eye if it offends or causes him to sin (Matt. 5:29-30). We enter the kingdom of God through much tribulation, both physical and spiritual (Acts 14:22). Kingdom citizenship requires a daily, agonizing, traumatic, "violent" struggle or war between the flesh and the spirit (Rom. 7:15-25; 1 Cor. 9:27; Gal. 5:27). There must be a crucifixion of self (Gal. 2:20-21; Rom. 6:1-23) if we are to enter God's kingdom. The apostle Paul experienced that "violence" upon entering Christ's kingdom (Phil. 3:2-11) and continued to experience it as he "fought the good fight" in the war between flesh and spirit (Rom. 7:15-25; 1 Pet. 2:11; Jas. 4:1-4; 2 Tim. 4:6-8). The entire book of Hebrews (and much of the other epistles of the NT) is written to explain and amplify the "violence" of this concept that Jews must turn from Judaism to Christ for atonement and salvation. The epistle to the Hebrews announces that the Messiah was none other than Jesus Christ and repentance before God was impossible through Judaism. Anyone seeking justification before God through the Mosaic dispensation is classified as an "apostate" (Heb. 6:1-8).

The subject of divorce is connected to the subject of money because almost all marital discord ensues ultimately from troubled money matters. If that cause for divorce isn't first, it is a close second, to any other alleged cause. Even in Jesus's day marriages, divorces and remarriages were often entered into for very mercenary reasons. Even then people tried to "marry well" financially. Men often divorced their wives and married those who had more money. Divorce laws were very liberal among many Jewish theologians in Jesus's day. The statement in Lk. 16:18 must be interpreted in the light of all NT teaching on divorce and remarriage (see Matt. 5:31-32; 19:1-9; Mk. 10:11-12; Rom. 7:1-2; 1 Cor. 7:1-40). It must be remembered that all the NT teaching on marriage, divorce and remarriage focuses on God's ideal (Matt. 19:1-9). What the NT teaches on these matters is intended for the citizen of the kingdom and is the highest spiritual expectation of God for Christians. It cannot be expected that unbelievers will share in the absolute ethical ideals of marriage presented in the NT. The Bible is unequivocal that divorce is a sin against God and against human beings. There are two exceptions where divorce may be acceptable as a last resort (Mt. 5:32; 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:15). First, divorce may be an acceptable alternative to staying married to

someone who is sexually unfaithful; second, divorce may be acceptable when one member of the marriage is an unbeliever and "puts asunder" the marriage by desertion. Divorce over other matters (in this context, money) is a serious sin according to Jesus here. More discussion of the matter of marriage, divorce and remarriage should be in my notes in The Gospel of Luke, (commentary), by Paul T. Butler, pub. College Press, ppg. 355-362. I personally believe that for a Christian spouse who is being physically abused so that life and limb is endangered, divorce is an acceptable alternative. The preservation of human life is near the very top of the hierarchy of ethical contingencies in the word of God. One thing is certain, in the light of the fact that human beings do sin by divorce; and in light of the fact that human beings have God-created sexual needs; and in light of the fact that only a few people are able to live their whole lives in celibacy---we cannot pass laws, either secularly or religiously, to the effect that divorced people may never remarry (i.e., we cannot enforce celibacy upon divorced people). Our only alternative to these facts is to preach, firmly, lovingly, and straightforwardly that people who sin by divorce may be forgiven based upon their repentance. If the marriage which they have broken cannot be repaired and re-instituted, they must decide whether they have repented and whether they should remarry or not. No preacher or elder or church can make that decision for them. The church must stand for marriage (even for those who have sinned by divorce). The church must stand for responsible relationships between men and women---not irresponsible ones! Of course, the church must discipline its members about continued illicit marital or sexual relationships, but it must also forgive and reclaim those who sincerely manifest penitence toward any sin! The church cannot put itself in the position of insisting its members who have sinned in the matter of divorce must remain celibate the rest of their lives in order to be a member of God's kingdom. That would be to "put a stumbling block" in the way of one of Christ's "little ones" (read carefully 1 Cor. 7:2,5,9,36).

Jesus gave an account (Lk. 16:19-31) of a rich man who used his riches selfishly to illustrate what happens to such people after they die. Jesus does not call the account of Lazarus and the Rich Man a parable! Even the name of the beggar is given. There was such a rich man; there was such a beggar; there is such a place as "torments" (see Rev. 14:9-11). Jesus would not "make up" a fantasy which has no basis in fact about such a serious matter as life after death. Furthermore, what Jesus teaches here about life after death for the impenitent is substantiated by the rest of the NT. The clearest picture we have in all the Bible on the state of the dead is in this account. The dead apparently go to some intermediate state where they are conscious, knowing and being known, as they await the final judgment. This intermediate state is an actual place. Samuel was recognized by both the witch and Saul (1 Sam. 28:13-19) and Moses & Elijah were recognized by the apostles (Mt. 17:3), Lazarus retained his name and identity even after death (Jn. 11:43) and so did Jesus! The NT teaches that life immediately after death will be for the believer a state of: (a) consciousness (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; Lk. 23:43; 16:24ff; 2 Cor. 12:2-4; Rev. 14:13); (b) divestment of earthly body, the spirit will given a new, recognizable, and one apparently similar to the earthly body at the final resurrection (1 Cor. 15:35ff; Rev. 6:9); (c) presence with Christ, (1 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23); (d) "better by far" (Phil. 1:23); (e) paradise (Lk. 23:43); (f) temporary incompleteness, no part of the church is complete without the whole fellowship of the saints (Eph. 3:18; Heb. 11:40); (g) restfulness, (Rev. 7:13; 14:13; Lk. 16:25; Jn. 11:11; 1

Thess. 4:13); but for unbelievers; (a) punishment (Mt. 25:46); (b) outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 8:12; 25:51; 25:30); (c) furnace of fire (Mt. 13:50); (d) eternal restlessness (Rev. 14:11); (e) torment forever, (Lk. 16:24; Rev. 14:9-11; 19-20).

The Bible is written in human language, describing unseen, spiritual and supernatural things in natural terms. The best God can do to describe to our limited, earthly experiences what life beyond death for the impenitent will be like is to describe it as "torment in flames" (Lk. 16:24; Rev. 14:9-11; 19:20; 20:14-15; 21:8). Whether that will be literal flames or "spiritual" (psychological) flame, or both, we don't know. If God can make a body "fit" to endure joy for eternity, he can make a body fit to endure torment for eternity (1 Cor. 15:35-58). The Greek word *odunomai*, is translated "torment" in KJV and "anguish" in RSV; in Rom. 9:2 and 1 Tim. 6:10 it is translated as "anguish of the heart." Mary uses the word to describe her mental "anguish" when she could not find the adolescent Jesus in Jerusalem (Lk. 2:48). Paul's departure from the Ephesian elders brought deep "anguish" to his heart (Acts 20:38). As most people know, mental and psychological or spiritual anguish is more severe torment than any physical torture. Unforgiven sin, unreconciled guilt and un-pacified animosity (war) forever and ever would certainly qualify to be described as a "tormenting lake of fire and brimstone." An unrelenting, unappeased conscience burns and consumes like fire. Eternal torment consists of total, eternal, and final confinement in cowardliness, untrustworthiness, pollution, murder, fornication, sorcery, idolatry, and falsehood (Rev. 21:8; 22:15). It will be a place of eternal darkness, weeping, and gnashing of teeth.

This report by Jesus on the rich man and Lazarus parts the curtain called "death" and dispels many human heresies about it. (a) it shows there is no such thing as "second probation" (called by some, purgatory); (b) there are no second chances; (c) the great chasm (Gr. *chasma*) is impassable and immovable; (d) the state of both the righteous and the unrighteous is fixed forever (Gr. *esteriktai*, once-for-all established). There are no scriptures anywhere in the Bible teaching a "second chance." 1 Peter 3:18-20 refers to the preaching by the Spirit of Christ who was in the prophet Noah (see 1 Pet. 1:10-11) when Noah preached to the antediluvian sinners (1 Pet. 3:19). The spirits of those disobedient were in the "prison" of sin during the preaching of the Spirit of Christ when he was in Noah; (e) there is no such thing as "soul sleep"---the same soul that was alive and conscious on earth was alive and conscious after death in both Lazarus and the rich man....those scriptures describing death as "sleep" are simply describing the dead person as he appears from the human viewpoint which is limited to seeing the visible, physical manifestations of life. In this account (Lk. 16) there is consciousness after death. Abraham and the rich man recognized one another. There was thinking and feeling (emotions at least). Death is not extinction---only separation. Physical death is the separation of the spirit from the mortal body but "at home with the Lord"; spiritual death is separation of the eternal spirit from its Creator without a "home"; (f) there is no such thing as "spiritism." The spirits of dead men do not return (except as God might permit a special dispensation like Samuel, 1 Sam. 28:7-25). Death causes a complete break with this world as far as communication is concerned (see Job 7:9-10; 10:21; 2 Sam. 12:23; 2 Cor. 5:8). All attempts to communicate with the dead is forbidden by the Bible (Deut. 18:9-12; Ex. 22:18; Lev. 20:6; Isa. 8:19-20; 2 Kings 1:3, etc.). What is

alleged to be communicating with the dead today is either a human hoax or the lying (false) signs of the devil (2 Thess. 2:9-12; Rev. 13:13-15). In any case, there is no communication---it is false! The famous magician Houdini wrote in his book, *A Magician Among the Spirits*, "Mine has not been an investigation of a few days or weeks or months, but one that has extended over 30 years, and in that 30 years I have not found one (spiritist) that did not reek of fraud, one that could not be reproduced by earthly powers....up to the present time everything that I have investigated has been fraud."

The rich man did not go to hell because he was rich. He went there because of his misuse of his riches. A godly use of privilege and possessions in this life is significant for all eternity. What we shall have to enjoy in the next life will be as a result of a godly, merciful use of our money and possessions to help those in need (Mt. 25:31-46). Using one's "riches" to help the proclamation of the gospel directly or indirectly is the best help one may give the unbelieving world. Life which is not affected by morality now will not be affected by the miraculous now or after this life! Neither a miraculous apparition or someone returning from the dead, nor a tragic story of the torture and suffering of the damned would effect the repentance of the rich man's brothers! Miracles are to establish the faithfulness of God's revealed Word---they do not in themselves bring people to repentance. Hardship, persecution, tragedy seldom produce repentance (see Amos 4:6-13; Rev. 9:20-21; 16:10-11). It is the proclamation of the absolute faithfulness and mercifulness of God as confirmed by the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ that is the power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:1-58; 2 Cor. 5:14-21). Miracles simply substantiate that what God has said about atonement, forgiveness, salvation, heaven and hell is to be trusted. Plenty of miracles were performed by God's messengers in Bible times. Man does not need any more miracles. God's word is sufficiently validated to engender trust in him. Men who will not believe now would not be convinced (Gr. *peisthesontai*, "persuaded, influenced, come to believe," etc.) even if another miracle were wrought before their very eyes. Many did not believe or trust Jesus even when he brought his friend Lazarus back from the dead before their very eyes (Jn. 11:45-47). Miracles which could not be denied did not produce discipleship in and of themselves (Acts 4:15-22). The task of Christians is to communicate the word of God clearly, plainly, understandably and lovingly to the unbelieving world and then to let every hearer make his own decision. Every human being deserves the opportunity to hear the word presented in an understandable and winsome way at least once. Christians are not responsible for the choice---only for the communication. This stark and realistic look at eternity should motivate every Christian for evangelism, immediately!

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 17:1---18:43

By God's grace and permission, human beings are created with the freedom to choose between good and evil. The possibility to choose evil necessitates what is called "temptation" or "testing." God decided to create human beings to live in a "tempting" environment in order to bring them to a spiritual maturity which would fit them to dwell forever in his immediate presence. One Christian writer has called the earthly existence man's "soul-making environment." The Bible speaks of our probationary period of life on earth as a place whereby we may be (if we choose) "conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29). So "temptation, trial and testing" is sure to come (Mt. 18:7) in a "soul-making environment." We could not be spiritually matured without being tested. The ideal environment for soul-making in rational humans must be one which supplies (a) their basic physical needs; (b) allows them to be free moral agents; (c) allows them to be challenged; (d) and allows them to learn the things which they need most to learn. In order for them to be free they would have to live in an environment in which there was neither an overwhelming "tug" or persuasion in the direction toward God nor one in the direction away from God. The environment which human soul-making required was one in which humans would be at an epistemic (cognitive-learning) distance away from God, yet not so far away as to preclude the soul freely making his own decision to come to God in love and submission. Humans needed to be placed in an environment which makes it possible for them to consider the world without immediately and automatically deducing the saving covenant of God from their environment, yet at the same time it must be an environment from which it is possible to deduce correctly that God does exist. This is as it must be if humans are to be truly free! In other words, there must be the possibility or temptation for humans to choose not to love and obey God if they are to freely choose to love and obey God. Any time a human being chooses evil, he not only sins against God and himself, he sins against the rest of humanity because he has become a "stumbling block" or "temptation" to all other human beings who know him and observe his life. "None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself" Paul wrote in Romans 14:7. John Donne wrote, (in archaic English) "No man is an Iland, intire of itselfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine...any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." Paul wrote, "Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ" 1 Cor. 8:12. There are those who not only do sinful things "but also approve of others practicing them" (Rom. 1:32). Peter's refusal to accept the will of God for the crucifixion of the Messiah became a "test, temptation" to Jesus (Mt. 16:23; Mk. 8:33). If you use your hand (eye, tongue, etc.) to cause someone else to sin, it would be better to cut the hand off. **WOE TO HIM BY WHOM TEMPTATION COMES!**

Evidently, servants who are called "unworthy" (Gr. *achreioi*, "worthless, useless" see Mt. 25:30; Lk. 17:10; Philemon 1:11) are those who do not serve beyond what they are

required to do. They keep the letter of the law and that's as far as they go. They try to do exactly as they are bidden, never trying to do any more. They do not go out of their way to look for ways to serve. They are always afraid someone will demand more of them than is necessary. ADMIT IT! YOU AND I ARE IMPERFECT SERVANTS! We really haven't even done what God's rules and regulations have demanded of us. We haven't even kept his law in the OT! And if we had been able to keep the OT Law perfectly, we should have done more! God, by his grace through Jesus may grant sinners to be joint heirs with Jesus, but sinners can never merit it. They may be called in some day to sit down and eat, but they can never go in demanding it. The obligation for created human beings is to be perfect, to live in the image of Jesus Christ. They do not do so. Therefore all humans are unprofitable servants, even when they have done the best they could do (Lk. 17:10)! Until a servant has done more than is expected or commanded of him may he expect merit. Jesus Christ, the Man, lived without sin, perfectly in the Law of God. He went beyond that and died for those who sinned and did not live perfectly. No other human has ever done that but Jesus! Therefore all humans are unprofitable servants! I remember visiting Walter Goodman in the constant-care unit at Spring River Village, and his first word to me was, "What do I owe you!" I think he thought I was a sub-contractor coming to collect. But I said, "Walter, you don't owe me anything---you're all paid up." He had done so much for all of Ozark Bible College personnel as a trustee and builder he was "all caught up." And that's how it is with us toward God. We're all paid up---Jesus Christ paid all we owe. We must constantly remind ourselves that whatever God cares to give us is up to him (Mt. 20:13-16). There is nothing coming to us of good which we deserve! We can take no credit for our world, our wisdom, our opportunities. We are indebted to Christ for everything. Even our expressions of thanks to him adds to our indebtedness to him because even our thanks is borrowed (2 Chron. 29:14-17). We would not even know how to say thanks as we should without his revealed Word. There are many things we would like to say to him and should say, but can't. But his Holy Spirit says it for us (Rom. 8:26-27). If we give him our life we are only letting him have what already belongs to him by right of creation and re-creation. Only when we admit that we are born destitute (Mt. 5:3; 1 Tim. 6:6-7) of all merit and that we earn no merit are we prepared to appreciate God. When we have this perspective, work in his vineyard is welcomed as a privilege and honor, not as a necessary evil. Work for Christ and others ceases to be work and becomes a way to express appreciation when we acknowledge that we are unprofitable servants. To the non-Christian, "everything" must be an unfair price to pay for serving Jesus. But, in the light of God's "everything" it is nothing at all (Rom. 8:31-39). It is the least we can do and live with our consciences, and not be depressed with unexpressed gratitude. "Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift" 2 Cor. 9:15.

First remember the context! Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees! He could not have been saying the kingdom was spiritually "within" the Pharisees! Second, the Greek word *entos*, is often translated, "among, or in the midst, of you." Third, the Pharisees were expecting the kingdom to come with "signs to be observed." So, what is being discussed here is how the kingdom will come, not where. The word must be interpreted in its context. Jesus is saying the kingdom "is in your midst" and you do not know it. The "King" was standing there talking to them. He and John the Baptist had announced that the kingdom was in the process of coming. J. B. had begun to baptize people for the remission of sins so

the Jews would know the "old kingdom" was being fulfilled and replaced with the new (Lk. 16:16). But the Pharisees would not acknowledge it. This is what the rest of the Bible teaches. The kingdom of God is an objective entity apart from any individual human being. True, it consists of human beings. True, it abides within us. But, just as Jesus Christ dwells in us, but is still a Person objectively apart from any single individual, so is the kingdom of God. The kingdom, on earth, exists as "the church" (Rev. 2:1---3:22). The kingdom, in heaven, continues to exist as "the church" (i.e., those who have had —past tense—their robes washed in the blood of the Lamb and have gathered around the throne of God). We know we are in the kingdom and the kingdom is "in us" objectively, through the Bible, not from some human feeling in our hearts. It is after knowing from the Bible that we are in the kingdom and it is in us that we get the feeling of being saved, and not vice versa.

The first time God judged and destroyed the world, in Noah's day, humanity had not one catastrophic sign that their world was coming to an end. All they had was the preaching of the Spirit of Christ that was in Noah and out of Noah's mouth (Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:18-22). There was no "gradual" rising of the flood waters. It was sudden, on the day Noah entered the ark "the fountains of the great deep broke up and the windows of heaven opened up" and the world was suddenly deluged with water (2 Pet. 3:5-13). Until that time people were living normally---eating, drinking, marrying, working and playing (Lk. 17:26-27; Mt. 24:36-39). So, it will be at the second (final) judgment of this world, There will be no signs! It will come suddenly, just as the flood came. It will be just like the days of Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah---the huge majority of people will not be prepared for the judgment. Many of them will be "looking back" wanting their wicked world to remain. REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE! So, do not be led astray by all the "latter day prophets" who have come and gone and are still coming and going! NO ONE KNOWS WHEN CHRIST WILL RETURN. True Christians are looking for it at any moment and every moment. They are continually preparing themselves to leave this world behind and go with Christ WHENEVER he comes. The time to turn loose of this world's attractions is NOW!

Necessary to the survival of a Christian's spiritual life in a totally world-oriented society like that of Noah's day and Lot's day is persistent, unbending, unending prayer. This parable is to teach us that we ought always to pray and NOT LOSE HEART. That is the point of the parable---the point is not that God is a grouchy, reluctant vindicator. The Christian must be like the widow of this parable and not give up. This judge (Lk. 18:1-8) was indifferent and out of his own selfish motive wanted to rid himself of an inconvenience; he gave in and did what he did not want to do. BUT OUR GOD IS NOT LIKE THAT! That is the next point of the parable (verses 17-18). We do not need to wear our God down. It is by persistent faith that we put ourselves in the right attitude to receive what God wants eagerly and speedily to give us. It is not God's attitude that needs changing---it is our attitude that needs changing. If an indifferent, callous, self-serving judge will finally give justice to a poor, defenseless widow because she did not give up, is not our gracious God eager and able to give complete justice to us! YES! God speedily vindicates his elect. God does not need persuading, he only needs people who are preparing themselves by persistent faith to accept his way and his time schedule. Some Christians think God should always do IMMEDIATELY

for them what THEY WANT done. But our God is eager to do for us what we NEED done, and to do it on his wise, omniscient time schedule. God does not work hastily or inexpertly like humans do. Human beings must understand the word speedily from God's all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving perspective. He answers us just like loving parents do their children---not immediately, and with much more wisdom than the child has. Remember the faith of the OT patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses) and remember that it took all the centuries until the FIRST coming of Christ to vindicate their faith!

The kingdom belongs to those who are like children! Human beings will not even see or enter the kingdom of God unless they become like little children. Did Jesus mean by this that adults have to become as weak, helpless, naive, guileless, malleable, trusting, compassionate, tender-hearted as children? SPIRITUALLY---YES! Of course, anyone with an ounce of common sense understands that Jesus does not mean we have to revert to being a child physically and mentally (1 Cor. 14:20). But in our relationships with God and God's creatures, we must have the spirit of a child! And that "ain't" easy! It requires a "new birth" as Jesus told Nicodemus. God had been saying that all along in the OT prophets. The primary attribute of a child is TRUSTING those who know more than they do! Every adult must come to God with that attitude. The kingdom doesn't need "managing" by any human beings (adult or otherwise). It only needs to be served in the manner outlined in God's word. A five year old child does not take it upon himself to "manage" the home in which he lives. He simply does what he is directed to do, trusting implicitly in the wisdom and power of father and mother to keep him safe and sound.

The rich, young, ruler would be a prime prospect in many churches today. But Jesus knew this ruler was NOT ready to be received into the kingdom until he dealt with his GREED. He must decide to worship God Almighty and devote his life to Jehovah and repent of his worship of and trust in riches. It may surprise some of us to know what the Bible says about belonging to the kingdom of God and being GREEDY. It says, in fact, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" In 1 Cor. 6:9-11 it specifies all those who will not inherit the kingdom: (pornoï, eidololatrai, moichoï, malakoi, arsenokoitai, kleptai, pleonektai, methusoi, loidoroi, harpages). Literal translation of the words above are as follows: sexually immoral ones (Greek, pornois, or pornographers); idolaters; adulterers; fleshly-minded ones (or sensual-gratifiers); homosexuals (Greek, arsenokoitas, "sodomites," or those who practice male coitus. 1 Tim. 1:10); thieves (Greek kleptoids); GREEDY ONES (or covetous ones); drunkards (or "winos"); revilers (or slanderers); and extortioners (or robbers, con-artists, etc.). Greed and covetousness are usually joked about or rationalized with, "Well, everybody does it," or, "That's the way the game of life is played if you want to survive," or, "It's just good business sense." But the Lord doesn't joke about it! He categorizes it equally as serious as idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, slander, extortion, et al. Greed/covetousness will keep any one from "inheriting the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Furthermore, Christians are not to associate with "one who bears the name of a brother (someone who claims to be a Christian) if he is guilty of....greed" (same Greek word as in 1 Cor. 6:10). The word "associate" is from the Greek word sunanmignustnai and is the same word used in 2 Thess. 3:14 which says, "If any man does not obey our (apostles) word in this

epistle, note that person and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." (KJV). Covetousness, or greed, is almost always listed with other horrid sins (Rom. 1:29). It is not even to be named among Christians as becoming them (Eph. 5:8). It is called "idolatry" in Col. 3:5. And Peter says twice that it is a characteristic or motive of "false teachers" (2 Pet. 2:3,14). The word "covet" in the Greek language means literally, "always wanting more," or, "never being satisfied or content with what one has." So the church should be expected to "admonish" its brothers and sisters against greed (see also 1 Tim. 6:2-19; Titus 2:12; James 4:1-10, etc.). Christian parents should teach their children to be satisfied and content with what God gives them. BRETHREN THIS IS SERIOUS....IT HAS TO DO WITH INHERITING THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

Today's modern theology says, if a person will become a Christian, and "tithe" or "give seed-money" to TV evangelists (or any other so-called "Christian" work) they will soon receive many, many material blessings. That is absolutely contrary to the Scriptures! If what we have just said in question 7 applies, the true Christian will never "profit" simply because he is a believer. And if the rest of the Bible, both OT and NT, teaches anything at all it teaches that the true believer who, by circumstances accumulates any wealth, will be so liberal he/she will give most of it to help other people whose circumstances indicate they need assistance. (Psa. 62:10; 1 Tim. 6:17). The text in Lk. 18:29-30 is a parallel to Mt. 19:28-30; Mk. 10:28-31. The "houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and lands" are clearly spiritual for if we leave all this to start with, we don't get new or additional "brothers, sisters, mothers, children." You can't have but one physical mother! And Mark records that Jesus added another spiritual blessing to go along with those pleasant ones-----"persecution." Of course, it is not sinful to become wealthy, unless one does so by cheating, lying, robbing, killing, or by marketing wickedness. But, sad to say, most of those who do accumulate wealth, do so by ungodly activity (1 Tim. 6:9-10). It is not necessarily righteous to be poor, either. Poverty is often used as a rationalization for criminal activity. I think Proverbs 30:8-9 is a good outlook for believers toward the material things of life: "Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, 'Who is the Lord?' or lest I be poor, and steal, and profane the name of my God."

Two ragged, handicapped, blind beggars start screaming at Jesus, "Help us, help us, help us!" They were misfits in society, social outcasts, nuisances with nothing to contribute to anyone. They were deemed "leeches on society." The multitudes were contemptuous of them. Many considered them to be in the way of those who could see and those who did make contributions to society. The crowd had decided they were hindering the productive people from seeing this Jewish rabbi who claimed to be the Messiah. So many people, even today, are so totally absorbed with their own selfish pursuits they cruelly shove the helpless aside or indifferently ignore them altogether. The disciples did not speak a word on behalf of the blind beggars! They probably considered them just one more burden to lay upon the other burdens their Master was carrying with him to Jerusalem for this Passover of which the Master had spoken ominous and sinister words. And what Jesus had been saying

and contemplating was undoubtedly weighing heavily upon his mind and heart (Lk. 12:49-53; Jn. 12:27-36). Jesus knew what lay ahead of him----CRUCIFIXION, SHAME, VICARIOUS ATONEMENT FOR ALL SIN. But he thrust aside his own breaking heart to help these two outcasts. Jesus saw in these two a beauty and virtue he did not find in the crowd or the apostles----FAITH. Their faith must have served as a refreshing relief and spiritual encouragement to Jesus as he faced the cross.

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 19:1---20:47

Jericho was an important "customs gate" for Palestine in the days of the Roman Empire. Most of the trade from east of Palestine (Mesopotamia, India, China) would come on the caravans through Jericho to the Mediterranean world. Jericho was a winter "spa" and "playground" for the rich. A carnal-minded citizenry lived there. Zacchaeus was a VIP in the commercial that area of the world. He was a "chief tax collector." It is, therefore, rather surprising that Zacchaeus would make such an effort to see this itinerant rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth, upon whom the Jewish rulers had placed a warrant for arrest! Most tax-collectors ("publicans") became wealthy because the Roman taxes were collected on both a percentage and a "cost-plus" basis. The tax-collector was required to collect a set amount for Rome, and all he could extort, coerce, or get above what Rome demanded by any means, ethical or unethical, he could put in his own pockets. Rome did not pay much attention to the ethics of publicans way down in the province of Palestine (much like so many government operations today e.g. the IRS). The financial dishonesty of government agents is reflected in John the Baptist's charge to the publicans, "Extort no more than is appointed you" (Lk. 3:13). Zacchaeus later admits he wronged others and violated God's law even if he had not violated Rome's laws. The Greek grammar and idiom of 19:8 should be translated, "Behold, Lord, see, half of my goods I give to the poor; and, on the condition that I have robbed anyone of anything, which I admit I have done, I restore it fourfold." This is another reason it is surprising that Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus of Nazareth. He would also risk his reputation with many of the rich Jews and other publicans by being so sincerely interested in Jesus. Jesus was always a persona non grata with the rulers, and at this time of his ministry his popularity with many of the other people had taken a downward turn. The only reason rich, powerful, and sinful Zacchaeus, would want to see Jesus is because Zacchaeus had undoubtedly seen the evidence that Jesus was who people were saying he was----the Messiah. Zacchaeus could have seen the miracle of the healing of the blind men at Jericho. That would attract Z's attention! He would have seen the compassion manifested by Jesus on the "outcasts" and that was attractive to a publican who, while rich and powerful, was not exactly loved by most of the populace. He undoubtedly saw in Jesus some way to deal with his past sin. But primarily, Z's zeal to meet Jesus had to do with the EVIDENCE of Jesus' power and AUTHORITY. It is great for people to be compassionate and helpful, but what sinners need more than compassion is AN AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE THEIR SINS.

Jesus had already told a paralyzed man, and all those standing near by, that the Son of man had AUTHORITY on earth to forgive sins (Lk. 5:17-26, et al). Then he proved his AUTHORITY by the miracle of healing the man's paralysis! Jesus would later forgive the sins of the thief on the cross by simply saying so. The thief on the cross may have been baptized by John. The thief may not have been a thief. He may have been wrongly accused and "tried" by Roman "trial" which was scourging with a flesh-flaying whip until he admitted a

crime he did not commit. In the second place, we evidently do not know all Jesus said to Zacchaeus that day in the house of the "chief publican." If Z. quickly and joyfully received Jesus into his house, and if Z. gave half of his estate to the poor and was willing to make restitution for sins of extortion in the past, Z. would gladly have found John the Baptist and submitted to his baptism had Jesus directed him to do so. Don't forget, also, that Jesus and his disciples customarily baptized those who wished to follow him (Jn. 3:25-26). We know on the AUTHORITY OF JESUS, Zacchaeus had salvation come to his house that day. "Salvation" is always an on-going process with all of us. Z's salvation certainly began that day he repented and made restitution by submitting to the Lordship of Jesus of Nazareth.

Yes! What the nobleman did was justice. He commanded all his servants to use what he had entrusted to them, saying, "Trade with these till I come." Two of them did as they were commanded. Those two were rewarded. But the third servant "was afraid" of his master because his master was a severe man taking up what he did not lay down and reaping what he had not sown. So the third servant stashed the pound with which he was commanded to trade, did nothing with it, cautiously thinking he was keeping it safe and would find favor with his master. The third servant was either lazy or cowardly; then he tries to put the blame for his failure upon his master. It does not work! The nobleman does not admit to the characterization of him by his servant. Actually the nobleman's graciousness to the other two servants, especially the second who gained less than the first, proves he was not as "severe" as the 3rd servant accuses him. The nobleman exposes the false accusation of the lazy servant by saying, "If you expected me to require more of you than normally required, you surely have no right to complain if you are judged by the standards you expected." Every Christian must do something to invest the "treasure" with which Christ has entrusted him---his innate abilities and the Gospel (the word of God) to bring profit for his Master. No Christian is without something to invest. No Christian should think Christ will demand more than his servant is able to produce. Jesus is not unfair or unjust. He is gracious, trusting, fair and just. No Christian will be able to blame Christ for his own laziness or cowardliness.

The owner of the colt was doubtless a disciple of Jesus and would not object to temporary use by Jesus (remember he had more than 12, see Lk. 10:1ff; Lk. 24). And of course, the colt was only borrowed for a while and then returned to its owner. Jesus was not stealing it. Jesus had no use for the colt beyond riding it into Jerusalem. The disciples were to tell anyone questioning them about taking it, "The Lord has need of it." The colt belongs to Jesus anyway! He created it! If he could destroy a fig tree, calm a sea, raise a dead body, or create bread and fish, he certainly could have taken the colt for his use WITHOUT the "owner's" permission. He could, in fact, have created a completely new colt for his use had he wished! The main lesson of this little incident, however, is the AUTHORITY displayed by Jesus's FOREKNOWLEDGE that a particular colt, upon which no one had sat, would be there at that spot, at that time, available for his use, so he could send two disciples who would be asked the very question he foretold, and they would give the very answer he instructed, and its "owner" would comply. JESUS HAS AUTHORITY OVER TIME, OVER EVENTS, OVER HISTORY. WHAT HE SAID EVENTS WOULD BE, THEY WERE!!!

Neither Nostradamus, Jeanne Dixon, Edgar Cayce, nor any other of a thousand extra-biblical "seers" has ever been able to predict the future in such minute detail as Jesus did on the spur of the moment as recorded in this incident.

It was the duty of Temple officials to challenge any one who might not belong in certain parts of it; it was also their duty to keep it from being desecrated. Had Jesus presumed to go into the Holy of Holies, or perform some ritual reserved only for a Levitical priest, the officials probably would have been correct in challenging his authority. The OT prophets condemn priests of their day for not fulfilling these duties. But these officials were challenging Jesus' cleansing of the temple of money-changers and merchandisers. Jesus was doing what the officials should have been doing! Instead, the officials themselves were desecrating the temple, making it "a den of robbers" by cheating and extortion. So these officials were hypocrites. They should have been cleansing the temple. They had put themselves in the position of defying Almighty God. Little did they know, they were standing face to face with God in the person of Jesus Christ. Actually, Christ could have done anything he pleased in, or with the temple. He said as much to Peter in the incident of the "temple tax" (Mt. 17:24-27). He had Peter to understand that he was the "Son of the King" and therefore "owner" of the temple. However, since he was here on a mission of incarnation, he would defer to the limits of his humanity. He would not perform the duties of a priest (Heb. 7:11-28) until his completion of the work of redemption. Then he was crowned a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. But his humanness did not keep him from warning these hypocritical officials that they were facing the "son of the owner of the vineyard" (20:13-18) and Almighty God would break them "into pieces and crush" them because they were rejecting the son. Jesus had already predicted God's terrible judgment upon the Jewish nation for its rejection of their Messiah (19:41-44). And he will predict it again in even more awesome details (Lk. 21:5-38).

Jesus was not dodging the issue when he replied to their question with a question of his own. Actually this is the Socratic method of teaching and was used a great deal in the OT Prophets. It is a very forceful method of teaching! It forces the "student" to think his own question through in a logical process to arrive at the answer. The answer has much more impact when the questioner realizes that he has discovered his own answer. So the Lord puts these learned rabbis into his classroom and begins to teach them what they will not learn any other way. Note: Jesus asked them specifically about John's baptism rather than his teaching, because of the uniqueness of the act of immersing people in water "unto repentance for the remission of sins" (see Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3). There could be no quibbling or hedging with this question. Baptism was a concrete, vivid, impressive act. None of these Jewish rulers could say, "What teaching?" Furthermore, immersing penitent sinners for the remission of sins was totally innovative. If John was commissioned and sent by God, and if his message was God-sanctioned, then the Law of Moses was being superseded! The issue was crucial. What right had John the Baptist to violate the OT law? He had the right only if his commission came directly by revelation from God! And everyone held J.B. to be God's prophet with God's message. Therefore, what John had said about the identity of Jesus of Nazareth was revealed to him from God. So now, these Jewish rulers are now impaled on

the horns of a dilemma! If they say John's baptism is from heaven they will admit that John speaks for God (about Jesus). If they say John's baptism is "from men," all the people who believe John speaks for God will stone these rulers for blasphemy! What to do? Just say, "We don't know where John got his idea to baptize people." Anyone standing around, and there were lots of them, could see immediately the hypocrisy of these rulers. Jesus had accomplished his purpose. Furthermore, the rulers were really not asking in order to learn the truth, they were seeking a way "to destroy" Jesus (Lk. 19:47). They thought they could trap Jesus with their challenge to his authority. The rulers were dishonest about John; they were dishonest about Jesus. Jesus refused to declare his Messiahship to men incapable of honesty. What good would it have done? There are times when Christians should not give the "bread" of the Gospel to dogs or cast the precious "pearls" of the truth before swine.

In this parable of a vineyard, Jesus pictures the "tenants" (Jewish rulers) plotting to kill the son of the vineyard's owner so they can take over the vineyard for themselves. This parable is recorded by each of the Synoptics---Mt. 21:33-46; Mk. 12:1-12; Lk. 20:9-19). Matthew records that "When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables (not just this one) they perceived that he was speaking about them." They weren't dummies---they knew who the "players" were in this little scenario! They were the villains of the story. Hatred for Jesus welled up in their hearts and they wanted to kill him on the spot, but "The better part of valor is discretion." They could see there was a good possibility they would be mobbed. They could see Jesus had the multitudes on his side (at least temporarily), so they would plot and plan and find some secret time to arrest him, try him, and have him slain. The crooked priesthood of the Jews had been attempting to take over the "vineyard"(the people of God) ever since the days of the OT Prophets (800 B.C.). They only released their strangle-hold on the temple and the people for a few centuries during and immediately after their exile into Babylon. They killed the prophets, and anyone else who dared challenge them. Corruption of the nation's political and religious structure had been worsening since the later days of the Hasmonean dynasty and the Herods. But that was to be over soon, for God was going to destroy the temple and the power of the Jewish hierarchy over the nation and its people. This God did in A.D. 70 by sending his "army"—the Romans (Mt. 22:1-14).

Jesus's answer to the Pharisees as to whom a believer should pay tribute---Caesar or God---is generic theology about the believer and civil government. With Jesus it was not an "either/or" problem. He clearly teaches that there is a sphere of human life where support of civil government is necessary, so, "render to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar." And there is a sphere of human life where certain things belong exclusively and a priori to God. The Bible teaches, of course, that everything, including civil governments and civil authorities belong to and are responsible to God. God's will and God's commandments take precedence over every other human institution, including family. But it should be evident to any sane human being that in a fallen world where the majority of people are unregenerate the only safeguard of inalienable human rights (life, liberty and proprietorship) is FORCE or COERCION. That's why civil government is necessary, so "Caesar" deserves to be acknowledged and supported. It is amazing that most people, including Christians, are unaware that the Bible has a great deal to say about civil government---its mandate, its

purpose, its structure, its operation. Clearly the Bible teaches that God has certain expectations and commandments for civil authorities to adhere to in the execution of their "ministry" as "the authorities that be." Sadly, most civil authorities are ignorant or indifferent to what the Bible says. For a thorough compendium on What The Bible Says About Civil Government, get a copy of the book by that name, written by Paul T. Butler, pub. College Press. You will be surprised at how much and how detailed are the instructions of God in the Bible about civil government. Copies of the book have been sent and acknowledged by President George H.W. Bush, Vice President Dan Quayle, Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, and President William Jefferson Clinton, reviewed in two national periodicals, and in the libraries of numerous attorneys at law.

The Sadducees presented Jesus with a scenario which, while realistic, was hypocritical. They were not asking for information, they were trying to prove that Jesus was wrong about a resurrection to eternal life and heaven. Certainly, it is possible for women (and men) to have as many as 7 spouses (e.g. Elizabeth Taylor, Mickey Rooney each had 8). So it might be a huge enigma for some people as to whom a person would be wed in heaven if she/he had 7 spouses on earth. But it was no enigma to Jesus. And, it really shouldn't have been to the Sadducees; after all, they were supposed to be students of the word of God, and believers in God's power to overcome all enigmas in the next life. But, as Jesus pointed out, they knew neither the scriptures nor the power of God (see the Matthew account of this text, Mt. 22:23-33). There will be no marriage in heaven. There will be no need for it. Procreation and socialization are the primary purposes of marriage and there will be no procreation and plenty of socialization in heaven, where we shall be like the angels and never die. If we may trust what God has revealed (however little and dim it may be) concerning the next life, we know life and personal intercourse and relationships in heaven will be much more thrilling and sensational than any fleshly sexual intercourse could ever be on earth in this life. Remember, the apostle Paul wrote that to "be with Christ is very far better" Phil. 1:21-23. For an intriguing and helpful speculation about what life will be like in heaven, read C. S. Lewis' book, *The Joyful Christian*. Following is an abstract of three of the articles from C. S. Lewis' book cited above: "Resurrection of the Body: What the soul cries out for is the resurrection of the senses. Even in this life matter would be nothing to us if it were not the source of sensations...Memory as we know it is a dim foretaste...of a power which the soul...will exercise hereafter. At the present we tend to think of the soul as somehow inside the body. But the glorified body of the resurrection as I conceive it---the sensuous life raised from its death---will be inside the soul. As God is not in space but space is in God..." "Intercourse in the Afterlife: "our present outlook of the absence of physical, sexual intercourse in heaven is like that of a small boy who, on being told that the sexual act was the highest bodily pleasure, should immediately ask whether you ate chocolates at the same time. On receiving the answer, 'No,' he might regard the absence of chocolates as the chief characteristic of sexuality. In vain would you tell him that the reason why lovers in their sexual raptures do not bother about chocolates is that they have something better to think of. The boy knows chocolate. He does not know the 'better' thing that excludes it. We know the sexual life; we do not know, except in glimpses, the 'better' thing, which in heaven, leaves no room for the lesser sensation. In denying that sexual life, as we now understand it, it is not necessary to suppose that the distinction of sexes or personalities will disappear...What is no

longer needed (sexual distinction) for biological purposes may be expected to survive for splendor." "Heaven: Dance and game are frivolous, unimportant down here; for down here is not their natural place. Here, they are a moment's rest from the life we are placed here to live. But in this world everything is upside down. That which, if it could be prolonged here, would be a truancy, is like that which in a better country is the End of Ends. Joy is the serious business of Heaven...At the resurrection of the body...once again the birds will sing and the waters flow, and lights and shadows move across the hills, and the faces of our friends laugh upon us with amazed recognition." Highly recommended—Heaven, by Randy Alcorn, pub. Tyndale, 2004.

Matthew 22:41-45 is parallel to Luke 20:41-44 and Matthew puts it this way: "Jesus asked them a question, saying, What do you think of the Christ (Messiah)? Whose son is he? They said to him, The son of David. He said to them, How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I put thy enemies under thy feet? If David thus calls him Lord, how is he his son?" Welllll, of course, the Pharisees could answer the first question. Almost any Jew, from the days of Samuel ca. 950 B.C., could answer that question. Every Jew knew their Messiah would be born from the lineage of David. The OT prophets said it over and over. The second question, which is basically a quotation from Psalms 110:1, is another ball game. But the Jewish religious leaders, scribes and Pharisees, who knew every jot and tittle of the OT, front-wards and backwards, should have studied Psa. 110:1 and have at least been perplexed as to how David's son could also be predicted to be David's Lord! To this day the Jews have no explanation for Psa. 110:1 Most Jewish Bible commentaries simply say Psa. 110:1 does not apply to David's son, but to David alone and that it is predicting David will be anointed a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Paul punctures that hot-air balloon with the needle sharp logic by his argument that only someone who proved to have an "indestructible life" could lay claim to the office of priest forever after the order of Melchizedek! (Heb. 7:16,25). But, of course, the Psalm in no way refers to David himself. It says exactly what Jesus said it did. These very Jewish "scholars" said Psa. 110:1 was a prophecy of David's son who would be the Messiah (see Mk. 12:35). Neither David nor any of his progeny could be a priest for he was not from the tribe of Levi! David, wrote the Psalm, talking about his progeny, his offspring, his predicted "son" when, in the second "lord," he used the Hebrew word adonai. He used Yaweh or, "Jehovah," for the first "Lord" in the sentence. Thus, "Jehovah (God) says to my lord (who is to be my unique son, Messiah), sit at my right hand...." The one of whom David wrote was to be a "priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." (Psa. 110:4). Now that should have been a "flag" to the Jews that David was writing about a descendant of his who would be other than an ordinary human "son." It should also be apparent that David had not written about himself, calling himself, "my lord." These Jewish rulers were impaled again on the horns of a dilemma. They could not admit that David was talking about an "eternal being" who would be David's "son" for that would be to admit the idea that God could incarnate himself in a fleshly body. Their intransigence against the word of God was so thoroughly exposed by Jesus through the scriptures and his logic, they were completely silenced. They dared not ask him any more questions or try any more verbal traps for him. They went away!

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 21:1-38

1. Before Jesus made this ominous prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and ancient Judaism, he had just days earlier pronounced Jerusalem's doom as he rode on the back of the colt (Lk. 19:41-44). After his triumphal entry he went into the city and confronted the Pharisees with God's imminent judgment upon them (see Matt. 23) and in the same breath condemned Jerusalem to be "forsaken and desolate." Next, he preached an alarming sermon on death and life (Jn. 12:20-50) in which he agonized over his own impending death (Jn. 12:27). In this sermon he warned, "Now is the judgment of this world." It could be literally translated, "Now is the crisis of the cosmos." He said the ruler of this world would be cast out (Jn. 12:31) contingent to the "crisis of the cosmos." The statement "Now is the crisis of the cosmos" was enough in itself to provoke the questions of the apostles about the destruction of Jerusalem. The word cosmos means "order, system, establishment." It was very plain to the apostles that Jesus was predicting the destruction of the present Jewish order, involving the desolation and forsakeness of the temple and the nation in that generation (Mt. 23:36). Put yourself in their place and time and culture. The apostles were filled with incredulity and excitement in response to these startling predictions. They probably pointed to the great stones of the temple (some of which were 38' X 12' X 18') with mouths agape. They knew the rabbinical traditions of that day like Olam hazzeh (the Jewish order then existing); Athid labho (the age to come after the existing order); and Olam habba (the messianic world to come). In some rabbinic tradition Athid labho and Olam habba were blended into one. Thus, according to rabbinic "tradition" these apostles had heard in their local synagogues, the existing order (in A.D. 30) Olam hazzeh was to usher in Olam habba.

2. The Jews had been looking for the Messiah to come and deliver them ever since their exile into Babylon. For evidence in the NT itself see The Gospel of Luke, by Paul T. Butler, College Press, ppg. 461-466. For a lengthy discussion of Jewish tradition about Olam habba (the messianic age) see the same work, ppg. 471-474. Jewish traditional harbingers of the messianic age were expected to be a literal fulfillment of the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel (ch. 7-12), Ezekiel (Gog and Magog), and Zechariah (ch. 11-14). They portrayed it to be literal war with Jewish enemies; the Jews being victorious; all righteous Jews resurrected and returned to Palestine; an age of miraculous material prosperity for all Jews; the Messiah would rule the world from Jerusalem which would be the capital of the world. We cannot detail all the graphic literalism of rabbinic tradition concerning the messianic age here. This should be enough to indicate why these apostles asked for a sign. They thought he was talking about Olam habba, so they wanted a sign as to when it would happen! Remember that the Jews had a propensity for "signs" (see Matt. 12:38; 16:1; Lk. 11:16; Jn. 2:18; 6:14; 6:30; 10:41; 12:18)--look up the word "signs" in your Bible Concordance and you'll find it listed about 85 times. There was nothing wrong with "signs." In fact the prophets predicted the Messiah would do "signs" to validate his identity. But the

problem was when Jesus gave them signs (plenty of them) they wanted more and different signs than he gave. In this great discourse Jesus gives "signs" to the apostles by which they may calculate the impending holocaust upon Jerusalem so they will not be "led astray" by the disbelieving Jews who said, "It can't happen here!" Millions of Jews paid no heed to this warning of Jesus (later proclaimed by the apostles, e.g., 1 Thess. 2:14-16; Heb. 8:13; 6:7-8; 10:25) of God's destruction of Judaism, and they perished inside the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Those followers of Jesus who believed his warning escaped to a city called Pella in Perea.

3. Jesus predicted the apostles would see many pseudo-Christes who would come, before, during and after the destruction of Jerusalem, pretending to be the real Messiah (cf. Matt. 24:4-5; Mk. 13:5-6). Christians were not to follow anyone else claiming to be the Messiah. The excitement and circumstances attending them was not a sign that Jesus was about to return, nor a sign that "the time was at hand." Jesus predicted pseudo-Christes would precede the Jewish holocaust of A.D. 70. There were, in fact, many such impostors who deluded multitudes of first century Jews into following them, claiming they would show "signs and wonders" to prove their claim. Josephus (Antiquities, XX, VIII, 5) speaks of numerous ones running around within the besieged city of Jerusalem trying to gather followers to take control of the city. In A.D. 44 there was the false-Messiah Theudas (not the one of Acts 5:36); about A.D. 54, an Egyptian Jew claimed Messiahship. Others are listed in Acts 5:36-37. They were plentiful. The pseudo-Messiahs came to a climax 62 years after the destruction of Jerusalem in the great rebellion against Rome under the false Messiah, Bar Kochba, A.D. 132-135. Had Jesus not warned the apostles in this great prophecy, they would have been easy marks for being led astray by pretended "signs and wonders." Lots of Jews were thus led astray (e.g., Acts 8:9-13; 16:16-18, etc.). The Jews of Jesus day were steeped in superstition, mysticism, mythology, and the occult. They had assimilated it into their culture from Babylonia and Persia during the exile and brought it back to Palestine with them. Superstition, mythology, etc., is in all Jewish non-biblical Jewish literature, including the Talmud and especially in the Kabbalah. Peter said of the NT writers, "We did not follow cleverly devised myths..." (2 Pet. 1:16ff), and Paul warned the young preachers Timothy and Titus to avoid Jewish "myths" (called "fables" in KJV) (1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4; Titus 1:14). And knowing the obsessive yearning in the Jewish psyche for a Messiah to come and deliver them, it would have been very easy for a crafty charlatan to seduce those Jewish fishermen into thinking he was their Messiah. You see how easy it is today for quacks to seduce thousands into believing they know when the alleged "tribulation and the rapture" are going to occur.

4. Jesus predicted there would be very unsettled and perilous times before God's wrath finally fell on Jerusalem and Judaism. Jesus prophesied soon-to-come to that generation "wars, rumors of wars, tumults, nation against nation, famines, earthquakes, pestilence, and other natural disasters (probably hailstones, eclipses, whirlwinds, etc.). He did this to keep the apostles from fleeing Jerusalem because he wanted them to stay there and preach repentance and remission of sins, beginning at Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and afterward to the uttermost parts of the world (Lk. 24:44-49; Acts 1:7-8). The "terrors and

great signs from heaven" do not need to be unnatural or supernatural phenomena. Today's generation has seen terrifying phenomena from the heavens! Think about it! The volcanic eruption of Mount St. Helens in 1980, exploded with the force of 20,000 atomic bombs; 150 square miles of forest was leveled in 6 minutes. An 805 ft. high "tidal wave" lapped up from Spirit Lake upon the side of Mt. St. Helens; a completely new canyon eroded 130 ft. deep, 200 ft. wide; volcanic ash floated hundreds of miles eastward, it caused complete darkness for miles and miles. IN ONE DAY! Things like this occur constantly in our world---they are not signs of the end of the world at any particular time. If the Bible teaches anything at all, it teaches (and this especially true of the OT prophets) that natural disasters are "signs" from God that this whole cosmos is doomed to eventual judgment and destruction. It does not mean that a particular nation, people, city, or individual upon whom a "tower of Siloam" fell is necessarily more sinful than any other---it just means that God is calling the whole world to repentance, before the final and complete judgment falls upon all mankind (see Lk. 13:1-5). Space does not permit documenting here all the wars, rumors of wars, tumults, nations against nations, famines, earthquakes, pestilences, tornados and sundry natural disasters from the sky that happened between A.D. 30 and A.D. 66-70. One has only to read Josephus, Tacitus, Will Durant, Gibbons, Seutonius, and even the book of Acts (11:29ff), to understand that such tumultuous things occurred just as Jesus said they would between A.D. 30 and A.D. 66-70. Jesus had a work for Christians to do in Jerusalem and Palestine which would take years to accomplish. They must not be terrified when wars and instability come and flee before the real "holocaust" came. When the real destruction of Judaism came he will want them to flee, thus, he will give in this same discourse, precise signs that it is imminent; then they are to flee to the mountains, not even going down into their houses.

5. Jesus now (Lk. 21:20-28) lists a number of things that will be plainly observable to the generation then living. He prophesies immediate signs that Judaism is "forsaken and desolated" and that the end has come for Jerusalem (see Mt. 24:15-34; Mk. 13:14-30). The first of these immediate signs will be when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies. Matthew and Mark call it the "desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel" (see Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). Daniel predicted the desecration of the temple and the city by Roman armies (the 4th great world empire). This was the consequence of the Jew's rejecting their "Anointed Prince" (Messiah) 490 years after the restoration of the Jewish commonwealth in 457 B.C. (Dan. 9:24-27). Roman armies surrounded the city first in November A.D. 66 but they soon decided they were too small in number and withdrew to their headquarters in Syria. The Jews believed they had been delivered by divine providence so they did not flee as the Christians did. However, many Jews who had been living outside the city fled into the city for future protection. Christians, remembering Jesus' prophecy, fled to Pella when the Roman armies began marching back into Palestine and this is documented in Eusebius' History, 111:5:3, "...the people of the church in Jerusalem, being commanded to leave and dwell in a city of Perea, called Pella, in accordance with a certain oracle which was uttered before the war to the approved men there by way of revelation." Nero sent Vespasian, with 60,000 men to Judea in the Spring of A.D. 67. Vespasian conquered all of Judea but was called back to Rome to become emperor. He sent his son, Titus, to Judea to put down the Jewish rebellion. Titus built up a great siege wall and waited 3 years for the Jews inside the walls to fight one another, destroy their own city, kill one another (and eat human flesh, Josephus reports),

commit suicide, and starve to death. Then Titus and his army marched in and "mopped up." Roman soldiers killed many Jews, looted the temple and the city, took 500,000 prisoners, and leveled as much of the city (including its walls) as they could. The Romans banished all Jews from living in Palestine. They built a city over the ruins of Jerusalem and called it Capoline, and erected idolatrous shrines and statues in it. The Jews never occupied that land as a nation again until 1948 (by sanction of the United Nations). Most Jews living there today are secular-minded about their culture; most of them do not profess any religious system that resembles ancient Judaism. In fact, many of them are evolutionists, secularists, and unbelievers. Most Jews, all over the world, have abandoned the kind of faith exhibited by ancient Jews like Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and Isaiah.

6. The statement in Lk. 21:23-24 is exclusively in Luke's account, i.e., "For great distress shall be upon the earth and wrath upon this people; they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." NOTE THE WORDS, "UPON THIS PEOPLE." What Jesus is predicting is to fall upon those people, of that generation, not the people of the 20th or 21st century or any century to come! Furthermore, if this great "wrath" is to come literally at the 21st century, then are literal "swords" to be the weapons-of-choice? The "times of the Gentiles" has been the focus of much error and confusion. By the word "until" Jesus indicates that the desolation of Jerusalem and Judaism will continue as long as God sees fit. So, the question is: How long will that be? There is a passage in Romans 11:25-26 which provides a clue---it says, "...a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel will be saved..." This passage makes it clear that at the time all Israel has been saved, the full number of the Gentiles (same as, "the times of the Gentiles...fulfilled") will have come in. Therefore, the question more precisely focuses on just who is "Israel" and upon all of saved Israel. It is plain from the NT that "Israel" is the church of Jesus Christ---be sure to read Romans 9:8; Galatians 3:29; 6:15-16. The "until" points to a time when God determines all will have been saved, both Jew and Gentile, through faith in Christ and obedience of the Gospel. That is the end of time, the end of the world. Thus, Jerusalem and Judaism will be "trodden down by the Gentiles" until the end of the world. The Jews had their time. They were allotted 490 years, from B.C. 457 to A.D. 34 (see Dan. 9:24-27) to fulfill their messianic destiny, bring the Messiah into the world, and complete God's redemptive program. They rejected the Messiah and crucified him. So the kingdom was taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles (Mt. 22:43; Acts 13:46). The "Gentiles" time will last until the end of time. God has not absolutely rejected the Jews, neither have all Jews totally rejected Christ---a hardening has taken place only in part. There are still Jews coming to God through Christ today. But through Christ is the only way God will accept anyone (Matt. 3:9; Jn. 5:23; 14:6; Heb. 10:10; 10:12-14, et al.), from now until the end of time. Genetic Jewishness counts for nothing with God---never did, never shall (Rom. 2:28-29; 4:9ff; 9:22-26; Gal. 3:6-9). The time allotted for the Gentiles (and Jews who become Christians) is until Christ delivers up the kingdom to God (1 Cor. 15:23-28)---that is the end of time. Until the end of time Jerusalem and Judaism will be, spiritually speaking, "trodden down by the Gentiles." Geographical Jerusalem and national Israel will be, so long as this world exists, alienated ("Gentile") in God's perspective. So long as a Jew will not come to Jehovah by faith in Jesus Christ, he is a heathen, an unbeliever, one who crucifies Christ afresh, and

as long as he seeks justification before God as a "Jew" there is no possibility of repentance before God (Heb. 6:1-8; 10:1-31). Repentance toward God can only be effected through faith in the vicarious death of Jesus Christ! GOD HAS NOTHING LEFT FOR THE JEWS EXCEPT JESUS CHRIST AND THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH! That's what the books of Hebrews and Galatians and Romans state unequivocally. AND TO TEACH THAT CAN'T BE CLASSIFIED AS "ANTI-SEMITISM." If it is, then John the Baptist, Jesus (who called those Jews who rejected him, "sons of the devil" Jn. 8:42-47), the apostle Peter, the apostle Paul (who called them "dogs" Phil. 3:2-3); the apostle John (and a host of other NT people) were "anti-Semitic."

7. Yes! These verses clearly refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and Judaism. Some people who read these words, "and there will be signs in sun and moon and stars...men fainting with fear...and then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory...your redemption is drawing near" (Lk. 21:25-28; and Matt. 24:29-31; Mk. 13:24-27)—insist, this has to be the end of the world and the Second Coming of Christ! Au contraire! This is simply a continuation of the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and Judaism---in highly symbolic and apocalyptic language, to be sure: (a) "Immediately" does not usually make room for much of a time gap---certainly not a gap of over two thousand years!; (b) "When these things begin to take place" surely is not referring to the 2nd Coming for there will be no signs pointing to its nearness---it will be instantaneous; (c) and the further statement, "...this generation will not pass away till all these things take place" undoubtedly includes the sun and moon being darkened, etc. Admittedly, this section is difficult for the Occidental mind, but not for the Semitic. A careful Bible student will find much help understanding this by giving attention to context, comparable passages from the OT and Biblical word usage. This section is couched in what is called apocalyptic language, similar to that of the OT prophets and the book of Revelation when predicting the "coming" of God in judgment upon pagan nations (and even upon the Jewish nation). Apocalyptic language is "crisis language" used to describe catastrophic events. Apocalyptic language is characterized by figurativeness, symbolism, for dramatic impact. The apocalyptic language of Jesus here should be interpreted in light of the following considerations: (1) Darkening of and falling from heaven of the sun, moon, etc. is often stated symbolically in the OT to picture any inexpressible calamity, especially the demise of an empire or culture (Isa. 13:10; 14:12ff; 24:23; 34:1-4; Jer. 4:23-28; 15:9; Joel 2:10; 2:30--3:21; Amos 4:9; Micah 3:6; Hab. 3:11, et al.) see also Gen. 37:9ff that this kind of imagery goes back as far as Joseph; (2) "distress of nations...at the roaring of the sea and waves.." pictures the distress of the wicked at the destruction of Jerusalem as calamities roll over them like waves of the sea (see Isa. 57:20-21; Jer. 6:23ff); (3) "the powers of the heavens shaken..." is a figurative prophecy of the "shaking down" of the system of Judaism and its obsolete priesthood (the ruling powers of Judaism) (see Heb. 8:13; 12:25-29; 13:13-14 and compare with Isa. 14:12ff; 24:21-23); (4) "then will appear the sign of the Son of man..." (not necessarily the Son in person). Matthew and Luke put it, "...they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.." The OT speaks of God "coming" to judge but not in person (see Amos 4:12, et al.). Jesus plainly told his apostles some of them would not die before they saw the kingdom of God come with power and before they would see the Son of man coming in his kingdom (Mk. 9:1; Mt. 16:28). So, in this passage he says that when the destruction of Jerusalem occurs it will be

unmistakable evidence to his followers that the Son of man has "come" (but not in person) to keep his word about taking the kingdom from the Jews and establishing it forever; (5) "men will be fainting with fear and foreboding..." Matthew says, "then all the tribes of the earth will mourn." Jews had been scattered all over the world since the Babylonian captivity. These would certainly mourn and faint with fear when they learned of Jerusalem's obliteration by the Romans for this would mean the end of the temple and Judaism's only *raison d'etre*. At that time, Jews all over the world were persecuted. This refers also to the prediction of Zechariah (12:10). There the Jews are predicted as mourning over the crucifying of their Messiah. John applies this prophecy to the crucifixion (Jn. 19:37); (6) This cataclysmic, catastrophic "falling of the heavens" is what Jesus meant when he said the same thing to the High Priest warning him of the consequences of crucifying the Messiah (Mt. 16:64)---i.e, the destruction of Jerusalem and Judaism; (7) Matthew and Mark add to these ominous words, "And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Mt. 24:31; Mk. 13:27). Luke says it this way, "When these things (the signs that could be determined about the fall of Jerusalem and the release of the Jewish strangle-hold on the kingdom) begin to take place...your redemption is drawing near." NOTICE, Luke does not say your redemption is here. When the fall of Judaism is accomplished, the fruitless fig tree will have been withered, thus a great obstacle standing in the way of the gospel going unto the whole world will be removed (see Mt. 23:18-22; Mk. 11:12-14; 11:20-25). God's kingdom (the church) will be built and exclusively established and recognized only when the Jewish system comes to an end. Luke's statement in 21:28 "when these things begin to take place..." is parallel to his note in 21:31 "So also, when you see these things taking place..." Both of these statements (Lk. 21:28 and 21:31) refer to the visible destruction of Jerusalem. Isaiah predicted ca. 700 B.C. that God would create a "new land" or "nation" with "one stroke---in one day" before the old nation had passed away (Isa. 66:7-9). Isaiah also predicted that this "new nation" (the church) would "go forth and look on the dead bodies of the men that have rebelled against me..." (Isa. 66:24). These prophecies in Isaiah refer to the establishment of the New Israel, the church, on the day of Pentecost--- and the subsequent destruction about 40 years later (A.D. 70) of the old order, Judaism.

8. Mark's Gospel has it, "Truly, I say to you this generation will not pass away before all these things take place," which is different from Matthew and Luke only in the Greek preposition used. Matthew and Luke uses *heos*, and Mark uses *mechris*, both of which may be translated, "as far as, to the extent that, to the point, until" (see Heb. 12:4; Gal. 4:17). As is evident, both are prepositions of limitation. "This generation" was that generation of Jesus' time---certainly not our generation in the 20th or 21st century. Compare the usage of the word "generation" in Mt. 16:28; Mk. 9:1; Lk. 9:27; Mt. 11:16; 12:41; 23:35-36. "Generation" does not mean "race" as some have alleged. It plainly means a life-span of some 40 years. "All these things," refers back to all the tribulations predicted in Lk. 21:1-32 (and parallels). Notice the significant and continued use of "these" (contemporary) things all the way through 21:1-32. But after Lk. 21:32 (and parallels) Jesus begins using "that" to refer to his 2nd Coming when heaven and earth IS to pass away.

9. So, friends, all these foreboding, frightening "signs" were to signal that God was

through with Judaism as a system by which to draw man back to him. Because man was so weak and self-deceiving, all the Law could do was condemn man under sin. It would require a perfect atonement, by a perfect man, vicariously applied by grace through faith to draw man back to God. The prophets had predicted this; John the Baptist announced its arrival; Jesus was it and proved it by his miracles, fulfillment of prophecies, teachings, perfect life of love, and finally by his death and resurrection . But the majority of the Jews would have none of it! God, being the merciful Father that he is, gave the Jewish nation some 40 years after Jesus's resurrection to hear it proclaimed and proved with as much persuasion as human beings can muster. God was patient until A. D. 70 to give the Jews time to think about it. And when they still wouldn't accept his Anointed, Jesus of Nazareth, as their Savior and Lord, GOD GAVE THEM UP TO ABANDONMENT AND DESOLATION. What else could he do????? The lesson for us? Jesus is coming AGAIN at an hour you do not expect.

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 22:1-71

Satan can tempt any human! He tempted even the perfect Son of God while on earth. But Satan cannot "take over" a person without that person agreeing to it. Satan had already been tempting Judas and Judas had already been agreeing with Satan about "dipping into" the purse he was carrying for all the 12 disciples (Jn. 12:6). Jesus called Judas "a devil" (Jn. 6:70-71), but Judas was not "demon possessed"---he was "Satan-possessed" (Jn. 13:21-30). "Demon possession," in the NT, appears to be something that happened at least to some people without their consent (the Syro-Phoenician woman's "child" Mk. 7:24-30; the man's "boy" or "child" Lk. 9:37-43, both are spoken of with diminutive nouns in the Greek text). It is difficult to see how little children would willingly consort with demons or willingly practice "demon worship" so as to be possessed by demons as is the allegation today about demon possession. It seems to me that demons were permitted by God to possess human beings in NT times and the demons were permitted to possess whomever they wished whether the persons possessed wanted it or not. But people allowing Satan to seduce them and to lead them into disobeying God "on their own recognizance" is different than "demon possession." This is what Judas did. It is what any and every human being does when he/she chooses to disobey the revealed will and word of God. Paul said of the Gentiles, in general, in Ephesus that they formerly consorted with the "prince of the power of the air," were "sons of disobedience," and "were by nature children of wrath." We may choose to "flee from the devil" (Eph. 4:27; Jas. 4:7). Demon possession was allowed by God for a special purpose during the time of Jesus and the apostles. It was to validate their message as the very word of God by providing for them the miraculous power to cast demons out. That showed that Jesus and the apostles had authority over not only this physical, visible world, but also over the unseen, spiritual world. Thus, they were validated as Almighty God's spokespersons. Demon possession (real, biblical demon possession), in my opinion, ceased with the passing of the apostles. There was no more need to validate their word when the last apostle died. One finds no mention in the NT of exorcism as a gift given to the Corinthian church, or anyone else other than apostles. But Satan's power to tempt is still strong. It isn't nearly as pervasive as it was before the New Covenant was completed in Christ and the world had the blessed "good news." There is "power in the blood" and those who believe that have power to resist (Heb. 2:14ff). The Lord will not let anyone be tempted "beyond their strength" but will "provide the way of escape that they may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13). Satan has been "bound" to a much smaller sphere by the Gospel. Read Paul T. Butler's commentary on The Gospel of Luke, pub. by College Press, 1981, Special Study, "Is There Demon Possession Today As There Was During the Time of Christ's Incarnate Ministry," pp. 153-156, and Special Study, "Gifts and Miracles," pp. 183-190.

Passover time was extremely appropriate for the establishment of the "Lord's Supper." (1) The very purpose of the OT feast was to symbolize the deed Jesus was about to

accomplish---redemption; (2) the apostles needed some connection between the only religion they had ever known and the "new" religion Jesus was bringing into existence; (3) Passover was always a very significant time of communion for all Jews. If Jews could ever "share" in something common to them all it was Passover; (4) Passover feast was specifically a time for teaching the grace of God in choosing and saving the Israelites for the purpose of serving his great redemptive program for the whole world. Paul teaches that the Passover (1 Cor. 5:6-8) was symbolic of the entire Christian life! In what way? In that through the "Paschal lamb" (RSV) (Jesus) which was sacrificed for us, we participate in the divine nature by faith in that sacrifice. (2 Pet. 1:3-5). The Lord's Supper is the ritual by which we are reminded of that participation made possible by the death of Christ. We do not participate by doing the ritual, per se. In other words, there is no efficacy in the ritual itself---nothing magical or miraculous in the emblems. Our participation, or communion, in the divine nature is made possible only by faith in the work of Christ. "Through him we have obtained access by faith to this grace in which we stand..." (Rom. 5:3, RSV). The Roman Catholic church teaches that at a certain point in the "mass" the wafer and the wine become, miraculously, literally, the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ who is being sacrificed at that moment---for the worshiper's sins. Thus, the "communion" for the Roman Catholic becomes the "sacrament" by which they have their sins atoned for. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, his disciples were arguing as to who would be the greatest in the kingdom! When Christians observe the Supper, they should be "discerning" that no believer is greater than another believer in Christ's kingdom---we are all servants. Humanity is leveled at the foot of the cross. This is precisely what Jesus taught at the first Supper when he washed the disciples feet! "Discerning the body" (1 Cor. 11:29) is really not "trying to visualize the crucifixion of Christ"---it is, according to the context of 1 Cor. 11, deciding that every Christian is equally a part of the body of Christ.

Jesus had just poured the first cup of wine for the Passover and given it to the apostles when he noticed their contention. The Greek word *philoneikia* ("dispute" Lk. 22:24, NIV) means "love of strife" and signifies a spirit of contentiousness. The apostles were enjoying their dispute over who would be greatest. Jesus had to interrupt this precocious moment to rebuke these ambitious men. Nothing hardens the human heart to spiritual sensitivity like ambition, greed and envy. Jesus had already rebuked them in practically the same words, just a few weeks earlier, as they walked through Perea on their way to this very Passover (Mt. 20:25-28). They did not get the message then. Now they were still acting like the heathen around them. Unbelievers get power over one another by bribery, flattery, deceit, favoritism or force. They do it for selfish reasons. Jesus made it very plain: "It shall not be so among you!" His disciples must understand what the world of unbelief does not understand. The only one who really has any influence over others is the one who gets it from those who have given it willingly because he has loved them and served them. Any person whose influence over others depends on force, deceit, flattery, partiality, does not really have honor. The greatest apostle would be the one who served the most. Jesus was the ultimate example of this principle.

This "supper" was intended to prepare those apostles for Jesus' fleshly departure from their presence. And it did---in the long haul. They were not prepared for the short-haul.

When he gave himself to his enemies without a struggle—without resisting, they all deserted him. They could not bear the injustice, the humiliation, the loss of their ambitious plans when Jesus did not resist being unjustly arrested. They believed he was the Messiah (God's "Anointed"—the Christ), they also believed he had miraculous powers—but they believed also that he should have resisted and physically conquered his enemies. When he didn't, they were ready to give up the idea of the kingdom of God being established. It was the resurrection that turned everything around. Once they understood that everything Jesus had promised was true, how were they to remember him, to keep his great work of death and resurrection uppermost in their thoughts? By observing the "Lord's Supper" of course! How were they to "commune" (share) with Jesus? By the "Lord's Supper" of course. What would be the best way to try to appreciate that he was really "with" them when he was not visible? The "Lord's Supper," of course. That is exactly what the "Lord's Supper" is for today! But do we need it each week? Why don't we just observe it monthly, or quarterly, or annually, like other Protestant churches? (1) there is apostolic example (or precedent) that the first century church observed it every first day of the week (Acts 20:7 plus other 1st cent. Christian literature); (2) Jesus said, "This do! as often as you do it, do it in remembrance of me...." indicating it should be often; (3) we certainly need a weekly reminder of Whose we are and why we are his; (4) and who said we should follow other churches in their practices?

It is not an easy thing to die for any cause, or for anyone else. However, many millions have died for causes (liberty, honor, justice, to protect others). Many have died rather than compromise their Christian faith and principles. So, it is not uncommon for man to sacrifice himself. How many of those who die for "causes" would live for Jesus Christ? I've know many military men and women who would die for their country, but they wouldn't live for God and Christ. So, it appears that it is easier to get people to die for certain causes than it is to get them to turn their living (lives) over to the will of God and Christ. How much courage does it take to really live as Jesus would have us live? Ever read the book, In His Steps?

Jesus prayer in Gethsemane shows us that we may often have to go against our "feelings" in order to do the will of God. The "feelings" of the flesh always cry out for us to feed, soothe, protect, and perpetuate the flesh. The "feelings" of the individual always cry out for the individual to assert itself, promote itself, and indulge itself. The will of God says a Christian is, "...to not think of himself more highly than he ought to think..." "...to outdo one another in showing honor..." (Rom. 12:3,10); Phil. 2:3-4 urges believers, "do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves..." "...each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others...". What Jesus experienced in Gethsemane does indeed apply to us. He was human, just as human as we are. His feelings cried out against death to self (Heb. 5:7-9). But he subjugated his feelings to his mind/faith and did what he knew was the will of God. We must all come to our own "Gethsemane" and make the decision to control our feelings by what we know to be the will of God. No one said being a Christian would be easy! Jesus never said it. The apostle Paul found it was not easy (Rom. 7:13-25; Gal. 5:16-26). It is WAR! So, let's quit playing like it's a game.

Peter denied he was a follower of Jesus in the courtyard of the high priest's house, either (1) because he thought he could rescue Jesus by some physical act if they did not suspect who he was; or (2) because he was humiliated to be known as a follower of Jesus because of what was happening to Jesus. I think (1) is more likely. It was Peter's adamant insistence that Jesus was not going to die that made Jesus say to him, "Get thee behind me Satan, thou mind not the things of God but the things of men." In other words, Peter was ready to die (physically) for Jesus (Mt. 26:35; Mk. 14:31), in fact so were all the disciples (Jn. 11:16). The apostles were not cowards as far as physical combat was concerned. They would have fought the enemies of Jesus at the drop of a hat. Remember, Peter was the one who whipped out the sword in Gethsemane and tried to decapitate the servant of the high priest! The problem the apostles had at that point in time was spiritual cowardice! They were not prepared to be members of a kingdom that stood for peace, love for enemies, and forgiveness. Don't we all need to take inventory of our spirituality? What kind of a kingdom do we think the church is? Do we want it to be like the kingdoms of the world? Big, popular, powerful in secular influence, indulgent of our whims and fancies and feelings? Isn't that essentially the same kind of denial for which the apostles were guilty?

Someone did protest the illegal and unjust way the innocent Jesus was treated by the authorities! It was Jesus himself! (see Jn. 18:19-23). But after his first protest, he did not protest again. He merely answered a few questions and then kept silent. He knew there was no point in protesting further. These wicked men were determined to have him executed, so determined they would bring false accusation against Jesus, bribe false witnesses, and perjure themselves. Have you ever wondered what you would have done had you been present at Jesus' trial and had an opportunity to say anything? If you had anything at all to say, of course, would have depended on what you knew for certain about him---and how you knew it (as an eyewitness or second-handed). Very few people had any opportunity to say anything at his trials----only the authorities (the Sanhedrin and Pilate). But why were there not some of the men on the Sanhedrin possessed of enough integrity and courage to speak up in his defense? Nicodemus had, earlier that year at the Feast of Tabernacles! (see Jn. 7:50-52). What about people today protesting the execution of the pick-axe murderer (woman) in Texas because she had "turned her life around had become a Christian, and was no longer a threat to society" (1998)? Jesus was not a "threat to society" he had killed no one; he had in fact, raised some people from the dead, healed many, cast out demons, etc. etc. How many today would protest the death of Jesus Christ? Perhaps many thousands, but, would they accept his death as atonement for their sins? Would they become his disciples and commit themselves to him, heart and soul and possessions?

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 23:1-56

After the Jews had subjected Jesus to illegal and malicious, verbal and physical abuse, they took him to Pilate (Roman procurator of Judea) for three reasons: (a) they were determined that he must die for his popularity with the masses and their ignorant and evil expectation that he was about to establish a physical "kingdom" and replace them as the leadership of the nation; (b) while they were determined that Jesus must die, Roman edict prohibited them from executing anyone on their own recognizance; they must either get permission to execute him or have Pilate do it. If the Jewish rulers had been in a legal position to order Jesus' execution, they would have done so immediately after their sham trial. They had tried to incite the populace to kill him at various times (e.g., John 10:31). (c) If the Jews could force Pilate to have Jesus crucified as a seditionist against the government of Rome it would relieve them of the onus of putting a popular and clearly innocent person to death; furthermore, the Jews despised Pilate and wanted to "get something, anything, on him" so that Rome might take away his procurator-ship and recall him to Rome.

Pilate was the consummate politician---"Pass the buck." He knew that Jesus had done nothing deserving Rome's condemnation. He did not want the death of an innocent man on his hands. This Jesus was a Galilean, and Herod Antipas (son of Herod the Great) was tetrarch of Galilee. Send him to Herod. Put the "monkey" on Herod's "back." Herod Antipas the sadistic, gluttonous, drunkard, egomaniac was also extremely paranoid about his political position, just as his old, murderous father was. Herod Antipas was a debauched "playboy" and loved to "party." Being half Arab and half Samaritan he was very superstitious. Nothing would please him more than to have this "Jesus of Nazareth" brought before him so he might investigate the political ramifications of his popularity. It also pleased him to have Pilate acknowledge his political rulership of Galilee. Herod saw an opportunity to have some "fun" with this itinerant rabbi, now a prisoner, who supposedly had "magical" powers to do "signs" and "wonders." Herod Antipas had, not too long before this, given the order to have John the Immerser decapitated (beheaded) and his head served on a platter to his conniving wife (who was also his niece and sister-in-law), Herodias. Herod was guilty of adultery, incest and murder. This he had done when he was drinking and carousing at his birthday party, being sexually enticed by his stepdaughter's dancing. Herod's murder of J.B. was extremely unpopular with the multitudes. This time, however, Herod would not kill a prisoner who was popular with the multitudes. Herod was no dummy. He would see if Jesus is a threat to his throne, be entertained by some "sign," have a little sadistic fun abusing the prisoner, show off his "power," make himself popular with the Jewish leaders, and send him back to Pilate. There have been other Herods in high places throughout history. But Jesus did not even so much as grace Herod with a word!

When Pilate asked what accusation they were bringing against Jesus (John

18:28:32), the Jews said, "We found this man perverting our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ ("Anointed") a king" (Luke 23:2), and Pilate said, "You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people..." (Luke 23:14). But the charges were not true as the Jews inferred: (a) Jesus was not guilty of forbidding people to pay taxes to Caesar. In fact, he had advocated just the opposite (Luke 20:21-26). Jesus never uttered a word that would have incited the Jewish populace to revolt against Roman rule; (b) Jesus never, so far as I am able to remember the Gospel accounts, personally, verbally, claimed to be "king." And he certainly did not ever claim or intend to be "king" physically and politically, over the Jews. In fact, Jesus fled the populace when they wanted to "take him by force and make him king" (Jn. 6:15). He allowed the apostles to preach that he was the "Anointed" (Christ) of God; he allowed the multitudes to acclaim him as the "Son of David," but he never did so. All of Jesus's claims had to do with him being "Son of man" (a messianic title from the OT), "one with God."

Eight times Pilate declared Jesus innocent (John 18:38; Luke 23:15; 23:20; 23:21; John 19:4; 19:6; 19:12; Matthew 27:24). Pilate not only proposed to "chastise" (scourge) Jesus, he did (John 19:1-3)! The Roman scourge was a whip with several thongs, each loaded with balls of lead, or sharp pieces of bone or spikes. Stripped of his clothes, his hands tied to a column or stake, with his back bent, the accused was lashed with these whips by six soldiers. Each stroke cut into the flesh until the veins and sometimes the intestines were laid bare. Often the whips struck the victims face knocking out eyes and teeth. It often ended in death. "Scourging" or "chastising" was the common Roman method of "making sure" the accused was either innocent or guilty. If the accused could maintain his profession of innocence until the "chastising" was completed, he was almost always acquitted and released---if not, he was then determined to be guilty and punished according to the penalties of Roman law. The charge of sedition was punishable by crucifixion. That is why the Jews accused Jesus of "forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar" rather than "blasphemy" of Jewish religion. They were fearful that Pilate would not let them stone him to death for blasphemy. The Jews knew that Pilate despised them and would like nothing better than to "get one up" on them. Further, if they could get Jesus killed by crucifixion it would be a much greater spectacle and stigma against him than stoning him for blasphemy.

Pilate capitulated to the demands of the Jews because (a) the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend; everyone who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar" (John 19:12); (b) when Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your king?" the chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15); (c) he saw he was gaining nothing (Matt. 27:24); (d) he saw that a riot was beginning (Matt. 27:24) and this would make him appear incompetent back in Rome; (e) the Jews were willing to take responsibility crying, "His blood be on us and on our children" (Matt. 27:25); (f) Pilate wished to satisfy the crowd which was demanding that Jesus be crucified (Luke 23:18-25; Mark 15:15). Pilate was a pragmatist. Today he would be called a "postmodernist." (the following resume of "Postmodernism" is from World magazine, 2/21/98)—(a) Truth is a construction---i.e., truth is relative---truth is "constructed" according to what works for the one constructing it; (b) Truth is a matter of interpretation, i.e., take anyone's statement or writing and "deconstruct" it, i.e.,

interpret it to make it mean what you want it or need it to say; (c) Truth is an exercise of power, i.e., those who rule impose their constructions of reality on everyone else---reason, evidence, and fact-finding can be set aside by simply exercising power over one's opponents; (d) Truth is compartmentalized, i.e., human beings are free to have many identities, compartmentalizing them so they do not impinge on each other---religion, sexual desires, job demands, family role, and political beliefs and none of these "compartments" need have any bearing on any of the others. Does this characterize any other politicians, past and present, you know about? Lord help us! Let us pray!

The "green wood" was the Messiah. The Jews and Romans were attempting to "burn him up" and destroy him. But he would not "burn" nor be destroyed. He would rise again! But what of the "dry wood?" The "dry wood" was the Jewish nation which was soon going to be put to the fires of destruction (A.D. 66-70). It would be consumed! It would never be God's "chosen nation" again. After the vicarious, death of God's "Anointed" sacrificial Lamb (and his resurrection and establishment of his "kingdom"---the church), "chosen-ness" (or "election") would be opened to anyone and everyone (but only those) who would come to God through faith in Jesus Christ (John 14:6, Acts 4:12; Heb. 9:25-29; 10:1-39, et al.). Jesus knew what that "holocaust" (the destruction of Jerusalem and Judaism) would mean to the Jews. Many of them would never accept his atoning sacrifice (Acts 13:46; Rom. ch. 9-10-11, et al.). It was the compassionate heart of God crying out to a few in the crowd who were feeling sorry for his physical condition. Apparently these were not believers---only sympathizers. They wailed because they took pity on his fleshly torture. His physical weakness is all they saw. They had not seen his deity. May we suggest that we too may be overly inclined to show pity only for the physical torture Jesus had to endure and may miss focusing our contrition in the right place. What we should lament is our sin and the injustice of the perfect Son of man having to be "made sin on our behalf." We should fall before him in awe because he was willing as a perfect human to suffer the "second death" in our place. As G. Campbell Morgan said: "In the last analysis, Jesus is never an object of pity on the part of sinful, condemned humanity. He is the OBJECT OF WONDER AND TRUE WORSHIP, as he is seen moving in regal splendor towards his cross." It is nothing short of awesome (reverence) that Jesus, in these hours of severest psychological and physical torture, could take time to show concern and deep sympathy for the intransigent Jewish nation and warn them once more of the heinousness of their evil. These are the only words he spoke between Pilate's judgment and the cross!

Jesus BECAME A CURSE FOR YOU AND FOR ME when he was crucified! (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21). It is not an accident of history that Jesus died by crucifixion. He was destined to be crucified (Acts 2:23). He himself predicted his own death by crucifixion (Matt. 20:19). It would not have done for Jesus to be put to death another way! It was prophesied that he would become a "curse" for all mankind (Isa. 53:1-12). Let us pause to praise God for his mercy and praise Jesus for his love!!!!!!

Jesus could promise anyone anything he wished to promise so long as it was within the revealed will of God. (a) this thief was clearly penitent for his sins; (b) this thief certainly

had plenty of opportunity to know enough about Jesus to know what was claimed about Jesus and that Jesus had given evidence to authenticate those claims so his faith in Jesus was based on knowledge; (c) Jesus could give salvation to anyone on any terms he wished so long as his last will and testament had not been probated (Heb. 9:15-28); (d) John the Immerser had already, in effect, demonstrated the law of animal sacrifices was being abrogated—the thief could have accepted J.B.'s baptism; (e) Jesus told Zacchaeus "today has salvation come to this house" and we don't know what Z. had done to come into covenant relationship at that point; (f) Christ's last will and testament was probated (Latin, probare; "to prove or establish") on the Day of Pentecost, A.D. 30, when its divine authority was attested to by his resurrection and subsequent miracles of the Holy Spirit. After that point in time those wishing to be in Paradise with Jesus must conform to those covenant terms.

In the centurion's utterance in the Greek text there is no definite article before the noun "God." If one translated the Greek text of Luke 23:39 literally it would be something like this, "...Truly, of a god, a son was this man." The absence of the definite article in Greek constitutes, where the context indicates, the equivalent of the indefinite article in English, i.e., "a." The centurion probably did not say, "Truly this man was a Son of God." It would probably be something more like, "Truly this man was a son of the gods" (plural, "gods" since Romans were polytheists, worshipers of many idols). In Greek, the noun with the definite article identifies, but the noun without the definite article qualifies. The centurion was honest hearted enough to recognize Jesus's innocence, but he probably had no concept of monotheism. So what he is exclaiming is that Jesus's behavior, and the signs he had seen, indicated to him Jesus was probably a son of some god. He knew Jesus was different from any other human being he had ever known. He was on the "right track." Let's hope some Christian found him later and converted him to Christ.

Mark mentions that it was "Preparation, that is before Sabbath" (Mark 15:42) when Joseph of Arimathea asked for the body of Jesus; John mentions that "because it was the Preparation of the Jews and" Jesus was buried (John 19:42); and Luke in our text today writes that it was "Preparation and Sabbath was coming" (Luke 23:54). It is interesting that only John uses the definite article before *parakeuen* ("Preparation"). "Preparation" was such a significant DAY it did not even need a definite article to emphasize its importance. "Preparation" was FRIDAY, the day before SABBATH. Before the end of "Preparation" everything must be completed and readied for Sabbath celebration. No work, no cooking of food, no traveling, etc. could be done once Sabbath began. SABBATH began at sundown on FRIDAY (i.e., "Preparation"). For a Jew to say "Preparation" was simply to say, "Friday." Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried on FRIDAY, before sundown! He was in the grave a part of Friday, all day Saturday, and a part of Sunday morning. Colloquially, for a Jew, that would be "3 days and 3 nights." Jews did not express themselves in exact terms of hours and minutes as Western (or Gentile) people did. It was important that Jesus be in the tomb "3 days and nights" as he had predicted. So three Gospel accounts make note that he died and was buried on "PREPARATION" (FRIDAY).

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Teacher's Notes, by Paul T. Butler

Luke 24:1-53

Besides the actual, bodily resurrection there are many alleged alternative explanations for the empty tomb of Jesus:

(a) Jesus' disciples stole his body and buried it elsewhere, then concocted the "myth" of a resurrection---Matthew says the Jewish rulers bribed tomb-guards to spread the story around that the disciples did that when the guards were asleep. That disciples could steal his body without awakening the guards is incredible. That they might pull off such a hoax and then suffer what they did for a lie is even more incredible. Where is the historical documentation from eyewitnesses to prove the disciples did so?

(b) Jesus' enemies removed his body from the tomb---why didn't the authorities present his dead body to those who were preaching a resurrection---that certainly would have squelched any truth to their proclamations. Again, there is no documentation that such measures were ever taken.

(c) The women, strangers in Jerusalem, half asleep, scared, blinded by tears, went to the wrong tomb. A young man was hanging around there, guessing what they wanted, said, "You seek Jesus...he is not here...behold the place where they laid him." The women became frightened, ran away, believed they had seen an angel, told the disciples, etc.---this attack is first, dishonest, for it leaves out the angel's statement, "he is risen..." second, the women knew precisely where the tomb was for they were there earlier to see Jesus being buried. Again, there is no alternative documentation to validate such an alleged story.

(d) Jesus didn't really die, he just passed out from all the trauma, was revived in the coolness of the tomb, got up, rolled the stone away, came out, evaded the sleeping guards, and appeared to his disciples. The disciples were ignorant and superstitious men, couldn't believe he had not died, so went out and preached that he had come back from the dead. The crucifying soldiers declared Jesus dead! John declared him dead. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus knew he was dead. Pilate took the word of the soldiers. The Jews (Matt. 28:11-15) knew he was dead. There is no document from eyewitnesses saying he merely fainted on the cross and was still alive when they put him in the tomb--there is the ridiculous Passover Plot, by Dr. Hugh Schonfield, and other rags like it, but they are preposterous in light of the antiquity, authenticity, and credibility of the NT Scriptures.

DO YOU BELIEVE A JEWISH RABBI OF THE STATURE OF SAUL OF TARSUS (PAUL) COULD HAVE BEEN CONVERTED TO BECOME A PERSECUTED APOSTLE OF CHRIST ON THE BASIS OF A HOAX?! NO WAY!!!

The women seem to have forgotten that Jesus predicted at least 3 times he must die but that he would be resurrected (Matt. 16:21-3; 17:22-23; 20:17-19). They apparently had even forgotten that he predicted he must die. All of his followers forgot because they didn't want to know what he predicted---they absolutely would not accept the prediction that he must die (Matt. 16:22; Mark 14:31). They were so engrossed in their plans for an earthly Messianic kingdom (and their positions in it) they paid little attention to what he kept saying to them. Of course, disciples of Jesus today would never be so engrossed in their own plans they wouldn't pay attention to what Jesus says about the nature of his Messiahship and his kingdom (satire).

How else explain a story like the women told if they saw Jesus dead----really dead---as dead as Roman scourging and crucifixion could make him! What amazes me is that the disciples saw Jesus raise three people from the dead (Jairus' daughter, the widow of Nain's son, and Lazarus), and yet they did not think he could raise himself from the dead! They saw him do so many other mighty miracles---even demonstrations of power over hell (demons), power over all nature, power to know other's thoughts, and yet they disbelieved that he was resurrected from death. Remember, there was a lot of occult mysticism in the rabbinical Judaism of that day. Peter would later affirm, "We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty..." (2 Pet. 1:16). And Paul warned the young evangelists, Timothy and Titus, about paying attention to "Jewish myths" of their day (1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4; Titus 1:14). When the women first told the apostles all they had experienced at the empty tomb, the apostles thought the women had succumbed to some Jewish myth to explain what they had seen.

The two disciples on the way to Emmaus were sermonizing (Gr. homilein, from which we get "homiletics") with one another as they walked along. In other words, they were deeply involved in analytical dialogue, trying to sort out the circumstances and meaning of all they had seen and heard in Jerusalem about the arrest, trials, and execution of Jesus. Theirs was not a casual conversation. They were really "jawing" with one another (Gr. suzetein, "debate, argumentation, disputation") about what had gone on and what they had heard about an empty tomb, angels, resurrection, prophecies, etc. They were despondent, they had hoped Jesus was the Redeemer of Israel, but he wasn't---he was dead. All their visions of deliverance from Rome, a glorious new, powerful, righteous Israel, were crushed. Apparently they were so totally concentrating on these ominous, awesome things they had just seen and heard, they looked right at Jesus as they talked with him and did not recognize him. After all, they were not expecting him to be alive, walking along the road to Emmaus. I do not believe God miraculously kept them from recognizing him (24:31). I've seen the same phenomenon happen naturally---two people so engrossed in arguing, they don't know what is going on around them.

The OT predicts the Messiah's suffering and glorification in: 2 Sam. 7:12; Psa. 16:1-11; 22:1-31; 89:3-4; 110:1-7; Isa. 52:13---53:12; Dan. 9:24-27; Zech. 11:7-14; 12:10-14; 13:1-9, and perhaps many other places for which we have not space to list and explain. The Jewish Talmud forbade Jewish rabbis from teaching what the OT prophets said about the time of the coming of the Messiah according to this note in The Hebrew Christian, organ of The International Hebrew Christian Alliance: " In Ketubot we read that 'the prophets shall not make known the end' and Rabbi Jonathan says in Sanhedrin 'Blasted be the bones of those who calculate the end.' Rabbi Jonathan ben Uziah is even rebuked by a voice from Heaven (a Bath Kol) because he 'reveals my secrets' and he is prevented from teaching on the book of Daniel (Dan. 9:24-27) because 'The date of the Messiah is in it.'" All the Jews, including the apostles, were so totally prejudiced about a physical deliverance from oppressors, and a re-institution of a physical Jewish kingdom on the order of the days of David and Solomon, they could not conceive of a kingdom that was spiritual (i.e., "not of this world" John 18:36-38). All their interpretations of the OT prophets was focused on a physical fulfillment. All one has to do to discover this is read the apocalyptic style in Jewish Apocryphal literature. The NT Scriptures declare unequivocally and unreservedly, that the Messianic kingdom, the church of Jesus Christ, is a SPIRITUAL KINGDOM. Our warfare is spiritual (2 Cor. 10:3-5), our covenant is spiritual, our fellowship is spiritual, our promises are spiritual (Eph. 1:3), our hope, or destiny, is spiritual. This physical world is doomed to extinction.

Christianity is not any part myth: (a) it claims that it is not mythological (1 Pet. 1:16-21, et al.)---the question is does it substantiate this claim?; (b) it claims to be based upon eyewitness testimony to historical, empirical facts (John 20:30-31; 1 Cor. 15:1-58; 1 John 1:1-4, et al.)---does it substantiate this claim?; (c) only 40 days after the events recorded about Jesus' death & resurrection the apostles were preaching them in the presence of Jesus' enemies, as facts everyone knew or could know (Acts 2:22) and Paul told King Agrippa they were things "not done in a corner"---it takes centuries for myths to be formed and believed; (d) if the resurrection of Christ was a "myth" why encumber it with details of a common human existence which made it open to investigation by enemies as well as friends; (e) if it was a myth it would have been just as palatable as the 100 other myths of the pagan civilization of that day and people would not have been persecuted and killed for believing it.

Here is a classic quotation of subjective, "I feel it" Christianity: "We cannot prove the resurrection as an historical fact and we do not need to...what the church needs...is the testimony of persons who...say that Christ has appeared to them...and that they have experienced his presence in some of the crises of meaningful experiences of their lives." -- Dr. J. Daniel Joyce, dean of the Graduate Seminary, Phillips University, in The Christian, March 30, 1969. First, if Christ and his resurrection was not an historical fact, how can he "appear" to anyone?! Second, we certainly do need to prove the resurrection as an historical fact, because that is what the NT claims it was! If it isn't, then the NT is a hoax, a lie, a fraudulent document. And millions of people have been slandered, abused, persecuted, tortured and murdered professing a faith that is a lie, a fraud! The facts of the Gospel are hard, realistic, historical facts, NO MATTER HOW ANYONE FEELS ABOUT THEM! You may "feel" about the Gospel facts any way you please, but your feelings cannot substantiate them or erase

them. They are THERE! The Gospel facts are just as historically real as the landing of the Pilgrims on the shores of Cape Cod in November 1620 after disembarking from the Mayflower. No one alive today saw the Pilgrims land at Cape Cod—that they did is accepted from the testimony (i.e. written records from those who did see it and were there. The Gospels adhere to all the fundamental principles of the laws of evidence for the historicity of ancient documents. **THEY WOULD STAND UP IN ANY HONEST, UNPREJUDICED COURT OF LAW IN ANY PLACE OR TIME!** This has been attested to by scores of legal giants like Wm. Gladstone, Simon Greenleaf, et al.

We've already dealt with the detailed answers to this question in Question #1, however, the militant world of unbelief continues to pose them and to try to make the NT accounts to be the naive rambling of some ignorant and credulous fishermen whose superstitions compelled them to fabricate a "myth" that Jesus of Nazareth was risen from the dead when he was not. Here's another classic quotation: "Christians need not affirm that Christ rose from the dead at all...so far as its having literal historical significance, it has become excess baggage for most of us..." Dr. D. W. Ferm, Presbyterian minister in Newsweek, 3-3-1972.-----and yet another, Rev. John Burke, P.O., exec. dir. of the Word of God Institute, a Catholic organization, quoted in the Los Angeles Times, 9-5-1977, "said he did not know of 'any credible biblical scholar who would hold for a bodily Resurrection.'" All Christians (esp. parents), not just preachers and elders, need to memorize the arguments for the historicity and credibility of the NT documents. There are young, impressionable, malleable souls whose eternal destiny may hang in the balance!

What would be the point in being a Christian if Jesus Christ did not actually, historically, rise from the dead? Even the great apostle Paul said (1 Cor. 15:19), if Christ is not raised we (Christians) are of all men most to be pitied----if he was not resurrected, we should eat and drink (practice the heathen life) for tomorrow we die! If the NT is not **ABSOLUTELY** true and historical, everything is morally relative to everyone's personal wishes, desires and feelings---there would be no absolutes! In February 1998, a University of Villanova women's basketball coach made his team allow an injured player from a Univ. of Connecticut women's basketball team, at the very beginning of their game, score an uncontested, undefended goal so she could break UCon's all time scoring record; the injured player was then taken out of the game and played no more. The Villanova coach, Harry Perretta said, "Some people will construe it as bad, some will construe it as great...There's no right or wrong answer. There is no absolute." (AP wire service in the Joplin Globe, 2-26-98). That, dear friend, is the moral relativism that has so thoroughly permeated our society as to make it unable, in every facet and level of its structure, to believe and act as if there are no moral absolutes for any thinking or behavior. And it is primarily due to a non-militant, wimpy, status-quo attitude of those who profess to be Christians and their failure to be "the salt of the earth and the light of the world" in the public educational and political arenas of America. The church must infiltrate all areas and levels of society and, if not totally convert it, make it sit up and take notice that the Bible is the historically-verifiable, divinely revealed, absolute Word of Almighty God and any human being and society which does not take it as its basis of operation is doomed to the judgment of God!

Introduction to Paul T. Butler Th.D

Paul was born in Springfield Missouri and graduated from Conway High School prior to enlistment in the US Navy. He began serious bible study with correspondence courses from San Jose Bible College. He later enrolled in Ozark Bible College and acquired his Bachelor of Theology degree June of 1961. He received a Master of Biblical Literature degree from Ozark in May of 1973. He received a Doctorate of Theology from The Theological University of America in October of 1990.

Paul taught at Ozark Christian College from 1960 to 1997. He also served many years as registrar for the college.

Introduction to the Sound Bible Study project.

The Sound Bible Study project is a cooperative effort of Christian educators and Jordan Media Enterprises LLC to provide the serious examination of the Scriptures for the conscientious student. All the teachers are experienced educators who have spent countless hours in the classroom on both sides of the lectern. The audio recordings and written notes are made available for those who wish to learn God's Word at a collegiate level but have been unable to matriculate. There is no intention to compete with the many faithful Bible schools, but rather to serve along side and strengthen both the student and the teacher for a stronger and more effective Kingdom of God that knows how to properly divide the Word of God.

