

Helping Our Children Present Jesus as the Servant Part II

**Growing Godly Family Series
Manual 30**

By

Duane L. Anderson

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**American Indian Bible Institute
Box 511
Norwalk, CA 90651-0511
www.aibi.org**

Growing Godly Families Series

This series of manuals is the result of a series of weekly e-mail topics that have been prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. They originally started out as a one page topic that gradually grew to the point where most topics are about three pages in length.

This series is especially designed for those who are already Christian leaders to give them Biblical principles for the development of godly physical and spiritual families. Because they give Biblical principles for developing godly families, they are also helpful for new Christians that want to grow and become godly families.

Mark 10:43-45 says, "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." In these verses Christ taught that godly spiritual leaders do not have the attitudes of leaders in the world. Worldly leadership is based on power and authority and is designed to benefit the leader and place him above others. In contrast, godly spiritual leadership is designed to help every Christian reach their full potential in Christ. The following three statements give a summary of three styles of leadership. The purpose of this series is to help every family develop their full potential as godly families.

If we drive people, we will drive them until they can get out of our way.

If we lead people, we will be able to lead them as far as we have gone ourselves.

If we serve people, we will help each person develop their full God given potential and equip each person for the ministry that Christ has prepared for every Christian.

In the world people often measure success by the amount of things that they accumulate in this world before they die. However, they are unable to take any of those things with them when they die. Mark 8:36-37 says, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Success produces rewards until we die but it produces nothing for eternity.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by our faithfulness and obedience. Matthew 6:19-21 says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Effectiveness produces eternal rewards. Mark 10:29-30 says, "So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life." I Corinthians 10:31 says, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." The Growing Godly Families Series is designed to help your family life count for eternity by bringing glory to God.

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Jesus was Transfigured

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly explain to others the choice that every person faces. People either make the choice to follow the things of this world or they make the choice to repent of their sin of unbelief and follow Christ. In our topic today we will see that Jesus was transfigured before some of His disciples.

Mark 9:1-6 says, “And He said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.’ Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’— because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.” Here we see that Jesus told the disciples that some of them were going to experience a very important event in their lives.

Jesus said that some of the disciples would not die until they had seen what the kingdom of God would be like. Jesus said that they would also see that kingdom with power. As a result, Jesus said that the disciples involved would have the opportunity to see the kingdom of God make a visible appearance. Just six days later Jesus told Peter, James and John with Him and the four of them went to a high mountain alone. The highest mountain in that area would be Mount Hermon which is about 9200 feet high. There on the mountain as they were alone Jesus was transfigured before the three disciples. The word “transfigured” means to be changed into another form or to transform. Suddenly Jesus looked very different as He had all of the glory that He had before He came to this earth and after He returned to heaven following the resurrection. We see that the clothes of Jesus became shining and very bright. They were so white that they were as bright as fresh snow. We see that they were so bright that it is impossible for someone on earth to get them that white by washing them because they showed the glory of God.

However, what happened next was even more amazing. Suddenly Elijah and Moses appeared and began talking with Jesus. Elijah went to heaven without dying while Moses had died. In the kingdom of God there will be both people who died and people who have not died. The Jews often divided the Old Testament into two parts, the Law and the Prophets. Moses wrote the Law while Elijah was one of the Prophets. Both the Law and the Prophets talked about the coming death of Jesus. Luke 9:30-31 says, “And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.” Here we see that these two men talked with Jesus about His coming death that had been prophesied in both the Law and the Prophets.

Peter and the other disciples were so amazed and fearful that they did not even know what to

say. We see that Peter did manage to talk even though he did not know what to say. As a result, he said, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." This may have been an indication that Peter thought that Jesus was going to set up the Kingdom of God immediately. Zechariah 14:16 says, "And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles." Here we see that Zechariah prophesied that in the future kingdom that the people will gather from throughout the world to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. At the time of the Feast of Tabernacles the Jews would spend the week in tents or shelters made of branches.

Since Peter did not really know what he was talking about, the Father took charge. Mark 9:7-10 says, "And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!'" Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves. Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant." Suddenly a thick cloud covered the mountain. Then a voice spoke from the cloud and said, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"

We see that the Father spoke from heaven at least three times about Jesus. At the baptism of Jesus Mark 1:11 says, "Then a voice came from heaven, 'You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" Then during the week before Jesus was crucified John 12:28 says, "'Father, glorify Your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, saying, 'I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.'" We have seen that the event mentioned in this chapter happened shortly after Jesus first told His disciples about His coming crucifixion.

Since Jesus talked with Moses and Elijah about His coming death and resurrection, the Father wanted the disciples to really listen to what Jesus was saying so that they would understand what was going to happen less than a year later. Matthew 17:6-8 gives more details about what happened right after the Father spoke. Those verses say, "And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, 'Arise, and do not be afraid.' When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Here we see that Jesus did not want them to be fearful about the things that they had seen and heard. Instead He wanted them to understand. Once they got up from the ground Moses and Elijah were no longer there and they just saw Jesus as He had been before He was transfigured.

We see that Jesus gave the disciples some instructions as they were going down the mountain. Jesus commanded the disciples not to tell anyone what they had seen until He had risen from the dead. The disciples obeyed what Jesus had said and did not tell anyone until after His resurrection. However, we see that the three disciples had questions in their own minds. They did not understand what was meant by the resurrection of the dead. Except for the Sadducees most of the Jews looked forward to the resurrection. Job 19:25-27 says, "For I know *that* my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. *How* my heart yearns within me!" The Jews were very familiar with promises like this one in Job and looked forward to seeing God with their physical eyes.

Because the three disciples did not understand what Jesus meant by His resurrection, they asked Jesus a question. Mark 9:11-13 says, “And they asked Him, saying, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” Then He answered and told them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I say to you that Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him.” The scribes taught about the promise in Malachi 4:5 so the disciples were familiar with that promise. That verse says, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.” As a result, they were expecting Elijah to come.

Matthew 16:10-13 says, “And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.” In Matthew we see that Jesus explained to the disciples that the ministry of John the Baptist as he prepared the way for the coming of Jesus was a partial fulfillment of the promise regarding Elijah.

However, that did not mean that they understood what Jesus said about His coming death and resurrection. That was why they were questioning among themselves. The disciples had been waiting for the Messiah who would come and restore the kingdom to Israel. As a result, they could not understand when Jesus said that the Son of Man must suffer many things. Here we see a lesson that is important for us to understand so that we can help others grow in their understanding. Many Christians have never had many of the Old Testament prophecies explained to them. They may have read them but they did not ask the Holy Spirit to help them understand. As a result, they have no understanding about what much of the Bible teaches. That is why it is so important to help our physical and spiritual children become familiar with the entire Bible and not just a few sections.

We also need to help our children understand the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. In I Corinthians 2:9-12 we read, “But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.” Here we see that the Holy Spirit is the One who gives understanding. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Healed a Deaf and Dumb Boy

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children know that the Holy Spirit is the One who gives Christians understanding of the Word of God. We saw that is why it is important for them to become familiar with the whole Word of God so that the Holy Spirit can remind them of other Scriptures that will give them this understanding. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus healed a boy that was deaf and dumb.

Mark 9:14-18 says, “And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them. Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to *Him*, greeted Him. And He asked the scribes, ‘What are you discussing with them?’ Then one of the crowd answered and said, ‘Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.’” In these verses we see that a great crowd of people were gathered around the other disciples when Jesus and the three disciples came down from the mountain.

We see that the scribes were trying to start an argument with the disciples. The crowd saw Jesus as He was coming down from the mountain and started to run to Him. The crowd immediately greeted Jesus when they got to Him. Jesus then spoke to the scribes in the crowd and asked the question, “What are you discussing with them?” Jesus knew the hearts of the scribes and knew that they were trying to start an argument with the disciples. Jesus chose to protect the disciples from such questions because He knew that the disciples were not yet fully prepared to recognize and answer the traps of the scribes and other religious leaders because they did not yet have the Holy Spirit.

We do not read that the scribes gave any answer. Instead one of the men in the crowd told Jesus that he had brought his son to Jesus to heal. The man said that his son was possessed by a demonic spirit that made it impossible for the boy to speak. This demonic spirit also did other things to the boy to try and destroy his life. John 10:10 says, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” This verse tells us that the goal of Satan is always to destroy. These verses show us that the demons that follow Satan have the same goal. The goal of this demon was more than just to prevent the boy from speaking. His goal was also to destroy the boy.

This demon would suddenly seize the boy. Each time that this happened the demon would throw the boy to the ground. The boy would begin to foam at the mouth and his body would become rigid. In the first part of verse 22 we read, “And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him...” This verse shows us that the demon had tried many times to destroy the life of the boy. Sometimes when the demon seized the boy he would throw the boy into the fire. At other times he would throw him into the water. Of course that meant that the parents had to watch him all of the time to try and prevent the demon from destroying the boy. Since Jesus was up on the mountain, the man asked the disciples to heal his son. However, the disciples were unable to cast the demon out of the boy and heal him.

We go one to read what Jesus said to the father. Mark 9:19-24 says, “He answered him and said, ‘O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me’. Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. So He asked his father, ‘How long has this been happening to him?’

And he said, ‘From childhood. And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘If you can believe, all things *are* possible to him who believes.’

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, ‘Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!’” Jesus said that particular generation was a faithless generation.

All generations since Adam have been without faith. However, this particular generation was unique because they had seen Jesus perform many miracles including the raising of the dead and they still refused to believe. In fact at the very time that Jesus had come down from the mountain the scribes were arguing with the disciples. The word translated “disputing” in verse 14 means to question, to discuss or to dispute. Mark 8:11 says, “Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him.” In this verse we see that the Pharisees were trying to start an argument in order to test Jesus. Acts 6:9 says, “Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen.” In this verse we see that the men were trying to start an argument with Stephen and later killed him. Here we see that this faithless generation had seen what Jesus had done and still refused to believe.

After speaking about the lack of faith to the whole crowd and especially to the scribes, Jesus told the father to bring the boy to Him. When the demonic spirit in the boy saw Jesus we see that the demon caused the boy to go into convulsions that caused him to fall to the ground and began rolling in the dirt. He also began to foam at the mouth. Then Jesus asked the Father how long this had been happening to his son. The father said that the demon had been doing this to the boy from the time that he was a young child. Then the father went on to explain that many times the demon had thrown him into the fire or the water in an effort to destroy him.

Then the father said, “If You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” Here we see that the father wanted help but he did not know if Jesus could help his son especially since the disciples had been unable to help. Here we see that the father did not know if Jesus had the power to heal the boy. This shows that the father did not have any understanding of the fact that Jesus is God. Jesus then pointed out that the problem was not His lack of power but rather the lack of faith of the father. Jesus made it clear that that He could heal if the father would believe. Suddenly the father changed his request and asked Jesus to help his problem of unbelief. Here we see that the father came to an understanding of the true meaning of faith. He first recognized Jesus as Lord. Then he repented of his unbelief by saying, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” Paul taught the same thing when he said years later in Acts 20:21, “Testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul said that whether he was talking to Jews or Gentiles that his message was still the same. Paul told everyone that they needed to repent of their sin of unbelief and come to God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark 9:25-29 says, “When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, ‘Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!’ Then *the spirit* cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, ‘He is dead.’ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, ‘Why could we not cast it out?’ So He said to them, ‘This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.’” Jesus saw that more people were running to see what Jesus was doing and so He quickly rebuked the demon.

Jesus told the demon, “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!” By this command Jesus showed that He has all authority over all demons. He also pointed out the fact that the boy suffered one additional problem that the father had not even mentioned. He said that this demon had caused deafness as well as making it impossible for the boy to speak. The demon had to obey the command of Jesus but he tried once more to destroy the boy as he came out. We see that the demon caused him to have great convulsions and to fall to the ground. Then his body stopped moving so that many of the people that were standing there thought that the boy had died. However, Jesus took the boy by the hand and lifted him up and he was able to go home with his father as a normal boy because Jesus told the demon never to enter the boy again.

Later when Jesus and the disciples went into the house the disciples came to Jesus and asked him a question in private. Their question was, “Why could we not cast it out?” In the past the disciples had been able to cast out demons. Mark 6:13 says, “And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.” They would again cast out demons in the future as a sign to prove their message about the resurrection of Jesus. Hebrews 2:3-4 says, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?”

Jesus explained a key lesson to the disciples that day when He said, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.” In this case the disciples were depending on themselves instead of depending on Jesus. Jesus explained what the disciples and we are to do if we meet a person who is in bondage to a demon. We are to spend time in prayer and fasting and ask Christ to defeat the power of Satan in the life of that person. This is important for both we and our physical and spiritual children to understand. It is Christ who defeats the power of Satan and not us. We are to pray that Christ will defeat the power of Satan in the life of such a person. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children the importance of depending on Christ to defeat Satan and his demons.

Jesus Taught about the Importance of Humility

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that we are not to try and cast out demons in our own strength. Instead we are to pray that Christ will defeat the power of Satan in the life of an individual that is demon possessed. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus taught the disciples about the importance of humility.

Jesus left the area around Caesarea Philippi where the large group of people met Him when He came down from the mountain. Mark 9:30-32 says, "Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know *it*. For He taught His disciples and said to them, 'The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.' But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him." Here we see that Jesus traveled to a different area of Galilee. It was only a few months until Jesus would be crucified and He had many things to teach the disciples before He returned to heaven after the resurrection. That was His main work from this time until His crucifixion. We see in John 17:4 that He had completed that work before He was crucified. In that verse Jesus prayed to the Father the night before His crucifixion and said, "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." That night the disciples did not understand but Jesus knew that He had prepared them for the time when He would return to heaven, send the Holy Spirit and begin the church.

The key message of the apostles after the resurrection was the death and resurrection of Jesus. As a result, Jesus taught them many times before His death about His coming death and resurrection even though He knew that they did not understand. The plan of Jesus was to then open the understanding of the disciples after the resurrection. Luke 24:45-48 says, "And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.'" This is a reminder of the fact that as we teach the Word of God that the Lord gives spiritual understanding to those with prepared hearts.

We see that Jesus explained three things to His disciples as He taught them. First, Jesus said He would be betrayed into the hands of men. The disciples never realized it until it happened that, Judas Iscariot, the betrayer was among them as Jesus was teaching them. Second, Jesus taught the disciples that He would be killed by those men. The disciples were looking for Jesus to restore the kingdom to Israel and so even though they heard Jesus say that He would be killed they did not understand. Third, Jesus taught the disciples that He would rise on the third day. Since they did not expect His death, the disciples could not understand what Jesus meant by the fact that He would rise the third day. The disciples could not understand because they were expecting something very different from what actually happened.

We see that the disciples did not understand but we also see that they were afraid to ask Jesus

what He meant. People have many questions that they need to have answered in order to gain a full understanding of the death and resurrection of Jesus. They will not find the Biblical answers to their questions unless someone encourages them to ask their questions and then takes the time to help them become familiar with the Scriptures that will answer those questions. That is why every person needs someone like Priscilla and Aquila to help them understand. Acts 18:26 says, “So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.” This couple took the time to answer the questions of Apollos and helped him understand the Scripture so that he could explain the message of the death and resurrection of Jesus and show that Jesus is the Christ.

We see the results of the ministry of Aquila and Priscilla in the following verses. Acts 18:27-28 says, “And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.”

Jesus taught the disciples as they traveled toward Capernaum. However, they also talked among themselves at times as they walked along the road. Mark 9:33-35 says, “Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, ‘What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?’ But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who *would be the* greatest. And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, ‘If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.’” Jesus waited until they were inside the house in Capernaum before He asked them about their discussion.

Once they were in the house Jesus asked, “What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?” The word translated “disputed” here means to reason together or to resolve in one’s mind. Mark 8:16-17 uses this word twice when those verses say, “And they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘*It is* because we have no bread.’ But Jesus, being aware of *it*, said to them, ‘Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened?’” We see that none of the disciples wanted to answer the question of Jesus so they all kept silent.

Then we see the reason why they did not want to answer the question that Jesus asked. The disciples had been discussing among themselves which of them would be the greatest. They were all ashamed to tell Jesus what they had been discussing. As a result, Jesus then sat down and called the disciples to gather around Him. Then Jesus said, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.” The word translated “desires” means to will, to desire or to wish. The disciples had each been saying that they wished or desired to be the first or most important in rank or influence. This is an attitude of pride rather than of an attitude of humility. Jesus explained the results of pride.

The word that is translated “last” means to be last in time, place or rank. The word translated “servant” is the word that is translated minister, servant or deacon. In Matthew 20:26 Jesus said, “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.” Jesus said that we will be great by becoming the last in rank or place. Paul wrote in II Corinthians 3:5-6, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything

as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” Paul wrote that God has made each of us sufficient so that we can be last in rank or place. When we have that attitude of humility the Lord will work through our lives to give life to others.

This helps us to understand why none of the twelve wanted to tell Jesus what they were talking about along the road. In fact they were probably embarrassed and filled with shame. Mark 9:36-37 tells us what Jesus did next, “Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, ‘Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.’” Jesus then took a little child to illustrate exactly what He meant. We see that Jesus took this infant or young child and held the child in his arms. Jesus said that those who receive one of these little ones in His name were actually receiving Him.

We see that the disciples heard but did not learn what Jesus meant. Mark 10:13-15 says, “Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought *them*. But when Jesus saw *it*, He was greatly displeased and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.’” Here we see the disciples tried to tell the parents to leave and not bother Jesus. The disciples thought that Jesus was too busy talking to the adults to be bothered by little children. Instead Jesus rebuked the disciples and told them to let the little children come to Him. He told them not to forbid them. In these verses Jesus then said that anyone of any age must receive the kingdom of God as a little child or they will not enter into that kingdom. A young child has faith and believes his parents even in times when the child is in a fearful situation.

Jesus explained that whoever receives one of these little children in His name receives Him. The word translated “receive” means to take with the hand, to pick up or to develop a friendship with a person. We are to humble ourselves and reach out to Christ and receive Him by faith just like a little child. Then we are to reach out to children as well as adults in the name of Jesus to tell them about His love. Jesus said that all those who receive Him also receive the Father. It was the Father who sent Him to this earth to pay the penalty for our sins by taking our sins and paying the penalty for them on the cross as He experienced separation from the Father to make forgiveness possible. Then at the moment of salvation Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit as the down payment and guarantee of our salvation so we receive the entire Trinity. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others what it means to come to Jesus for salvation with the faith of a little child. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to present that message to others.

Jesus Talked about Others who Served Him

In our last topic we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children what it means to come to Jesus for salvation with the faith of a little child. We saw that we also want to help them reach out in acceptance to little children as well as to adults. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus taught the disciples to recognize that there were others who also served Him in addition to those who were following Him.

In Mark 9:38-41 we read, “Now John answered Him, saying, ‘Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us.’ But Jesus said, ‘Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is on our side. For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.’” Since the disciples were in the house with Jesus, we see that John told Jesus about something that had happened when Jesus was not present with them.

They saw a man casting out demons in the name of Jesus. This man was not one of the disciples that traveled with Jesus. As a result, John and the other disciples with him ordered this man to stop casting out demons in the name of Jesus. Although Jesus had not been present with the disciples when this happened, Jesus knew exactly what had happened because He knows all things. First, He knew the man was actually casting out demons. This meant that the man was not a false teacher but rather a true believer in Jesus. Second, Jesus said that a person who did miracles in the name of Jesus could not immediately begin speaking evil of Jesus. Third, Jesus said that someone who is not against Jesus and the disciples was on their side.

In contrast, Jesus had given a very different answer when the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out demons by Satan. Luke 11:20-23 says, “But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils. He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.” Christ had defeated the demons because He was stronger than Satan. In the same way, Jesus allowed this man to cast out demons which meant that He was on the Lord’s side and not on Satan’s side.

Then Jesus went on to make a very important statement about spiritual rewards. Jesus told the disciples about anyone who gave them a cup of water in the name of Jesus because they were disciples. Jesus said that such individuals would not lose their reward. Jesus made a similar statement about rewards when He said in Matthew 10:42, “And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.” Both of these verses show that Jesus is very eager to give rewards to Christians for even a small act of service like giving a cup of water in His name. Jesus explained the reason for His eagerness to give rewards in Matthew 25:40 which says, “And the

King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’” Jesus said that when we serve His followers that we are serving Him.

Jesus went on to warn those who would cause a little one to stumble. Mark 9:42-48 says, “‘But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— where ‘Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’ And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— where ‘Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’ And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire— where ‘Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’”

First, Jesus warned about causing a little one who believes in Him to stumble. Since this verse talks about a little one who believes it can refer either to a physical child or a person that is a new Christian. I Peter 2:2 says, “As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.” In this verse we see that new Christians are compared to newborn babes. John had just said that the disciples had forbid someone to cast out demons in the name of Jesus. These verses help us to see that forbidding new Christians to do what they can to serve the Lord could cause them to stumble. Jesus pointed out that such a sin is very serious because He said that it would be better for such a person to have a millstone hung around his neck and he be thrown into the sea. A millstone is a large stone that was pulled by a donkey to grind the grain.

Second, Jesus warned about letting your hand cause you to sin. Sin is really a heart issue because Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?” However, a sinful attitude in the heart will result in sinful actions. Jesus then went on to compare life and eternal judgment. He pointed out the fact that it would be better for a person to choose life instead of rejecting that life for the temporary pleasures of sin and then receive eternal judgment. Hebrews 11:24-25 says, “By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.” These verses show us that Moses made the choice to reject temporary pleasure and chose instead to receive eternal life. Jesus was pointing out the fact that such a choice is a choice with eternal benefits.

Third, Jesus used the foot and the eye to give two more illustrations of the fact that the desires of our heart can cause us to choose sin instead of choosing eternal life. Jesus also pointed out the fact that those who do not choose eternal life will experience eternal judgment. We see that Jesus said that in that eternal judgment “their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. The worm translated “worm” speaks of the kind of worm that infests dead bodies. Spiritual death is eternal separation from God. Because those who reject eternal life are spiritually dead their bodies will never stop experiencing eternal judgment.

II Thessalonians 1:6-9 says, “Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.” These verses remind us that those who choose the temporary pleasures of sin and do not repent of their sin of unbelief will experience eternal separation from God in the lake of fire and brimstone. Revelation 21:8 says, “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” This is eternal judgment.

Jesus then said in Mark 9:49-50, “For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. Salt *is* good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.” Believers will be seasoned with the fires of persecution and suffering while in this life. Jesus told the disciples in John 16:33, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” In contrast, unbelievers will experience the fires of eternal judgment as we saw in the earlier part of this topic in Mark 9:43-44.

Then Jesus explained the importance of salt. In the time of the New Testament there was no refrigeration to preserve food. As a result, the people would preserve food by adding salt to it. However, it is possible for salt especially around the Dead Sea to become contaminated and lose its flavor. When that happens, the salt becomes worthless because it will not preserve anything and it will not add flavor to anything. As a result, Jesus told the disciples and us that we are to do two things as we follow Him. First, we are to have salt in ourselves. In Matthew 5:13 we read, “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.” We are to be a preservative in the world by sharing the Word of God and bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

Second, we are to have peace with one another. With Christians, I Thessalonians 5:13 says, “And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves.” Then with the people of the world Romans 12:18 says, “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.” We see in these verses that we are to do everything possible to live at peace with all people and especially with other Christians. We want to show our physical and spiritual children how to be a preservative in the world by sharing the Word of God and bearing the fruit of the Spirit. We also want to help them learn to live in peace with Christians and as much as possible with those who are not Christians. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children by your example how to be a preservative in the world and have peace with others.

Jesus Taught about Divorce

In our last topic we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children how to be like salt in the world and how to have peace with others. In this topic we are going to see that Jesus taught the Pharisees and the rest of the people about the difference between permitting divorce and commanding divorce.

Jesus had been teaching in the region of Galilee. As we begin Mark 10 we see that Jesus went to one of the areas of Judea. Mark 10:1-2 says, “Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again. The Pharisees came and asked Him, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce *his* wife?’ testing Him.” Galilee was the northern area of Israel while Judea was the southern area of Israel. In between was the area of Samaria. Here we see that one area of Judea was the area on the other side of the Jordan. That area was known as Perea. Jesus taught in this area of Judea until it was time for Him to go to Jerusalem to be crucified.

The people throughout the region of Judea heard that Jesus was nearby and so multitudes of people came to Perea to see Jesus. We see that Jesus did what He was accustomed to do when the multitudes came to Him. Jesus began to teach the people again. Here we see an important lesson about the ministry of Jesus. Jesus made it a habit to teach the people when they came to Him. This is one of the things that we as Christians should also learn to make a part of our lives. When people come to us with questions, I Peter 3:15-16 says, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.” Here we see that we are to be ready to give an answer even to those who are trying to tear down our reputation and make fun.

However, we are not to try and give our own opinions. Instead we are to share the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” As we share the Word of God, Ephesians 4:15 says, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—.” By sharing the Word of God we know that we are sharing the truth. By speaking the Word with love, the Lord can then speak through His Word and discern the thoughts and intents of the hearts as we teach the Word of God to others.

We see that some of the Pharisees came to the area of Perea to hear Jesus teach. However, they had a different purpose than the rest of the multitude. They came to ask questions but not to learn. Instead they came to ask questions to test and try to trap Jesus by the words that Jesus spoke. As a result, they began by asking the question, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce *his* wife?” At that time the Jews were very divided by the question of divorce. Some felt that divorce was allowed for any and every reason. Other thought that divorce was only allowed

when a person had committed adultery. The Pharisees knew that in this large crowd that part of the people held one view and part of the people held the other view. They felt that whichever way Jesus answered that His answer would turn part of the people against Him.

We read in Mark 10:3-9 what Jesus did. Those verses say, “And He answered and said to them, ‘What did Moses command you?’ They said, ‘Moses permitted *a man* to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss *her*.’ And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” Instead of answering their question, Jesus just asked them what Moses had written in the books of the Law.

The Pharisees answered by saying part of what Moses had said in Deuteronomy 24:1, “When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house.” The word translated “uncleanness” is used 54 times in the Old Testament and is translated nakedness 51 of those times. This is the only place the word is translated uncleanness. The word is used three times in Genesis 9:22-23 where we read, “And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid *it* on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces *were* turned away, and they did not see their father’s nakedness.” Then the word is used 24 times in Leviticus 18 where it is used to describe various kinds of sexual sin. As a result, the verse the Pharisees quoted showed that divorce was allowed because of various forms of sexual sin.

Jesus pointed out that the reason divorce was allowed was because of the hardness of the hearts of people. However, the passage never required, encouraged or even suggested divorce. That passage gave instructions that the person could not marry someone else and then return to the original partner because that would be an abomination before the Lord. Then Jesus quoted the passage written by Moses in Genesis 2:24 which says, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” This is the command that Moses wrote about marriage and is the foundation for all marriages.

In this command we see that a man is to leave his father and mother. This command was given to Adam and Eve who had no father or mother which shows that God was giving a principle for all future marriages because it could not apply to the marriage of Adam and Eve. Many divorces do happen because of the hardness of the hearts of people. That is why Malachi 2:16 says, “For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one’s garment with violence,” says the LORD of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.” In Malachi 2 God spoke to Israel about the way that Israel had profaned the family. In Malachi 2:15 God explains why He made the two one. That verse says, “But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.” Here we see that God wants a couple to become one because God seeks godly children and that happens best in a home where the parents provide a godly example by their marriage and lives.

Jesus certainly shows His love and mercy to those who have been divorced. In Luke 5:29-32 we read, “Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, ‘Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance.’” Jesus also chose to reach out to an entire town through the Samaritan woman even though Jesus said in John 4:17-18, “The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.’” Even though Jesus knew the past of this woman, He chose to begin and end this statement to the woman by complimenting her for telling the truth. Then He reached out to the whole town through her introduction of Him.

A Christian is given three situations in which remarriage is allowed. Romans 7:2 says, “For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband.” A widow or widower is free to remarry. Matthew 5:32 says, “But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.” Jesus included the exception clause here and in Matthew 19:9 about a partner who continues to commit immorality and divorces their partner frees just as death frees (in the law those guilty of adultery were stoned to death – Leviticus 20:10). I Corinthians 7:15 says, “But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.” Here we see that an unbelieving partner who refuses to continue living with a Christian and gets a divorce means that Christian is not under bondage and is free to remarry.

Christ was later asked a further question by His disciples. Mark 10:11-12 says, “In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same *matter*. So He said to them, ‘Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.’” In this answer we see that Jesus said that if either a man or a woman got a divorce in order to marry another that the person getting the divorce is guilty of adultery. This is an illustration of the hardness of heart mentioned in Deuteronomy 24 as hardness of heart is a sin that causes other sins. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand what Jesus taught about marriage so that they will be able to teach others. We also want to help them learn how to help others have their hearts transformed by Christ as they learn to yield to the Lord moment by moment. May the Lord richly bless you as you help others develop godly marriages.

Jesus Blessed Little Children

In our last topic we saw that the Pharisees tried to trap Jesus by asking Him a question about divorce. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to answer people who use questions like this to try and trap them. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus showed His love for children by blessing little children.

While Jesus was talking to the multitude, we see that some parents brought their little children to Jesus. Mark 10:13-16 says, “Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought *them*. But when Jesus saw *it*, He was greatly displeased and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.’ And He took them up in His arms, laid *His* hands on them, and blessed them.” Here we see that Jesus had a very different attitude than the disciples.

In that day many Jewish parents would bring their children to a well known teacher and ask that teacher to bless their children. That is what we see happening in these verses. The word translated “little children” is used several times in Luke 2 to speak of Jesus just after His birth and in chapter two of Matthew when the wise men came to visit Jesus. The word is used in a spiritual sense in I John 2:13 where we read, “I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father.” Here we see that the disciples thought that Jesus was too busy to spend time with little children and so they rebuked the parents. Many people think that young children are not important.

However, Jesus saw what was happening. We see that Jesus was greatly displeased with the disciples. Jesus made it very clear to the disciples and to the whole crowd of people there that day that He had a great love and concern for even the youngest child. Jesus told the disciples to let the little children come to Him. The word translated “forbid” means to hinder, deny or refuse. In Mark 9:38-39 we see that Jesus said to John, “Now John answered Him, saying, ‘Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us.’ But Jesus said, ‘Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me.’” In this case John had forbid someone to cast out demons in the name of Jesus. Jesus knew the heart of the man and told John not to forbid him. In this verse the disciples were hindering these little children from coming to Jesus.

Little children have great faith. Jesus said that the multitude had to have the kind of faith that the little children had in order to receive the kingdom of God. Then Jesus showed by His actions as well as His words that He had a great love and concern for little children. Jesus then took the little children up in His arms. He laid His hands on them and blessed them. The word translated “blessing” means to praise or to dedicate a thing to God with a solemn prayer. Mark

14:22 says, “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” In this verse we see that Jesus dedicated the bread of the Last Supper by His prayer to the Father. In the same way, Jesus dedicated these little children to the Father by His prayer.

We go on to read in Mark 10:17-20, “Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?’ So Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’” And he answered and said to Him, ‘Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.’” Here we see that a man came running to Jesus and wanted to know what he had to do to inherit eternal life. In Matthew 19:20 we see that he was a young man. At the same time Luke 18:18 says, “Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Here we see that even though he was young that he was already a ruler (probably of the synagogue).

Later we also see that he was rich and that is probably why he asked what he had to do to inherit eternal life. He had probably inherited his wealth from his father and thought that he could do something to receive eternal life the same way. This young man came running to Jesus. He knelt in front of Jesus. He also recognized Jesus as a Good Teacher. In addition, he wanted to receive eternal life. From his outward actions this young man would appear to be a man with great potential.

The Ten Commandments divide into two parts. The first part speaks about the relationship of man to God. Then the second part speaks about the relationship of man to man. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 5:16-20 which includes most of the second part of the Ten Commandments. This young man thought that he had lived a very good life. In fact in Mark 10:20 we see that he answered Jesus by saying, “Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.” Apparently other people also thought that this young man lived a good life since he was already a ruler even though he was still young. They had observed his outward actions but did not know his heart.

In contrast, we see that Jesus looked at his heart. In Matthew 19:19 we see that Jesus also quoted Leviticus 19:18 which summarizes the whole second part. Leviticus 19:18 says, “You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.” The last part of this verse, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”, summarizes the second part of the Ten Commandments that talked about the relationship of man to man. Mark 10:21-22 says, “Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, ‘One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.’ But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”

Jesus knew that this young man in his heart did not love his neighbor as he loved himself. As a result, Jesus gave this young man the opportunity to see his own heart by telling him to sell what he had and give it to the poor. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Suddenly this young man had to face the fact that

he did not love his neighbor as himself. He had deceived himself into thinking that he had kept the commandments that related to other people. Suddenly he was faced with the fact that he did not have a concern for the poor and he had no desire to share what he had with the poor. Jesus had used the quote from Leviticus to expose the heart of this young man. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Here we see that the Word had exposed the thoughts and intents of his heart.

Jesus also told the young man the thing that he lacked to receive eternal life. Jesus said, "Come, take up the cross, and follow Me." Once Jesus had exposed the heart of the young man to himself, then Jesus answered his question about how to have eternal life. The Holy Spirit convicts those who are not Christians of three things, John 16:8-9 tells us the first of those three things when those verses say, "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me." Here we see the one sin that keeps people from receiving eternal life is the sin of unbelief. This young man showed that he was unwilling to repent of his sin of unbelief and place his faith in Jesus. That is the one sin that prevents every person that makes that choice from receiving eternal life. We also learn another key lesson from these verses. We see that Jesus looked at this young man and loved him. True godly love will cause us to speak the truth in love. This young man could see that Jesus loved him. He could see that Jesus spoke in love. Jesus shared with him the message that he could have eternal life by following Jesus. Then Jesus showed His love by giving that young man the opportunity to make that choice. In fact it would only be a short time later that Jesus would say as He hung on the cross, "It is finished," as He completed the payment for sin so that the Father can freely forgive all those who will come to Jesus in repentance and faith.

We see that the young man did make a choice that day. He was sad as he heard the words of Jesus because he knew that he was not willing to repent of his sin of unbelief and follow Jesus. In his sadness he walked away with great sorrow in his heart. In fact the invitation of Jesus to follow Him had revealed the true condition of the heart of this young man. He had revealed to himself that his god was his money and possessions. In I Timothy 6:9-10 we read, "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Here we see that the desire for riches does lead many people to destruction and perdition. These two words speak of eternal judgment.

We want to show our physical and spiritual children by our example of sharing the Word of God in love that the Word will reveal the condition of a person's heart to himself or herself if we will share the Word in love. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to share the Word of God in love.

Jesus Warned of the Danger of Riches

In our last topic we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children how to share the Word of God in love so that the Word will expose the thoughts and intents of the hearts of those who need to repent of their sin of unbelief. We saw that the Word exposed to a young man that his god was his money. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus warned about the danger of riches.

The rich young ruler had just walked sadly away from Jesus because he chose to reject Jesus and depend on his riches. Jesus then warned His disciples about the danger of trusting in riches. Mark 10:23-27 says, “Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, ‘How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!’ And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, ‘Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches 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.’ And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, ‘Who then can be saved?’ But Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With men *it is* impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.’” Here we see that Jesus began to warn the disciples about the danger of riches.

Jesus said that it is very hard for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God. The reason why it is so hard is due to the fact that many with riches depend on their riches instead of coming to Jesus in repentance and faith. In Mark 8:35-37 Jesus had said, “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” The reason that it is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of God is due to the fact that they choose to depend on their own efforts to save their lives. They try to reach heaven through their own efforts instead of realizing that they can only come to the Father by repenting of their sin of unbelief and placing their faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus. They might gain great worldly riches but at the same time they will lose eternal life.

The disciples were surprised at the words of Jesus because the Jews taught that worldly riches were a sign of the favor of God. The Jews thought that a rich man could earn his salvation by buying many animals to use as sacrifices and by giving money to the poor. In contrast, Jesus made it clear that it is impossible for any person to earn salvation. Titus 3:5 says, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” This verse makes it clear that we are saved by mercy because the Father was satisfied with the payment that Jesus made by shedding His blood for our sin. The Father showed this satisfaction by raising Jesus from the dead. The Persians had a saying that it was impossible for an elephant to go through the eye of a needle. The Jews did not have elephants so they had changed that saying to camel which was their largest animal. Jesus made it very clear that no one can be saved by works. That was why the disciples wondered who could be saved.

Jesus then explained that it was impossible for men to save themselves. However, Jesus then pointed out that the things that are impossible with men are always possible with God. God can save rich people who will come to Him in repentance and faith just as He can save any other person.

Jesus went on to answer a question from Peter about rewards for those who did follow Jesus. Mark 10:28-31 says, “Then Peter began to say to Him, ‘See, we have left all and followed You.’ So Jesus answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.’” Jesus said that there is a reward both in this present life and in the life to come for those who have left home or family for His sake and for the sake of the Gospel.

In this life we see that we become a part of a much larger spiritual family. John 1:12 says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” This verse shows us that we become children of God. Then Romans 8:16-17 adds, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” These verses promise that we experience two privileges as a part of this much larger family.

First, on this earth we will have the privilege of suffering with Christ. John 16:33 says, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” Then Acts 5:41-42 adds, “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ.” We see that in this world that we can expect tribulation as a Christian. At the same time we know that God will also give us peace. We can expect tribulation because Satan is not happy. II Timothy 3:12 says, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”

Second, for eternity we see that we will be glorified together with Christ. We were given eternal life by Jesus at the moment of salvation. In the future we see that we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. This means that we will share all of the blessings of heaven together with Jesus for all eternity. Romans 8:18 says, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” God is going to reveal His glory in us throughout eternity.

Jesus went on to speak again about His coming death and resurrection. Mark 10:32-34 says, “Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will

condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.” Jesus shared with the disciples why they were going to Jerusalem even though He knew that they would not understand until after His death, resurrection and with some things the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said that they were going up to Jerusalem. After His resurrection the disciples asked Jesus in Acts 1:6, “Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel.” Here we see that the disciples were looking for the immediate arrival of the earthly kingdom even after the resurrection. That is why Jesus went on to say in Acts 1:7-8, “And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Jesus let the disciples know that it was not yet time for the earthly kingdom.

Jesus said that He would be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes. The chief priests were the leaders of the worship that happened in the temple at Jerusalem. Even though they were very religious, their hearts were far from God. Jesus described the heart condition of these religious leaders very well when He said in Matthew 23:27, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men’s* bones and all uncleanness.” The hearts of these religious leaders were filled with all uncleanness.

Jesus then explained to the disciples what the chief priests and scribes would do. Jesus said that the religious leaders would condemn Him to death and then deliver Him to the Gentiles. Matthew 26:63-66 says, “But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, ‘I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘*It is as* you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, ‘He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?’ They answered and said, ‘He is deserving of death.’” Matthew 27:2 say, “And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.”

Finally Jesus told the disciples that the Gentiles would mock, scourge, spit on and kill Him. Matthew 27:27-31 says, “Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what Jesus told His disciples. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these verses.

Jesus Taught about Godly Leadership

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what Jesus taught His disciples about His coming death and resurrection. In our topic today we will be learning how to help our children explain and become an example of what Christ taught about godly leadership.

Jesus and His disciples were walking along the road leading to Jerusalem. While Jesus was walking with James and John, we see that they made a request to Jesus. Mark 10:35-37 says, “Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, ‘Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.’ And He said to them, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ They said to Him, ‘Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.’” Jesus had taught the disciples about His coming death and resurrection. However, the disciples were thinking about something very different. The disciples were expecting Jesus to become the king when they got to Jerusalem. That thought caused James and John to make a request.

James and John saw their opportunity to make their request as they walked with Jesus. As a result, they said to Jesus, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.” If you have children you know that when you get a request worded like this from them that they know that maybe they should not be making that request. Jesus just answered the two, “What do you want Me to do for you?” Then they made their request to Jesus. Their request showed that they did not have any understanding of spiritual leadership and so wanted worldly leadership.

They were looking for Jesus to set up His kingdom. As a result, they wanted to know if they could sit on His right hand and on His left hand when He came into His glory. In that time the right hand and the left hand were the two places of highest honor. As a result, the request of James and John was to be treated like they were the two special friends of Jesus that deserved to receive the most honor and praise. This request was motivated by pride rather than humility. I Peter 5:6 says, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.” This was a lesson that James and John had not yet learned.

We go on to read the response of Jesus. Mark 10:38-41 says, “But Jesus said to them, ‘You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?’ They said to Him, ‘We are able.’ So Jesus said to them, ‘You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared.’ And when the ten heard *it*, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John.” Jesus just told them that they did not know what they were asking.

Then Jesus asked the two brothers this question, “Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” Jesus had told the disciples that His

suffering and death were near. Here we see that Jesus compared this suffering that would soon happen to a baptism of suffering. James and John had no understanding of the question that Jesus had just asked them. However, they quickly answered that they were able to be baptized with that baptism. Many times Christians make this same mistake. They make promises about things that they do not understand.

Jesus then explained to James and John that they would experience the baptism that He would soon experience. Acts 12:1-2 says, "Now about that time Herod the king stretched out *his* hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword." These verses show that James was the first of the apostles to die for his faith. Revelation 1:9 says, "I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Patmos was an island that the Romans used as a place to exile prisoners that they did not want to escape. John spent the final part of his life on this island as a prisoner of the Roman government. In this way James and John were both baptized with the baptism of suffering.

Jesus then added that the places of honor on His right side and left side were not His to give. Instead Jesus said that those places were already reserved for those for whom it is prepared. This is an important lesson for all of us to understand. All rewards are determined by the will of God because He knows the heart of every person. All twelve disciples needed to learn this lesson because we see that the other ten disciples were very unhappy with James and John where they heard about their request. The other ten were very unhappy because they also had the same desire to have a place of importance when Christ sets up His kingdom.

This provided Jesus with an opportunity to teach the disciples that godly leadership and rewards are very different from worldly leadership. Mark 10:42-45 says, "But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." This was a very important lesson for the disciples to learn. It is just as important for us to learn this same lesson if we want to be effective in our service for the Lord.

Jesus then called the disciples to Himself and began to explain the difference between worldly leadership and godly leadership. Jesus explained that worldly leadership has certain characteristics. Throughout the world, the sin nature leads most people to act in similar ways when those people are in positions of leadership. Jesus said that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over others. The word translated "lord it over" means to bring others under one's power, to be the master or to exercise lordship. Acts 19:16 says, "Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." In this verse the word is translated "overpowered". Then I Peter 5:2-3 Peter wrote to the leaders of local churches and said, "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you,

but being examples to the flock.” Here we see that godly leaders are not to lead by lording it over the flock but rather by being an example to the flock.

Second, Jesus said that worldly leaders exercise authority over those they lead. The word translated “exercise authority” means to wield power over. We have an example of such a leader in the church in III John 1:9-11 where we read, “I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church. Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.” Here God makes it clear that such attitudes and actions are evil.

Then Jesus went on to describe what godly leadership is like. Jesus told the disciples that Christians are not to exercise leadership like the world. Then Jesus used two key words to describe godly leadership. First, Jesus said that whoever desires to be great is to become a servant. The word translated “servant” means a servant, a deacon who cares for the poor, a waitress or a waiter. This type of leadership is illustrated in I Thessalonians 3:1-2 where we read, “Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith.” In this verse the word is translated “minister”.

Second, Jesus said that the one who desires to be first shall be slave of all. The word translated “slave” is the word for a bondservant, a slave or one who gives himself to do the will of another. This is the word that was used to describe Jesus in Philippians 2:7 where we read, “But made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.” We see that Jesus became a bondservant for us. In the same way we are to show our love by becoming a bondservant to others. Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Here we see that we are to lead by serving one another as slaves of Christ.

Jesus then explained why He came to this earth. Worldly leadership expects to be served. In contrast, Jesus did not come to be served. Instead he came to serve. The greatest demonstration of that service was when He gave His life a ransom for many. The word translated “ransom” means to pay the price to redeem or to pay the ransom for a life. Jesus paid that ransom with His own blood. I Peter 1:18-19 says, “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” We want to show our physical and spiritual children what godly leadership means by our own example. That will happen as we become bondservants of Christ and lead as a slave of Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children what godly leadership means by your example.

Jesus Gave Sight to Bartimaeus

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to become servant leaders. That can happen as we show them by example what it means to be a servant leader. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus healed a blind man by the name of Bartimaeus on His way to Jerusalem.

Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem because the time of His death for our sins was now only a few days away. In spite of what was ahead for Him in His own life, Jesus still had time to show mercy to all those who asked for mercy. Mark 10:46-48 says, “Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’” In these verses we see that Bartimaeus had a great need because of the fact that he was blind.

We see that Jesus met Bartimaeus near the city of Jericho which was about 15 miles from the city of Jerusalem. Jesus and His disciples were leaving the city of Jericho. The old walled city of Jericho was a short distance north of the New Testament city of Jericho. Jesus was probably between the old walled city and the newer city because Luke 18:35 says, “Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging.” Here we see that they were coming near the city of Jericho. Jesus and the disciples were on their way to the city of Jerusalem. There was a large crowd traveling with Jesus and the disciples because they were all on their way to Jerusalem because it was almost time for the Passover.

We read that Bartimaeus was blind. That was why he was lying along the side of the road begging. In that time the only way for the blind to survive was by begging. This was a good place to beg because this place was on the main road from Perea to Jerusalem. That meant that near the times of the various feasts in Jerusalem that there were large numbers of people traveling along this road because they were on their way to Jerusalem for the feast.

Bartimaeus was told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by the place where he was lying. Bartimaeus had heard many things about Jesus. He had certainly heard how Jesus had healed others of various diseases and physical problems. As a result, he began to cry out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” This was a statement that showed that Bartimaeus believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Isaiah 11:1 says, “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.” Then Jeremiah 23:5 says, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.” Here we see that even though Bartimaeus was blind that he was familiar with the Old Testament promises about the coming of the Messiah.

However we see that there was a total lack of compassion by many of the people that were in the multitude following Jesus. We see that many in the crowd sharply warned Bartimaeus to

keep quiet. The word translated “warned” means to charge sharply or to rebuke. Mark 10:13 says, “Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them.” In this verse the word is translated rebuked. In this case it showed a lack of compassion by the disciples. That is the same attitude that many in the crowd had as they told Bartimaeus to keep quiet. However, that did not quiet Bartimaeus. Instead he just kept calling to Jesus.

In contrast, we see that Jesus responded to Bartimaeus with love and compassion. Mark 10:49-50 says, “So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.’ And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.” Jesus stopped and stood still. Then He commanded that Bartimaeus should be called to Him. We do not read that Jesus ever rejected even one person who called to Him for help. Instead Jesus was quick to respond to requests with compassion and love.

We see that Bartimaeus asked Jesus to show mercy to him. The word translated “mercy” means to have mercy or to show mercy and speaks of helping those who are afflicted. Mercy is not something that is deserved. Instead mercy is freely given. II Corinthians 4:1 says, “Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.” In this verse we see that it is because of the fact that the Lord has shown us His mercy that we even have the opportunity to serve Him.

The people who spoke to Bartimaeus told him, “‘Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.’” The word translated “be of good cheer” means to have courage or to be filled with cheer. Jesus used this word several times when He rewarded those who had shown faith in Him by seeking to be healed by Him. Jesus also used this same word to encourage both the disciples and later to encourage Paul. John 16:33 says, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” Then Acts 23:11 adds, “But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, ‘Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.’” Jesus wants all those who follow Him to be filled with courage.

Suddenly Bartimaeus was greatly encouraged. He quickly threw aside his garment, got up and came to Jesus. The word translated “to throw aside” means to throw off or to throw away. This same word is used in Hebrews 10:35 where we read, “Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.” The writer of Hebrews told those who had suffered for Jesus not to throw away their confidence that they had in the Lord during their time of suffering. In this verse we see that Bartimaeus had great confidence that the Lord was going to give him eyesight and so he quickly threw his garment aside.

Then Bartimaeus rose and came to Jesus. The faith of Bartimaeus in Jesus was revealed by everything that he said and did. He continued to keep calling out to Jesus even when others tried to silence him. He quickly threw aside his garment and came to Jesus when Jesus told him to come. Now we are going to see how Jesus rewarded this faith. Mark 10:51-52 says, “So Jesus answered and said to him, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ The blind man said to Him, ‘Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your faith has made you well.’ And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.” Jesus changed the life of Bartimaeus that day.

The first thing that Jesus did was ask Bartimaeus a question. Jesus asked “What do you want Me to do for you?” Here we see that Jesus gave Bartimaeus an opportunity to publicly declare his faith to the multitude that was following Jesus. Jesus wants all true believers to publicly declare their faith to others. He told the disciples in Luke 24:46-48, “Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.” We are all called to be witnesses to what Jesus has done in our lives through His death and resurrection.

He immediately answered, “Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.” The word translated “Rabboni” means master, chief or prince. The only other time the New Testament uses this word is in John 20:16 where we read, “Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to Him, ‘Rabboni!’ (which is to say, Teacher).” Both Mary and Bartimaeus recognized that Jesus is the Christ by their use of this word. This was a bold statement on the part of Bartimaeus because he made this statement in front of a large crowd of people. As we yield our lives to the Lord, He will also give us the strength to witness boldly about Jesus.

Jesus also recognized and honored the faith of Bartimaeus. Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” Here we see that Jesus focused on the faith that Bartimaeus had shown by His request. The word translated “well” in this verse is used 110 times in the New Testament and of those is translated “save” 93 of those times. Romans 10:13 says, “For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’” As a result, we see that Bartimaeus received both physical sight and spiritual sight that day. This is the word that is used in many other passages to describe salvation such as Acts 2:47 where we read, “Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

We also see the response of Bartimaeus when he received his sight. We see that he immediately followed Jesus. When individuals repent of their sin of unbelief and place their faith in Jesus, we see that there is also a change in their actions. Their desire is to follow Jesus and learn more about Him so that they can grow in the understanding of His love. We want to show our physical and spiritual children how to help those who come to Jesus in repentance and faith begin learning to take root in Christ and His love. Colossians 2:6-7 says, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.” As the love of Jesus takes root in their hearts new Christians will begin to grow spiritually. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to help others come to Jesus and grow in Him.

Jesus Presented Himself as the King

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to new Christians how to take root in Christ and His love so that they can grow to spiritual maturity. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus publicly presented Himself to the Jews as their coming king.

Jesus and His disciples along with a large crowd traveled the last fifteen miles from Jericho to Jerusalem after Jesus gave physical and spiritual sight to Bartimaeus. Mark 11:1-3 says, “Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; and He said to them, ‘Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring *it*. And if anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it,’ and immediately he will send it here.’” We see what happened when Jesus got close to the city of Jerusalem. The towns of Bethphage and Bethany were close together and were less than two miles from the city of Jerusalem. Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead just a few weeks earlier at Bethany.

As the road passed near the small town of Bethphage Jesus sent two of His disciples into the town. Jesus gave the two some very specific instructions about what they were to do when they came into the town. They were told that as soon as they came into the town that they would find a colt tied. Zechariah had predicted this event in Zechariah 9:9 where we read, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.” This was a colt on which no one had ever yet ridden. We see that Jesus was careful to fulfill each prophecy about Himself.

This event showed the two disciples again that Jesus knew all things. He had just been walking up the road from Jericho to Jerusalem and He was able to tell the disciples exactly where they would find a donkey with a colt that had never been ridden. This is one of many times that Jesus showed that He knows all things. Jesus also knew that the people standing nearby would question why the disciples were untying the donkey. As a result, Jesus told the disciples what to say when they were questioned. Jesus said they would be asked, “Why are you doing this?” The Lord told them that they were to answer, “The Lord has need of it.” Jesus said that the owner would immediately give his permission for them to take the donkey.

The disciples then went to the small town. Mark 11:4-7 tells us what happened when the disciples followed the instructions of Jesus. Those verses say, “So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. But some of those who stood there said to them, ‘What are you doing, loosing the colt?’ And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it.” We see what happened as the disciples followed the instructions of Jesus.

Just like Jesus had said, they found the colt tied by the door of a house. Since their houses were built right to the edge of the street, the donkey was actually standing in the street. The two disciples began to untie the colt from the place where it was tied. Some of the people standing there immediately began to question the disciples and ask them why they were untying the colt. These people probably recognized the disciples since the disciples had been with Jesus just a few weeks earlier when He had raised Lazarus from the dead. Jesus was well known in this area. He had spent time at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus in the past. Luke 10:38 says, "Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house." Then John 11:1-3 says, "Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, 'Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.'" Here we see that Jesus had spent time in this area so people were familiar with Jesus and His disciples.

As a result, when the two disciples said that Jesus needed the colt, the people immediately let them take the colt. The disciples brought the colt to Jesus at the place where they met Him as He walked toward Jerusalem. The disciples threw their clothes on the colt of the donkey. Jesus then sat on the colt. Jesus was now ready to enter the city of Jerusalem and offer Himself as the king. This was important because it caused the Jewish religious leaders to make the choice to officially reject Him. John 12:19 says, "The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, 'You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!'" This caused them to move forward with their plans to put Jesus to death.

However, in these verses we see that the common people showed their love for Jesus. Luke 11:8-11 says, "And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: 'Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Blessed *is* the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!' And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve."

Most of these people traveling to the feast in Jerusalem along this particular road were from Galilee. These were people that had seen and heard much more about Jesus than the people of Judea. As a result, many of these people believed that Jesus was the Christ. They were looking for Jesus to become the king and reestablish the nation of Israel. Many of these people probably knew Zechariah 9:9 which says, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey." When they saw Jesus riding on the colt of a donkey they recognized Him as the promised Messiah.

Some of the people spread their clothes on the road ahead of Jesus. This was one of the ways that the people of Israel showed that they recognized a person as their king. II Kings 9:13 says, "Then each man hastened to take his garment and put it under him on the top of the steps; and they blew trumpets, saying, 'Jehu is king!'" In this verse we see that the people spread their clothes under Jehu when they anointed him to be the king of Israel. Others as they followed

Jesus cut down branches from the trees along the road and spread them on the road. Then some of the people went ahead of Jesus and others followed behind as the whole crowd began to move slowly toward Jerusalem.

The people were shouting and crying out, “Hosanna! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ Blessed *is* the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” The word translated “hosanna” originally meant “save now”. Each year as the people travelled toward Jerusalem for the various feasts they would sing the words of Psalms 113-118 as they walked toward Jerusalem. Psalm 118:26 says, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.” Many of the Jews felt that this talked about the Messiah for whose arrival they were eagerly waiting. Their use of this verse as they surrounded Jesus as He traveled the last little distance to Jerusalem meant that they felt Jesus was the One who fulfilled the Old Testament promises.

The Jews longed for the day when the kingdom of David would be reestablished. Psalm 145:10-13 says, “All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.” The Jews knew that God had promised that the kingdom of David would be an everlasting kingdom because of the promises that had been given to David.

Of course that was exactly what the angel had told Mary when the angel said in Luke 1:31-33, “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” In these words that the people cried out as they walked toward Jerusalem with Jesus we see that the people also recognized that Jesus came in the name of the Lord. They were eager for Him to establish this eternal kingdom.

When Jesus arrived at Jerusalem He went into the temple. The temple included the entire courtyard that surrounded the temple as well as the buildings of the temple. Here we see that He was inspecting what was going on in the temple courtyard. We will see what Jesus did the next day as a result of that inspection. However, since it was getting late at that time Jesus then left the temple and went back out to the town of Bethany where He and the disciples were going to spend the night. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand and learn to explain the fact that many of the common people did recognize Jesus as the coming King and that He was the One who fulfilled the promises of the Old Testament. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.

Jesus Taught about the Prayer of Faith

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the fact that many of the common people recognized that Jesus was the promised eternal king of Israel. In our topic today we will see that Jesus taught His disciples about the importance of praying with faith.

Jesus and the twelve walked from Bethany back to Jerusalem the next morning. Mark 11:12-14 says, “Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, ‘Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.’ And His disciples heard *it*.” Here we see that Jesus was hungry when He and the disciples left Bethany.

As Jesus and the disciples walked toward Jerusalem they could see the leaves of a fig tree in the distance. Jesus decided to see whether there were any figs on the tree. Matthew 21:9 says, “And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, “Let no fruit grow on you ever again.” Immediately the fig tree withered away.” Jesus and the disciples walked until they came to the tree. When they reached the tree they saw that there was nothing but leaves on the tree. Normally the figs grow along with the leaves so since the tree had many leaves it would have been normal for there to be figs among the leaves. However, there were not even small figs.

Jesus then spoke to the fig tree and said, “Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.” The disciples heard Jesus as He pronounced this judgment on the tree. In the Old Testament the fig tree was used as a picture of the nation of Israel. Hosea 9:10 says, “I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season. But they went to Baal Peor, and separated themselves to that shame; they became an abomination like the thing they loved.” This verse refers to the fathers as the firstfruits of the fig tree but said they had become an abomination to God by their worship of idols. Deuteronomy 28:64 promised that Israel would be scattered if they turned away to idols. That verse says, “Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone.” This judgment did come on the nation of Israel because of their sin.

However, God is a God of mercy who keeps His promises so He also promised that one day that is still future He will restore the nation of Israel. Romans 11:25-29 says, “For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.’ Concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God *are*

irrevocable.” A short time later Jesus warned of the judgment of that generation of Israel in another way.

We go on to read that the next thing Jesus did was cleanse the temple. Mark 11:15-19 says, “So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’” Here we see that Jesus showed that the Jews living in the time of Jesus were just as rebellious as their fathers.

The night before Jesus had carefully observed what was going on in the temple courtyard before He went out to Bethany. As a result, Jesus began to take action once He arrived at the temple in the morning. Jesus went into the temple courtyard and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the courtyard. Those who were selling animals were selling them to the people who came from other areas and could not bring animals for sacrifices. The people who sold these animals and birds would pay the high priest in order to sell them in the temple so the high priest and his family made extra money from these fees. The money changers would also pay the high priest so that they could use the temple area to exchange the Roman and Greek coins for Jewish coins. Jesus also stopped those who were using the courtyard as a shortcut to carry their things that they sold to other parts of the city.

Then Jesus explained the purpose of the temple by quoting part of Isaiah 56:6-7 which says, “Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants—everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and holds fast My covenant—even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” Here we see that the real purpose of the temple was to be a place of prayer.

However, the scribes and the chief priests were not happy when they heard what Jesus had done. In fact they were so angry that they started thinking about how they could destroy Jesus. These men were convicted by the words that they had made the temple a den of thieves but they were unwilling to repent. Instead they decided that they would destroy Jesus. We see that these men were acting out of fear. I John 4:18-19 says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.” Jesus had earlier said in John 5:42-44, “But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that *comes* from the only God?” They wanted to destroy Jesus because they did not have the love of God in their hearts. Jesus knew their plans and so that is why He went out of the city in the evening so that they did not know where to find him during the night. Meanwhile the rest of the people were astonished at the teaching of Jesus.

The next morning Jesus and the disciples returned to Jerusalem. Mark 11:20-24 says, “Now in

the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Him, 'Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away.' So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them*, and you will have *them*.'" Jesus and the disciples passed the tree that Jesus had cursed on their way to the city. They saw that the tree had dried up from the roots.

Peter remembered what Jesus had said and pointed out the tree to Jesus. He told Jesus to look and then said to Him, "The fig tree which You cursed has withered away." The answer that Jesus gave showed that Peter showed surprise by the way that he said this to Jesus. This surprise is revealed more clearly in Matthew 21:20-21 which says, "And when the disciples saw *it*, they marveled, saying, 'How did the fig tree wither away so soon?' So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done.'" We see that Peter spoke for all of the disciples because they were all surprised.

Jesus used the opportunity to teach the disciples about having faith in God. The statement by Matthew shows that if something is the will of God that it will happen if people have faith. Jesus said that if it was the will of God that even a mountain could be removed. This is illustrated in Zechariah 14:4 which says, "And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south." We see in this verse which will happen when Jesus returns to the earth to rule for one thousand years that it will be the will of God to move the mountains. Jesus said that the disciples would see God do similar things as they prayed for the will of God to be carried out.

Jesus wanted the disciples to learn to have faith as they prayed to the Lord. Jesus also wants each of us to have that same faith as we pray. Romans 8:26-27 gives a great promise about our prayers when those verses say, "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*." We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to pray in faith for the will of God because the Lord promises that He will answer if we pray in faith for His will. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children what it means to pray in faith by your example.

41.

Jesus Taught about the Importance of Forgiving

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to pray in faith. We saw that we also want to help them learn to pray for the will of God. Jesus promised that such prayers will be answered even when it involves things that are seemingly impossible. In this topic we are going to see that Jesus taught the disciples about the importance of forgiving.

Jesus had just been teaching the disciples about praying in faith. In these verses we see that Jesus went on to relate answered prayer to forgiving others. Mark 11:25-26 says, “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” These verses teach us some key lessons about prayer and forgiveness.

The Jews normally stood when they prayed in public. In fact Jesus warned in His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:5-6 that the people were not to be hypocrites when they prayed publicly, “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” We see that the Lord wants prayer that comes from the heart.

In this passage we see that such a right heart attitude is related to forgiveness. Jesus said that when we pray that we are to forgive any person that we have anything against. This includes both a Christian and one who is not a Christian. It can be for some sin of that person or even something that is not a sin. Ephesians 4:32 explains why we are to forgive when that verse says, “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.” This verse makes it clear that we are to forgive others because of the fact that God has forgiven us. The Father forgave us for all of our sins so we should forgive others for their sins against us.

An unwillingness to forgive others may show that there has never been true repentance of our sin of unbelief. Hebrews 12:15-17 warns, “Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; lest there *be* any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.” Paul also gave a warning in II Corinthians 13:5 which says, “Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?— unless indeed you are disqualified.” That is why Jesus warned that the Father will not forgive those who are unwilling to forgive because it shows a heart of unbelief.

When Jesus arrived at the temple that day, He was immediately questioned by the religious leaders about who gave Him authority to cleanse the temple. Mark 11:27-28 says, “Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. And they said to Him, ‘By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?’” Here we see that these religious leaders were illustrating the very thing that Jesus had just talked about with His disciples. These religious leaders had no desire to accept the cleansing of the temple because they were greedy for the money that they collected from those who bought and sold in the temple. As a result, they asked Jesus two questions that showed the unbelief in their hearts.

The first question was, “By what authority are You doing these things?” Jesus had answered this question much earlier in His ministry when confronted by the religious leaders. Jesus said in John 5:17, “But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.’” We see the reaction of the Jews that day in John 5:18 where we read, “Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” The religious leaders were unwilling to accept this earlier statement of Jesus and they showed by their questions that they were still unwilling to accept the fact that Jesus is God and has all authority.

The second question was, “Who gave You this authority to do these things?” Jesus had spoken to these religious leaders in John 5:22-23 and said, “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.” In this statement Jesus had told the religious leaders the source of His authority. That was the fact that they did not want to accept. Jesus could have also answered this question with the statement that He made after His resurrection to His followers. Matthew 28:18 says, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” However, Jesus knew that the real problem of the religious leaders was their unbelief and they would not accept anything Jesus said.

That is why Jesus answered their question with a question. Mark 11:29-33 says, “But Jesus answered and said to them, ‘I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me.’ And they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men’—they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed. So they answered and said to Jesus, ‘We do not know.’ And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.’” Jesus promised the religious leaders that He would answer their questions if they would answer His question to them about the baptism of John.

Suddenly the religious leaders had a problem when Jesus asked, “The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me.” Their discussion among themselves shows that they knew the answer to the question of Jesus. However, that created a problem for them. If they answered what they knew was the truth, they would show that their hearts were filled with unbelief. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;

who can know it?" Jeremiah certainly explained what the hearts of the religious leaders were like. They were desperately wicked because Jesus had done many signs to prove that He is God and they were unwilling to come to Him in repentance and faith. Instead they refused to answer in their efforts to try and continue to deceive the people about their own lack of spiritual life. They did not want Jesus to ask them why they did not believe John the Baptist.

At the same time we see that the religious leaders were driven by their own fear. I John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love." Those who have come to Christ in repentance and faith will be led by the love of Christ as they yield to the Holy Spirit. In contrast, those who have hearts of unbelief will be driven by the fear of men. That was exactly what happened in the lives of these religious leaders. We see that the religious leaders feared the people. The religious leaders recognized that the people considered John a great prophet. That caused the religious leaders to act out of their own fear. They were unwilling to answer the question of Jesus because of their fear of the people. Finally they told Jesus that they did not know whether the baptism of John was from heaven or from men.

In the same way we see that many people are so controlled by their own fear that they are afraid to say what they believe. In addition, they are unwilling to do what they know is right and will do what they know is wrong in order to please people. People will have a godly fear and reverence for God or they will fear people. That was why the religious leaders said, "But if we say, 'From men—they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed.'" They lacked a fear and reverence for God. As a result, they were filled with fear about the reaction of the people if they denied that the baptism of John was from God.

Once the religious leaders gave their answer we see that Jesus told them that since they would not answer His question that He would not tell them by whose authority He had stopped those who were buying and selling in the temple. Jesus had told them by whose authority He had cleansed the temple when He cleansed it the first time at the beginning of His ministry. John 2:16 says, "And He said to those who sold doves, 'Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!'" In this verse Jesus had said that the temple was His Father's house. However, the religious leaders did not want to accept the statement of Jesus because they were unwilling to believe in Him.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand the fact that there are religious people who refuse to believe that Jesus is the Christ. Such individuals have developed their own form of religion which denies the power of God and refuses to come to the Father through Christ. Paul warned Timothy in II Timothy chapter 3 that the day would come when there would be many such people. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to recognize those who refused to believe in Christ.

Jesus Gave the Parable of the Vineyard Owner

In our last topic we saw that the religious leaders refused to believe that Jesus is the Christ. They wanted to know who gave Him the authority to cleanse the temple. Jesus answered their question with a question that they refused to answer. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus gave a parable that described these religious leaders.

The religious leaders had just said that they could not answer the question of Jesus. Then Jesus gave a parable to them that described these religious leaders and gave a warning about coming judgment. Mark 12:1-5 says, “Then He began to speak to them in parables: ‘A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around *it*, dug *a place for* the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers. And they took *him* and beat him and sent *him* away empty-handed. Again he sent them another servant, and at him they threw stones, wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully treated. And again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some.’” This parable is most easily understood if we read Isaiah 5:1-7 first.

Isaiah 5:1-2 says, “Now let me sing to my Well-beloved a song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it; so He expected *it* to bring forth *good* grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes.” Then Isaiah 5:7 says, “For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry *for help*.” Here we see that the Lord established Israel as His vineyard. Understanding that fact will help us to understand the entire parable as Jesus warned of the judgment of the religious leaders.

God sent His servants, the prophets, to the nation of Israel. Instead of turning to the Lord when God sent the prophets and other messengers to them, we see that the leaders of Israel rejected the message of the prophets. They showed their rejection of that message by the way that they treated the prophets. I Kings 21:13-14 says, “And two men, scoundrels, came in and sat before him; and the scoundrels witnessed against him, against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, ‘Naboth has blasphemed God and the king!’ Then they took him outside the city and stoned him with stones, so that he died. Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, ‘Naboth has been stoned and is dead.’” God then sent Elijah in I Kings 21:19 to speak to Ahab. God told Elijah to say, “You shall speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD: ‘Have you murdered and also taken possession?’” And you shall speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD: ‘In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours.’ This is an example of the way that godly men were treated in the Old Testament.

Hebrews 11:37-38 gives us a summary of the way that the leaders of Israel had treated the Old Testament prophets when those verses say, “They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were

tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.” The leaders of Israel in the Old Testament rejected most of the prophets that God sent to warn Israel.

Mark 12:6-8 tells what the Father did in the New Testament to speak to the leaders of Israel. Those verses say, “Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But those vinedressers said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ So they took him and killed *him* and cast *him* out of the vineyard.” The religious leaders had just challenged Jesus and asked who gave Him the authority to cleanse the temple of those who bought and sold. John 1:11-12 says, “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” These religious leaders were showing their rejection of Jesus at this very moment as Jesus gave them this parable.

Jesus was actually prophesying His own death which would come just a few days later at the hands of these religious leaders. It was these very men who would condemn Jesus to death. Mark 14:62-64 says, “Jesus said, ‘I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, ‘What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?’ And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.” Here we see that all of those who were gathered there that night condemned Jesus to death.

Jesus explained the reason why the religious leaders condemned Him to death in this parable. Mark 12:7 says, “But those vinedressers said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’” Caiaphas explained to the other chief priests and Pharisees why he thought it was necessary for Jesus to be killed. John 11:49-50 says, “And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, ‘You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.’” Caiaphas said that they either had to kill Jesus or they would lose their power and control over the people. The parable shows that Jesus knew exactly what they were planning.

Jesus said that these men would kill Him and cast Him out of the vineyard. John 19:14-16 says, “Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, ‘Behold your King!’ But they cried out, ‘Away with *Him*, away with *Him*! Crucify Him!’ Pilate said to them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar!’ Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away.” The crucifixion of Jesus happened outside the city wall of Jerusalem because John 19:17-18 says, “And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.”

Jesus went on to warn these religious leaders about their own coming judgment when He said in Mark 12:9-12, “Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy

the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others. Have you not even read this Scripture: ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?’” And they sought to lay hands on Him, but feared the multitude, for they knew He had spoken the parable against them. So they left Him and went away.” In these verses we see that Jesus warned the religious leaders that the Father would bring judgment upon them.

Just forty years after the death and resurrection of Jesus the Roman army came and completely destroyed the city of Jerusalem and all of the people that were in the city. In this way there was a direct judgment by the Father of the very men that had condemned Jesus to death. Jesus also said that the Father would give the vineyard to others. In Romans chapters 9 through 11 we see that God temporarily set aside the nation of Israel and gave the Gentiles the privilege of taking the Gospel to the whole world. However, that setting aside is not permanent. Romans 11:25-27 says, “For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.’” This shows the mercy of God to Israel.

Then Jesus quoted Psalm 118:22-23 which says, “The stone *which* the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing; it *is* marvelous in our eyes.” When Israel was building the temple in Jerusalem in the time of Solomon, all of the materials for the temple were prepared away from the location of the temple and brought to the site where the temple was being built. One of the stones that was brought to the temple site did not seem to have a place where it went and so the builders threw it away. Later they realized that they had thrown away the chief cornerstone which was the stone by which all the walls had to match up so that the entire temple would have straight walls. In this parable Jesus said that was the Lord’s doing. The religious leaders were rejecting Him. It is only through repentance of sin and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ that anyone can come to the Father. The leaders were rejecting the One who gives life.

The religious leaders were very angry when they heard this parable of Jesus. They knew that he had spoken this parable about them. They were so angry that they wanted to lay hands on Jesus immediately and kill Him but they were afraid of the crowd of people around Him. That was why these religious leaders were so happy when Judas Iscariot came to them. Mark 14:10-11 says, “Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them. And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.” Jesus was going to die at the time that He planned and not at the time when the religious leaders wanted to kill Him. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus gave this parable to let the religious leaders know that He knew exactly what they were planning to do. However, He was going to die according to His set time and not theirs. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this parable to others.

Jesus Answered the Pharisees and Sadducees

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the parable of the vineyard to others. We saw that Jesus warned the religious leaders of judgment that would come upon them. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus was questioned by the Herodians and Pharisees.

The religious leaders were eager to trap Jesus by whatever way would work. A group of Pharisees and Herodians came to question Jesus in order to try and trap Him. Mark 12:13-17 says, “Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in *His* words. When they had come, they said to Him, “Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?’ But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, ‘Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see *it*.’ So they brought *it*. And He said to them, ‘Whose image and inscription *is* this?’ They said to Him, “Caesar’s.” And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ And they marveled at Him.” Usually the Pharisees and Herodians did not work together but they were ready to try anything to trap Jesus in His words.

The Pharisees and Herodians pretended to really want to know what was true to cover up the fact that they were trying to trap Jesus. As a result, they tried to flatter Jesus with their words. They said that they knew that He was a teacher that was fair and honest in His decisions. They said He did not have favorites that He favored. They even said that He taught the Word of God correctly. However, these things were all said to cover the fact that they were really trying to trap Him. Jesus knew that they were being hypocrites who did not believe any of these things that they said about Jesus. Then they asked their questions, “Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?” Since the Pharisees and Herodians came together they thought that they could accuse Him of wrong regardless of how Jesus answered. The Herodians were a political group that backed Herod and the Roman government. The Pharisees did not like the fact that their land was controlled by Rome and they did not like to pay taxes to the Romans.

Jesus asked them why they were testing Him. Then He asked them to bring Him a denarius (the coin that was paid for a day’s wages and also the coin that each person had to pay as a tax to the Romans each year). These men quickly got a coin and gave it to Jesus. He asked them whose picture was on the coin. They replied that it was a picture of the Roman emperor, Caesar. Jesus then said, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” The men that questioned Jesus were amazed at His answer because they knew that they had not trapped Him. By this answer Jesus pointed out that we have a responsibility to our human governments. Romans 13:5-7 says, “Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes

to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.” At the same time we have a responsibility to God. We are to give to God the things that belong to God. Suddenly the Pharisees and Herodians were amazed because instead of trapping Jesus they could not disagree with what Jesus had said.

When the Sadducees saw that Jesus had answered the Herodians and Pharisees, then the Sadducees came with their question. Mark 12:18-23 says, “Then *some* Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, saying: ‘Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man’s brother dies, and leaves *his* wife behind, and leaves no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife; and dying, he left no offspring. And the second took her, and he died; nor did he leave any offspring. And the third likewise. So the seven had her and left no offspring. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife.’” The Sadducees thought that Jesus would not be able to answer their question.

The Sadducees actually showed their hypocrisy by their question. Acts 23:8 says, “For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.” The Sadducees only recognized the books written by Moses as having authority and said that he did not teach the resurrection. All of the chief priests and a majority of the Sanhedrin were Sadducees. They were the people who got the fees that were paid by the people changing money and selling animals for sacrifices in the temple courtyard. As a result they were very upset when Jesus cleansed the temple because that meant that they would lose the profits that they made from the fees that they charged.

Here we see that the Sadducees were asking a question about the resurrection when they did not believe in the resurrection. They thought that they could show the impossibility of the resurrection by their question. Deuteronomy 25:5-6 says, “If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband’s brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her. And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.” Moses had given these instructions to Israel so that the inheritance of each tribe and family remained within that tribe and family.

The Sadducees said that seven brothers each married the same woman and each died after they had married the woman. None of them had any children. Finally the woman died also. Then the question of the Sadducees was, “Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife.” The Sadducees thought that they could show the impossibility of the resurrection by showing that in the resurrection that all seven brothers could not be married to the same woman. Since the Sadducees did not even believe in the resurrection, we see that they were actually trying to trick Jesus in front of the people so that the people would not believe Jesus.

We see the answer of Jesus in Mark 12:24-27 where we read, “Jesus answered and said to them, “Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of

God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken." Instead of being tricked Jesus explained why the Sadducees were mistaken.

There were three things that the Sadducees did not know. First, they did not know the Scriptures. God performed the first marriage when He created Eve and brought her to the man. Genesis 2:21-22 says, "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man." Since the angels were already in existence, this meant that there is no marriage among the angels. Our eternal bodies are described in I Corinthians 15:44 which says, "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." In our spiritual body we will not have marriage and we will not have children. Instead we will have a new type of life and will never experience death. We will have perfect spiritual relationships with everyone.

Second, they did not know the power of God. In I Kings 17:22 we read, "Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived." II Kings 4:35 says, "He returned and walked back and forth in the house, and again went up and stretched himself out on him; then the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes." Then II Kings 13:21 says, "So it was, as they were burying a man, that suddenly they spied a band of *raiders*; and they put the man in the tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet." In all three of these verses from the Old Testament God showed His power to raise the dead. The Sadducees did not want to accept this fact.

Third, the Sadducees did not accept even what Moses wrote about the resurrection. In Exodus 3:6 Moses wrote about the burning bush experience and said, "Moreover He said, 'I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'" And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God." The word translated "I AM" is a strong present tense word that shows that God is still the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob because "I AM" has no beginning and no end. The Sadducees suddenly had to realize the Moses also spoke of the resurrection and they claimed to believe the writings of Moses.

In the book of John we see that many times Jesus used this same word to show His eternal existence. Christ spoke of Himself as "I am the Bread of Life", "I am the Resurrection and the Life" and all of the other titles using "I Am" in the book of John point to the eternal existence of Jesus. Then Jesus said to the Jews in John 8:58-59, "Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.'" Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly explain the eternal existence of Jesus. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this fact to others.

Jesus Answered one of the Scribes

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the fact of the eternal existence of Jesus. We also want to help our children understand that the religious leaders tried in many different ways to trap Jesus. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus answered one of the scribes.

One of the scribes had heard the Sadducees reasoning together as they tried to trap Jesus with their question about the resurrection. The scribe realized that Jesus had given the Sadducees a good answer. As a result, the scribe then asked Jesus a question and heard His answer. Mark 12:28-31 says, “Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, ‘Which is the first commandment of all?’ Jesus answered him, ‘The first of all the commandments *is*: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This *is* the first commandment. And the second, like *it*, *is* this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” We will see how Jesus answered the question of the scribe.

The Pharisees said that there were 613 laws in the Old Testament. As a result, this question asked Jesus what was the most important of all of the commandments. Jesus answered this question by quoting from the Scriptures. Deuteronomy 6:4-5 says, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” Then Leviticus 19:18 says, “You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the LORD.” Here we see that Jesus answered the question of the scribe by combining the statements of both of these verses and pointing out the fact that the second is like the first. Jesus summarized the commandments of the entire Old Testament by quoting from these two verses.

First, the quotation of Deuteronomy 6:4-5 recognizes that the Lord is one. The word used for one in this verse means there is unity. It is the same word that is used in Genesis 2:24 where we read, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” In this verse it was used to speak of the unity of a husband and wife. In Deuteronomy it speaks of the unity of the Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) as one God. This unity is illustrated in Genesis 1:26 where we read, “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Second, Deuteronomy 6:4-5 recognizes that we are to love the Lord with our whole heart, soul and strength. The heart is the inner man or the spirit. Another form of this word is used in both Genesis 6:5 and Jeremiah 17:9. Genesis 6:5 says, “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil con-

tinually.” Then Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit comes into our lives. Romans 8:16 says, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” This means that the Holy Spirit has come into our human spirit and we have a family relationship to the Lord.

Third, we see that we are to love the Lord with our whole soul. Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The word translated “soul or life” means the inner self. Vine’s Expository Dictionary says, “Generally speaking the spirit is the higher, the soul the lower element. The spirit may be recognized as the life principle bestowed on man by God, the soul as the resulting life constituted in the individual, the body being the material organism animated by soul and spirit.” Simply put the soul is the mind, emotions and will. In contrast, Romans 1:19-23 shows that the spirit is natural light, conscience, wisdom, sensitivity and creativity. An animal can have a soul but cannot have a spirit which makes it impossible for an animal to relate to God. As a result, we are to love the Lord with our whole mind, emotions and will. Then we are to love the Lord with our whole strength.

Jesus went on to say that the second commandment is like the first by quoting from Leviticus 19:18. This shows that the second most important commandment in the Old Testament is to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. These two commandments actually summarize the entire Old Testament. In Luke 10:29-37 Jesus showed that our neighbor is any person by giving the parable of the Good Samaritan. If we love God with our whole heart soul and strength and we love our neighbor as we love ourselves, those two commandments summarize the entire Old Testament.

We read the response of the scribe in Mark 12:32-33 which say, “So the scribe said to Him, “Well *said*, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” The answer of this particular scribe showed that he had a very different attitude from many of the scribes. He understood that godly inner attitudes were more important than sacrifices. Samuel had told Saul this same thing in I Samuel 15:22 where we read, “So Samuel said: ‘Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.’” This scribe understood something which Saul was not able to understand.

That is why the scribe told Jesus that Jesus had spoken the truth. The scribe recognized that there is only One God. He said that there are no other gods. I Corinthians 8:5-6 says, “For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.” Here we see that the scribe had understanding as well as knowledge. Most of the Jews could quote many passages from the Old Testament. However, many of the people had no understanding of the spiritual truth that came from those verses.

That is why the statement of the scribe is so important. The scribe recognized that people were to love God with the whole, heart, soul and strength. However, He also added one additional word. The scribe said that it was important to love God with the whole understanding. That shows a key lesson about this particular scribe. II Timothy 2:7 says, “Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.” This scribe realized the need for understanding which can only come from the Lord. Paul prayed that the Christians in the city of Colosse would let God fill them with spiritual understanding. Colossians 1:9 says, “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.”

The scribe also recognized that loving God and loving one’s neighbor as self was more important than any number of whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. A whole burnt offering was when the entire sacrifice was burned. The writer of Hebrews explained in Hebrews 10:6-8, “In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.’” Previously saying, ‘Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them’ (which are offered according to the law).” One thing that this scribe did not yet realize was that Jesus would soon fulfill the whole law by His own death and resurrection. Jesus had said in the Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew 5:17, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

Jesus publicly recognized the wise answer of the scribe in Mark 12:34, “Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’ But after that no one dared question Him.” Jesus showed that He recognized the wisdom of this scribe and told him that he was not far from the kingdom of God. Jesus recognized that this man was searching for truth although he may not have recognized that himself. Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:20-21, “For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” That man would soon have an opportunity to make a choice. He would have to choose whether to avoid the light or come to the One who is the Light.

We also see that no one dared to ask any more questions after the question by this scribe. At this point the enemies of Jesus had all been silenced by His answers to the various questions that they had asked Him because they could not disagree with His answers. Christ gives us an example of the importance of answering questions from the Word of God instead of our own opinions. We want to show our physical and spiritual children the importance of answering the questions of others from the Word of God because such answers can be used by the Lord to draw people to Jesus. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to answer questions with the Word of God.

Jesus Warned about the Scribes

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to answer the questions of others with the Word of God instead of their own opinions. We said that the Father will use such answers to draw people to Jesus. In this topic we are going to see that Jesus questioned the religious leaders about the Messiah.

The religious leaders had tried to trap Jesus by asking Him a series of questions. Then Jesus went into the temple courtyard and began to teach. Mark 12:35-37 says, "Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, 'How *is it* that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.' Therefore David himself calls Him 'Lord'; how is He *then* his Son?' And the common people heard Him gladly." Here we see what Jesus often did when He went to Jerusalem. He went into the temple and started teaching. We see that Jesus often taught by asking questions. That was what He did that day.

We see that these questions were designed to help the people think about the Word of God so that they could begin to understand that the Old Testament taught that the Son of God came from the family of David. However, they also showed that the religious leaders did not understand what they taught. One of the teachings of the scribes was that the Christ is the Son of David. That was a true statement about Christ because the genealogies in Matthew and Luke show us that both Mary and Joseph were descendents of David. Matthew 1:17 gives a summary when that verse says, "So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon *are* fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ *are* fourteen generations." This verse says that Jesus was the twenty-eighth generation after David thus showing that He is a descendent of David.

However, the second question of Jesus showed that the religious leaders did not understand what they taught even when they taught from the Old Testament. David wrote in Psalm 110:1, "The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." Jesus quoted this verse and then asked the question, "Therefore David himself calls Him '*Lord*'; how is He *then* his Son?" We see that the quotation from Psalm 110 used two different names for God. The first word LORD is the Hebrew word Yahweh (Jehovah). By using this title David made it clear that it was God the Father who called the Messiah "Lord". Since the Father called the Messiah Lord, this quote shows that the Father says that Jesus is both the Son of David and the Son of God.

By His question, Jesus showed that David called one of his own descendents Lord. Romans 1:1-4 further explains "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Paul said that God promised through the prophets who wrote the

Holy Scriptures that His Son, Jesus Christ, is our Lord. Paul also pointed out the fact that Jesus was also a descendent of David by physical birth. He said He is declared to be the Son of God with power. The common people heard Jesus gladly but the religious leaders were very upset.

Jesus went on to give a warning about the religious leaders. Mark 12:38-40 says, “Then He said to them in His teaching, “Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, *love* greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, who devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.” Christ warned the people to beware of the scribes because He knew that their influence was very evil. Here we see that Jesus pointed out that the religious leaders and especially the scribes were controlled by pride and were not led by God. Then Jesus gave several ways that they showed their pride.

First, they showed their pride by their long robes. Long robes were the description the loose outer garments for men that extended to the feet. They were usually only worn by kings, priests and other persons of high rank. Matthew 23:5 adds one additional thing when that verse says, “But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.” Phylacteries were small cases that were fastened by a strap to the forehead or the left arm near the heart. These cases would have the following verses written on them: Exodus 13:1-10, 11-16, and Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21. Many Jews thought that these would drive away demons. The scribes made much larger cases so that they would be more noticeable. The Jews wore tassels on the bottom of their robes. However, the scribes would make their tassels longer to try to make other Jews think they were more spiritual.

Second, their pride was shown by the fact that they loved greetings in the marketplaces. The Jews had various titles for religious leaders like “Rabbi”, “Father” or “Teacher”. The scribes wanted the people to call them by all of these titles to cause the people to think that they had more spiritual authority. Spiritual authority cannot be given by men because Jesus said in Matthew 28:18, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” Titles can be given by man but all spiritual authority belongs to Christ. Christ said in Matthew 23:6-8, “They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’ But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.” Third, these verses also say they showed their pride because they wanted the best seats in the synagogues. Fourth, this pride was shown by the fact that they also wanted the best places at feasts.

Christ pointed out two things that showed their true character. First, the true character of the scribes was really shown by the way that they took advantage of widows. We read that the scribes devoured widows’ houses. The job of the scribes was to make copies of written documents. As a result, they were often given the responsibility to write certain documents for widows regarding their estates. Many scribes would convince the widows to use much of their money to support their work as a scribe or to give much of their money to the temple since the scribes also received money for making copies of the Old Testament scrolls. Either way it was self gain for the scribes.

Second, Matthew 6:5 says, “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.” It was a common practice of the scribes to pray for long periods in places where they could be seen by other people. They were not talking to God but were trying to impress the people.

While Christ was in the temple, He was sitting close to the treasury where the people gave their offerings. Mark 12:41-44 says, “Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many *who were* rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. So He called His disciples to *Himself* and said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.’” Jesus observed how the people put their money into the containers for their offerings

In that day the money consisted of coins of various sizes and various kinds of metal. A denarius was a coin that was a day’s wage for a common laborer. As Jesus and the disciples observed the giving of the people many of the rich came and placed large bags of coins in the treasury. Of course bags of coins usually rattle and so often get noticed by others. As Jesus watched He saw a poor widow come and drop two mites in the treasury. The two mites were small copper coins that together were only worth 1/64 of a denarius.

Jesus called the disciples to Himself and taught them a very important lesson about giving that day. Jesus said that the poor widow had given more than anyone else that gave an offering that day. Then Jesus explained what He meant by that statement. The rich were giving out of their abundance. Jesus used this word when He warned about the danger of riches in Luke 12:15 which says, “And He said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.’” The Jews thought that riches were a sign of God’s blessing and that was why Jesus gave this warning. Jesus followed this warning by giving the parable about the rich fool who died that night and took nothing with him.

In contrast, Jesus said that this woman gave out of her poverty. We see that she gave her whole livelihood. The word translated “livelihood” means resources or goods. This is the word that is used in the parable of the prodigal son who told his father in Luke 15:12, “And the younger of them said to *his* father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls *to me*.’ So he divided to them *his* livelihood.” Here we see that the word spoke of the entire inheritance that the man gave to his sons. Since this poor widow gave her entire livelihood it meant that she had nothing for her next meal until she earned some more money. Her love for the Lord caused her to give from her heart and she gave all that she had. That was why Jesus said that she gave more than anyone else that day. We want to help our physical and spiritual learn to give generously from the heart to the Lord by our example. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to focus on eternal riches instead of worldly riches.

Jesus Taught Four Disciples about the Future

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children recognize that there are some religious leaders who are controlled by pride instead of being led by the Lord. We also saw that we want to help our children learn to store up eternal treasures instead of earthly treasures. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus taught some of His disciples about the future.

Jesus had silenced the religious leaders who were questioning Him by the questions that He asked them. Then Jesus left them. Mark 13:1-2 says, “Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*’ And Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Do you see these great buildings? Not *one* stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.’” Many years earlier Herod the Great had begun a project to beautify the temple. John 2:20 says, “Then the Jews said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’” That statement was made three years earlier so work to beautify the temple had now been going on for 49 years.

As they went out of the temple one of the disciples mentioned all of the beautiful stones that had been added to the temple to make it more beautiful. Jesus agreed the temple was very beautiful but Jesus said that it would not remain that way for very long. Instead Jesus pointed to the buildings and said that not one stone would be left sitting on another. Instead they would all be thrown down. Matthew and Luke also wrote about what Jesus said that day. Luke 21:5-6 says, “Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, ‘These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.’”

Later Jesus went to the Mount of Olives which was just across a small valley from the temple. We read in Mark 13:3-8, “Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?’ And Jesus, answering them, began to say: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am *He*,’ and will deceive many. But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet. ⁸ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These *are* the beginnings of sorrows.’” Here we see that the four disciples asked Jesus two questions. They thought that their two questions were talking about the same time but the answer to their two questions shows that there is a large time gap between the two events.

Jesus began by answering the first question “Tell us, when will these things be?” because it dealt with the destruction of the temple. The temple was very beautiful but only 40 years later in 70 A.D. the Roman army completely destroyed the temple buildings along with about a million Jews. The disciples expected Jesus to immediately set up His kingdom so they did not

expect a time gap between these two questions. Just before Jesus returned to heaven 40 days after His resurrection the disciples asked in Acts 1:6, “Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’” This question shows that the disciples did not expect the entire period of the church between their first and second question that day as they questioned Jesus on the Mount of Olives.

Their second question actually had two parts. Matthew 24:3 says, “Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’” We could split this into two questions since we know that the disciples were looking for the time when Jesus would restore the kingdom to Israel. The first question is, What will be the sign of Your coming? The second question could be stated, When will the end of the age be? They probably expected Jesus to set up the kingdom before the Passover season was over. When He had not yet set up the kingdom 40 days later, they asked the question about restoring the kingdom in Acts 1:6. Their lack of knowledge about the period of the church meant that their real desire was to know when Jesus would set up the kingdom.

The answer of Jesus showed that there would be a gap of a longer time before He would set up His Kingdom. Jesus began by warning the disciples not to let anyone deceive them. Jesus knew that after His return to heaven that there would be many deceivers. Through the years since Jesus returned to heaven there have been many deceivers who claimed to be the Christ. We can expect such deceivers to continue to appear both before and after we Christians are taken to heaven.

The ultimate deceiver will be the antichrist who will appear after we as Christians are taken to heaven. II Thessalonians 2:7-10 says, “For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” The One who restrains is the Holy Spirit because John 16:8 says, “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” The Holy Spirit will be taken out of the way when the church is taken to heaven at the Rapture. Then the antichrist will be revealed.

Jesus went on to describe to the disciples some of the things that will happen on the earth prior to the time that He comes to set up His Kingdom which will follow the seven year period known as the Tribulation. These things are increasing as the time gets closer. The disciples heard of wars and rumors of wars but there are even more wars and rumors of wars today. Jesus told the disciples not to be troubled because Jesus said those things would happen before the time of the end. Throughout the time since the disciples there have been nations rising against other nations and kingdoms arising against other kingdoms. There have been earthquakes in various places. There have been famines and shortages of food. There have been other troubles and problems. Jesus said that such things are just the beginning of sorrows. The word translated sorrows is used to speak of the labor pains of birth in I Thessalonians 5:3

where we read, “For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.” That verse is talking about the time after the church is taken to heaven and the period known as the Day of the Lord has begun.

Jesus went on to warn the disciples about future persecution. Jesus then gave the disciples a warning that has applied to Christians throughout the centuries since Jesus returned to heaven. Mark 13:9-13 says, “But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. But when they arrest *you* and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate^[c] what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”

Jesus warned that His disciples would be delivered up to councils. Peter and John experienced that for the first time in Acts 4 and then again in Acts 5. In Acts 4 they were threatened. Acts 4:21 says, “So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done.” Then in Acts 5 they were beaten. Acts 5:40-41 says, “And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” Jesus said this would be a testimony to such rulers.

Jesus then said that the Gospel must first be preached to all nations before all these things would be fulfilled. That is why the final words of Jesus before He returned to heaven in Acts 1:8 say, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” This points forward to the fact that there will be continuing persecution until Jesus comes. Christians continue to be arrested and killed. The Lord has given many persecuted Christians the words to speak when they had been arrested and delivered to various courts by those who oppose the Gospel throughout the time since. Family members continue to turn against other family members. Jesus said that the time would come followers of Jesus would be hated by all just because of the fact that they are followers of Jesus so this opposition will continue to get worse. However, Jesus gave a promise that those who follow Him will be given supernatural strength to endure even when they suffer. This is a wonderful promise about the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why the disciples considered it a privilege when they suffered for their ministry for the Lord. That will help our children to have strength and also consider it a privilege if they experience suffering in their lives as they serve the Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn that it is a privilege to suffer for Christ.

Jesus Taught about the Great Tribulation

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn why it is a privilege to suffer for Christ. That will help them to have strength when they face opposition because they are Christians. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus went on to teach four of His disciples about the Great Tribulation.

Mark 13:14-16 says, “So when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not” (let the reader understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.” In these verses we see that Jesus referred to one of the things written by Daniel in the Old Testament to help the disciples understand what is going to happen in the future when the tribulation comes.

In Daniel 9:26-27 we read, “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it *shall be* with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.” In Daniel 9:24-27 Daniel talks about 70 weeks of years that will happen before the Lord will bring in everlasting righteousness. Daniel divided those weeks of years into three periods of seven weeks, sixty-two weeks and one week.

Daniel said in Daniel 9:25 that this period would begin with the command to restore Jerusalem. That verse says, “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.” In Nehemiah 2:1-8 we read about King Artaxerxes giving the command to rebuild the wall in Jerusalem. That happened in 445 B.C. The seven weeks and sixty-two weeks make a total of sixty-nine weeks. Each week represents seven years or a total of 483 years. On the Jewish calendar that would be in the month of Nisan of A.D. 30. The exact day in that month is either the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey or the very day He was crucified. That makes the prophecy by Daniel an exact prophecy that was fulfilled by the death of Jesus.

There means that there is a break between week sixty-nine and week seventy of the prophecy of Daniel. The church was unknown in the Old Testament and that is why it is called a mystery in the New Testament. As a result, the break before the seventieth week is the period of the church. The church began on the Day of Pentecost and will be completed when Jesus takes the church to heaven at the time of the Rapture described in I Thessalonians 4:13-18. Then the seventieth week of years of Daniel will immediately follow the Rapture. The verses quoted from Daniel in the preceding paragraphs show that it is in the middle of this week that the

“abomination of desolation” will be set up in the temple that will be rebuilt in Jerusalem. The antichrist will set up his own image in the temple and that will be the “abomination of desolation” mentioned here in Mark.

Matthew 24:15 says, “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand).” Here in Mark we see that Jesus warned that as soon as the antichrist sets up his image in the temple that the Jews in Judea must immediately flee to the mountains in order to escape the attempt of the antichrist to destroy all of the Jews. Those who are sitting on their housetop will not have any time to go into their house to gather some things to take with them as they flee. Those who are out in the field will not have any time to return to their house to get some extra clothes.

Mark 13:17-20 goes on to say, “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter. For *in* those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.” In these verses we see that Jesus warned that those who are pregnant or have very young children will have an especially difficult time trying to escape. Jesus may have been thinking about the evil that Menahem showed to the women of Tiphshah realizing that similar things may happen as Israel flees from the antichrist. II Kings 15:16 says, “Then from Tirzah, Menahem attacked Tiphshah, all who were there, and its territory. Because they did not surrender, therefore he attacked it. All the women there who were with child he ripped open.”

Jesus also said that those who will have to flee the antichrist need to pray that their flight will not be in winter. The winter would create several extra challenges for the people to have to flee in the winter. There would be no food on the trees or in the fields. That is the rainy season in Israel and overflowing streams could make it impossible to flee through the open countryside where people would not see them. Then Jesus explained why this will be such a dangerous time for the people of Israel. Jesus said that there would be greater tribulation in those days than there has ever been in past history or will be in the future. Matthew 24:21 says, “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.”

Jesus said that the Lord has already determined long ago to keep these days short because otherwise no one would survive. In Daniel 7:25 we read about the antichrist and how long God will let him persecute Israel and the tribulation saints once he sets up his image. That verse says, “He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.” Here we see that the antichrist will be able to persecute the tribulation saints for half a time. This will be the second half of the tribulation so that will be a period of three and a half years.

Jesus also warned that during the tribulation that there would be false christs and false prophets. Mark 13:21-23 says, “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, *He is* there!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and

wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.” God wants Israel and those who will become saints during the tribulation to know that there will be many who will try to deceive them. This will be especially important because they will become saints after the Rapture of the Christians so those that have been following the Lord for many years will not be on the earth to teach them.

These false christs and prophets will say things like, “Look, here *is* the Christ!” or, “Look, *He is* there!” Jesus warns that such false teachers are not to be believed. Revelation 1:7 tells how Christ will come at the end of the tribulation. That verse says, “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.” During the second half of the tribulation Israel and the tribulation saints will be hiding from the antichrist. The goal of the devil will be to get the people of Israel and the tribulation saints to leave the places where they are hiding so that the antichrist can destroy them.

Then we are told how these false christs and false prophets will try to deceive the tribulation saints. We see that they will perform signs and wonders to deceive the saints. The fact that they will do signs and wonders to try and deceive the elect during that time should not surprise us. II Thessalonians 2:9 says, “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” Here we see that the antichrist, himself, will deceive all who reject the truth with all power, signs and lying wonders. Since Satan is able to give the antichrist the ability to deceive those who reject the truth with all power, signs and lying wonders, it should not surprise us that he is able to give that same power to others. These false christs and false prophets are going to try to deceive the elect in the same way that the antichrist will deceive those who are unbelievers.

That is why Christ gives this as a clear warning to those who will be tribulation saints so that they will not be deceived by these false christs and false prophets who are saying that Christ has appeared at various places on the earth. Instead they are to wait and see Christ when He appears in the clouds and His appearance signals the fact that He has come to fight against the antichrist to defeat him and all of his armies. Zechariah 14:4 says, “And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.” This valley will allow the tribulation saints to escape from the antichrist for a final time before he is destroyed and the Lord become the King over all of the earth.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what Jesus taught about the Great Tribulation so that they can clearly explain what Jesus taught about that time to help others understand. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn how to explain what Jesus taught.

Jesus Taught about His Return to Earth

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what Jesus taught about the tribulation so that they can explain to others what Jesus taught. In this topic we are going to see what Jesus taught four of His disciples about His return to this earth to rule on the earth for one thousand years.

In Mark 13:24-27 we read, “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.” The previous verses described some of the events of the Great Tribulation which will be the last half of the tribulation. As a result, these verses are speaking about the things that will happen as the world moves toward the end of the tribulation. We see that there will be several signs in the heavens.

The word translated “after” is translated “with” in most uses in the New Testament (345 times). Revelation 8:12 says, “Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.” Various passages tell us that the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. Joel 2:10-11 says, “The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness. The LORD gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; for strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it?” The Day of the Lord is used to describe the times when God brings great judgment particularly the final judgments beginning with the tribulation. In the New Testament it will begin with the tribulation and extend through the final judgments. II Peter 3:10 says, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”

We also see that the stars of heaven will fall and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Matthew 24:29 says, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” Both verses talk about the same event and mention the same things that will happen as the tribulation comes to its conclusion. Here we see that both the heavens and the earth will be affected by these events.

The entire world will see the coming of the Lord to earth to rule. For those who have rejected Him this will be a day of judgment. This judgment is illustrated in a very important way from the time of Noah. Matthew 24:38-39 says, “For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the

Son of Man be.” All unbelievers will be taken off the earth in judgment. In contrast, the elect who have come to Him in repentance and faith during this time, it will be a time of regathering from all of the places where they have been scattered including both the farthest part of the earth and the farthest part of the heaven.

Jesus went on to give the disciples the parable of the fig tree to illustrate what the time of His coming to rule on the earth will be like. Mark 13:28-31 says, “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.” Jesus explained to His disciples with Him how people will be able to recognize when His coming to rule on the earth is close. Jesus used the fig tree as His illustration.

Like many fruit trees, in the spring of the year a fig tree gets buds on it. Those buds will become figs. At the same time the branches become tender and the tree starts to form new leaves for the coming season. Jesus said that when the disciples saw these things happen to the fig tree that they knew that summer was very close. In the same way, Jesus said that when the earth sees the things happening in Mark 13:6-23 and especially the things in verses 14 through 23 that people can know that the coming of Jesus to rule on the earth is very close. In fact Jesus said that it is right at the doors. The events in verses 14-23 will only last 3 ½ years (1260 days). Revelation 12:6 says that God will feed Israel in the wilderness for 1260 days. That verse says, “Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.” Then Revelation 13:5 tells us how long the antichrist will rule after he sets up his image. That verse says, “And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.” This is why Jesus said His coming will be right at the doors.

Jesus went on to say that the generation living at the time in which the events of the tribulation will take place will not pass away until all these things have taken place. This is a reminder that the tribulation is actually a very short period of time because it is only the seventieth week of Daniel (seven years). Daniel 9:27 says, “Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.” Daniel 9:24 promises, “Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.” Since the Messiah was cut off (Jesus died and rose again) after the sixty-ninth week, the time of the church which was not mentioned in the Old Testament is happening before the seventieth week (the tribulation).

Then Jesus gave His disciples and all future followers a wonderful promise when He said in verse 31, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.” Revelation 21:1 says, “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.” After Jesus rules on the earth for 1000 years (Revelation 20:4-6) there will be the final judgments of Satan and all unbelievers

(Revelation 20:7-15). Then II Peter 3:10 says, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” Through these events the world as we know it now will pass away. However, the words spoken by Jesus will not pass away but everything that He said will happen exactly as He has said it.

Jesus then told the disciples in Mark 13:32-37, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. *It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning— lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!” Jesus said that at time no one including the angels knew what time these events will happen in the future except the Father. Since Jesus set aside some of His relative attributes when He came to this earth, He had even set aside His knowledge of the time of these events until He returned to heaven.

Jesus told the disciples that they were to watch and pray since they did not know when these events would happen. If Jesus told the disciples to watch and pray at that time, it is even more important that we watch and pray today since we are much closer to that time. Then Jesus gave an illustration. Jesus compared Himself to a man going to a far country. Jesus started that trip to that far country in Acts 1:9 where we read, “Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.” Jesus is now sitting at the right hand of the Father in heaven because Romans 8:34 says, “Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”

Jesus then gave instructions to the disciples that apply to all who become His servants. Jesus said that He has given each of His servants work to do before He returns. As followers of Jesus, we are to be busy doing His work that He has prepared us to do. As Christians we know that Jesus is going to return at the Rapture to take us to heaven. However, none of us know when that day will be. That is why we are to be watching and ready at all times for His coming. The same will be true during the tribulation for all who become tribulation saints. They are also told to be ready for His coming at all times because no one knows the exact time at which Jesus will return. The time of His coming at both the Rapture and when He returns to rule will be sudden. There will be no advance warning. It can happen at any time of the day or night.

We also want to help our physical and spiritual children to be ready and watching for the coming of Jesus. It will be sudden so we want to show them by our attitude to be ready at all times. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to realize the importance of being ready when Jesus comes.

Jesus was Anointed by Mary

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what Jesus taught to four of His disciples about what is going to happen when He returns to this earth to rule at the end of the tribulation. In this topic we are going to see that Mary anointed Jesus in preparation for His coming death.

The time for the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was almost there. Mark 14:1-2 tells us what the Jewish religious leaders were planning during this time. Those verses say, “After two days it was the Passover and *the Feast* of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put *Him* to death. But they said, ‘Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people.’” Here we see that the start of Passover was just two days away. That meant that it was already Wednesday and that the next day would be Thursday. The Jews counted a day from sunset to sunset. That meant that the Passover meal would be eaten after sunset on Thursday night and the crucifixion would happen on Friday. Christ told the disciples in Matthew 26:2, “You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”

However, the chief priests and scribes were not really thinking about Passover. Instead they were thinking about ways to destroy Jesus. They were thinking how they could capture Jesus by trickery so that they could put Him to death. This showed the condition of their hearts. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” The chief priests were the men who were supposed to lead the nation in worship to God as they remembered how the Lord had given them deliverance out of the land of Egypt. Instead they were plotting the death of the Son of God. I Corinthians 5:7 says, “Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.” The religious leaders certainly did not realize that Jesus was going to be the Passover that would make it possible for the Father to pass over and blot out the sins of all who would believe and receive Jesus as their Passover.

Caiaphas was the high priest that year and he had said a few weeks earlier right after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead in John 11:49-50, “And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” Here we see that Caiaphas was so eager to maintain his control over the people that he led in the planning of the destruction of Jesus. The condition of the hearts of the chief priests and scribes was so evil that their only concern was how to avoid an uproar among the people when they put Jesus to death. For that reason they did not actually want to kill Jesus during the feast. However, at the same time they did not want Jesus to escape and leave the area of Jerusalem before they could kill Him. As a result, they wanted to arrest Jesus when no one was around to see them do it.

Mark 14:3-5 says, “And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table,

a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured *it* on His head. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, “Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they criticized her sharply.” Bethany was a village a very short distance from Jerusalem. This was the village where Lazarus (whom Jesus had raised from the dead a few weeks earlier) and his sisters Mary and Martha lived. Jesus was having dinner at the home of Simon the leper. This was probably a man who had formerly been a leper and had been healed by Jesus since Leviticus 13:45 says, “Now the leper on whom the sore *is*, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’”

We see that a woman also came to the home of Simon the leper. John 12:2-3 says, “There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.” In these verses we see that John tells us that the one who anointed Jesus was Mary, the sister of Lazarus. Alabaster was a very expensive form of marble that came from Egypt and could be carved into fancy containers that were used to store expensive perfumes because that material was considered the best way to preserve expensive perfumes.

We see that some who were there were indignant or very upset that this expensive perfume had been wasted. John 12:4-6 says, “But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, who would betray Him, said, ‘Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?’ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.” John tells us that it was Judas that was very upset and why he was so upset. We see that he criticized Mary very sharply. However, Judas did not have a concern for the poor. Judas had no concern for anyone except Judas and he wanted that money for himself. A denarius was a day’s wages so three hundred denarii meant that this was about 300 day’s wages or the income from a year of work. That cost made this perfume a very expensive gift. Judas called it a waste of money but it really showed a total lack of love for Jesus.

In contrast, Mary showed her great love for Jesus but this act of love. She showed that love by pouring this very expensive ointment on the head of Jesus. We go on to read what Jesus said about this act of love and worship which Mary had shown by her actions. Mark 14:6-9 says, “But Jesus said, ‘Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.’” Jesus made it clear that He recognized the love that Mary had shown by her actions.

Jesus said, “Let her alone.” The word translated “let alone” means to leave, to let alone, to send away or to forgive. Jesus used this word in John 16:28 to say that He was leaving the world to return to the Father. That verse says, “I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.” Nearly a third of the times the word is

translated forgive. I John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Jesus used this word three times as He talked to a different Mary. He used this word to describe His forgiveness of the sins of Mary Magdalene in Luke 7:47-49 after she anointed His feet. Those verses say, “Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.’ Then He said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’ And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, ‘Who is this who even forgives sins?’” As a result, Jesus was telling Judas to stop questioning what Mary had done.

Jesus also told those present not to trouble Mary. Jesus explained that Mary had done a good work by anointing Him. Then Jesus explained that they could help the poor whenever they desired. Like Judas, there are many people who claim to have a concern for the poor when they are really seeking personal benefit. That is why I Timothy 6:9-10 warns. “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” In contrast to the attitude of Judas, Galatians 2:10 the leaders of the church in Jerusalem told Paul, “They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.” Paul gave similar advice to the elders in Ephesus when he said in Acts 20:35, “I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Jesus went on to explain the meaning of what Mary had done by anointing Him with the expensive perfume. He said that Mary had done this beforehand to prepare His body for burial. This was an act of worship by Mary to show her love for Jesus. She knew that there were many in Jerusalem that wanted to kill Jesus. The chief priests had immediately gathered a council as soon as they heard Jesus had raised her brother, Lazarus, from the dead. John 11:53-54 says, “Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.” Mary wanted to show her love for Jesus whatever happened.

Jesus also gave a promise about the actions of Mary that day. Jesus said, “Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.” Jesus chose to make the actions of Mary that day something that would be a public witness of her love for Jesus throughout the future. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that true worship is showing our love for Jesus by the things that we do and not just by the words that we speak or the songs that we sing. We show our children by our example as we show by our actions the love that we have for Jesus. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children that true worship results in actions that come from the heart.

Jesus Observed the Passover

In our last topic we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children our love for Jesus by our actions and not just our words or our songs. True worship comes from the heart in thanksgiving to God for the fact that Jesus paid the penalty for our sins and the sins of the whole world by shedding His blood for our sins. In our topic today we want to help our children understand why Jesus observed the Passover before His death.

Judas was upset that the expensive ointment that Mary had poured on Jesus was not sold. He was a thief and carried the bag of money so he had probably hoped to steal most of it. As a result, Mark 14:10-11 says, “Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them. And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.” Here we see that Judas took some immediate action to gain extra money in another way. He showed by his choice that his heart was deceitful and desperately wicked. He is called Judas Iscariot. The name “Iscariot” means a “man of Kerioth” which was the name of a small town about twenty-three miles south of Jerusalem. That meant that he was from Judea instead of Galilee like the other disciples. That made it easier for him to hide his true character from the rest of the disciples.

Judas knew that the chief priests wanted to kill Jesus. As a result, Judas went to the chief priests and offered to betray Jesus to them when no one was around. Matthew 26:14-15 says, “Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?’ And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.” We see in Exodus 21:32 that was the price that was paid to a master for a slave that was killed by an ox. That verse says, “If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.” We see that by his actions that Judas showed that he had no more respect for Jesus than he had for a slave.

The chief priests were glad when they heard the offer of Judas. Luke 22:5-6 says, “And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.” The chief priests wanted to arrest Jesus when there was no one around to see what they were doing. They wanted to get Pilate to put Jesus on a cross before most of the people realized what was happening. This also showed that their hearts were deceitful and desperately wicked.

Jesus knew what Judas had done. As a result, we see that Jesus did not want Judas to know where He and the disciples would eat the Passover. Mark 14:12-16 says, “Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover *lamb*, His disciples said to Him, ‘Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?’ And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, ‘Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, “Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?”’ Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished *and* prepared; there make ready for us.’ So His disci-

ples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.” Here we see that Jesus sent the two disciples with instructions that would not let Judas know where they were going to eat the Passover until he arrived at the house. Luke 22:8 says, “And He sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.’” This verse tells us that the disciples were Peter and John.

For more than 1400 years the Jews had celebrated the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In Exodus 12 we read about the first Passover. The Jews were to kill a lamb and put the blood on the top and sides of the door of their house. Exodus 12:13 says, “Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.” In the time of Jesus the Jews would kill the Passover lamb between three and five in the afternoon and sprinkle some of the blood on the altar rather than put it on the doorposts as had been done in Exodus. Then the lamb was taken to the place where the meal would be eaten and roasted whole. Exodus 12:8 says, “Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.” The bitter herbs were made into a sauce which included nuts, dates, pomegranates and apples in which they would dip their bread.

Jesus told the two disciples how to find the place where they would prepare the Passover. Jesus said that when they went into the city that they would meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Since the women normally were the ones who carried the water, they would be able to quickly notice a man with a pitcher of water. Jesus told the two disciples to follow the man carrying the pitcher of water until he went into a house. By these instructions Jesus made certain that Judas had no way of knowing where they would eat the Passover. Then the two disciples were to talk to the owner of the house and tell him, “The Teacher says, ‘Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’” Many people in Jerusalem would have a room that people from Galilee and other places could rent and use for the Passover and the other feasts that were held in Jerusalem.

Jesus said that the owner of the house would show them a large upper room. Such upper rooms were often over a porch or a room built on a roof. In II Kings 4:10 we see that a couple had made a small upper room for Elisha, “Please, let us make a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there.” This provided a place of privacy for Elisha each time that he passed through that town. Since our verses in Mark mention that this was a large upper room it may have been the entire second story of the house so that it provided an area where a large group of people could gather for the various feasts or other events. This may have been the same upper room where the disciples met before the day of Pentecost mentioned in Acts 1:11.

This upper room was furnished and prepared. This meant that it had the things that were necessary to prepare such a meal since people coming from other areas would not bring those things with them. Jesus told Peter and John to prepare the Passover meal in that upper room. They did as they were instructed and went into the city. They saw the man carrying a pitcher of water just as Jesus had predicted and they followed him to the house. There they prepared the Passover for Jesus and the other disciples.

Mark 5:17-21 says, “In the evening He came with the twelve. Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me.’ And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, ‘Is it I?’ And another *said*, ‘Is it I?’ He answered and said to them, ‘*It is* one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born.’” We see that Jesus and the rest of the disciples came at the time for the meal and they all ate together.

We see that while they were eating that Jesus said that one of the men there that night would betray Him. The disciples became sad and each one began to question, “*Is it I?*” Here we see that none of the disciples even suspected Judas. Instead they all questioned whether they could do such a thing. This shows us that Jesus had treated Judas with the same love and respect that He treated the other disciples even though He had known throughout the time that Judas was a disciple that he would betray Jesus. In fact Jesus had said much earlier in John 6:70-71, “Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?” He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.” This was a real example of the love that Jesus demonstrated to each of His disciples as Peter later wrote in I Peter 4:8, “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’” Peter had taken this verse from Proverbs 10:12 which says, “Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins.” Jesus certainly showed His love for Judas.

Jesus did answer the question of the disciples by saying, “*It is* one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish.” However, John 13:26-29 explains, “Jesus answered, ‘It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.’ And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, ‘What you do, do quickly.’ But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, ‘Buy those things we need for the feast,’ or that he should give something to the poor.” None of the other disciples had any idea that it was Judas who would betray Jesus until the very moment when it happened.

Jesus also said in Mark 14:21, “The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born.” That statement is explained in more detail in Hebrews 10:29 where we read, “Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?” We want to show our physical and spiritual children how to show the same love that Jesus showed to Judas by our example. May the Lord richly bless you as you provide an example of the love of Christ by your life.

Jesus Taught the Meaning of the Lord's Supper

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to show the love that Jesus showed to Judas even though Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus showed the disciples while they were eating the Passover Supper that we are to remember Him by what has become known as the Lord's Supper.

Jesus and the disciples were eating the Passover meal together. Suddenly Jesus did something that He had never done before as they were eating together. Mark 14:22-26 says, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave *it* to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, 'This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.' And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

We see that it was while they were eating their meal together that Jesus taught the disciples something very important. Jesus taught this lesson by taking something that was very simple and can be found in every culture in the world – bread and the cup. During the meal Jesus took a piece of bread, thanked the Father for the bread and then broke it and gave each of the disciples a piece. Then Jesus said, "Take, eat; this is My body." The disciples may have just eaten the Passover Lamb or else they were just getting ready to eat it. They understood that at the original Passover that the blood was placed on the doorposts of their houses and that as a result the death angel passed over their houses and did not kill the oldest child as he did in the houses of the Egyptians. It was just a few months later that the Lord gave Israel the Law through Moses which was the Old Covenant that God made with the nation of Israel.

For hundreds of years the Jews had eaten the bread and drank the cup as they ate the roast lamb and remembered the Passover and the giving of the Old Covenant. Here we see that Jesus said that the bread represented His body. John the Baptist had introduced Jesus in John 1:29 by saying, "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" The Jews had offered many lambs as sacrifices to provide a covering for their sin. However, Hebrews 10:4 says, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins." That night Jesus introduced the New Covenant to His disciples. He said that the bread represented His body. The next day the disciples would see His body hung on a cross to pay the penalty for sin once for all so that sin could be forgiven, be removed as far as the east is from the west, be buried in the depths of the sea, be blotted out and be remembered no more. They would then understand that the bread represented His body.

After the disciples had eaten the bread Jesus took the cup and when He had given thanks the cup was passed from disciple to disciple and they each drank some of it until all of them had

drank from the cup. Then Jesus said, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many." Jesus had said in Matthew 5:17-18, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled." Jesus had fulfilled the righteous demands of the Law when He gave that cry of victory on the cross, "It is finished!" His blood had paid the penalty for sin so that He could now offer forgiveness as a free gift. That is why Galatians 3:24-25 says, "Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor." The Law shows us our sin and the need for One who could save us from our sin. However, at the moment of salvation we are set free from our sin because Christ fulfilled all of the requirements of the Law by shedding His blood for us.

John 19:28-30 says, "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!' Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put *it* on hyssop, and put *it* to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit." The Romans would give sour wine to people of crosses to prolong their suffering. Jesus knew that purpose and let them put it to His mouth to fulfill the words of Psalm 69:21. However, there was no need for Him to drink that sour wine because He immediately said "It is finished!" The penalty for sin had been paid in full. Jesus then handed over His Spirit to the Father and willingly gave up His life to complete the finished payment for the penalty for our sins. Jesus will next drink the fruit of the vine when He drinks us with us in the eternal kingdom of God. Then the disciples sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

As they went out Jesus said in Mark 14:27-28, "Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." Here we see that Jesus warned the disciples in advance that they would stumble because of Him that night. The word translated "will be made to stumble" means to be made to stumble or fall away. Jesus quoted from Zechariah 13:7 which says, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Companion," says the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; then I will turn My hand against the little ones." Here we see that Jesus explained to the disciples that something would happen to Him and they would all be scattered like sheep that night.

Later that evening Judas betrayed Jesus. Mark 14:45-46 says, "As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, 'Rabbi, Rabbi!' and kissed Him. Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him." At that point John 18:7-11 says, "Then He asked them again, 'Whom are you seeking?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus answered, 'I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,' that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, 'Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.' Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?'" Then Mark 14:50 says, "Then they all forsook Him and fled." The disciples probably did not realize until later that they had fulfilled the prophecy that Jesus had quoted earlier that evening.

One other thing that Jesus told the disciples before the answer of Peter was, “But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.” Here we see that Jesus promised that He would be raised from the dead. He also told the disciples that after the resurrection that He would meet them in Galilee. In Matthew 28:16-17 we read, “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.” The appearance mentioned in I Corinthians 15:6 may also have happened in Galilee. That verse says, “After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.”

Peter and the other disciples did not expect to forsake Jesus and flee. Mark 14:29-31 says, “Peter said to Him, ‘Even if all are made to stumble, yet I *will not be*.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that today, *even* this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.’ But he spoke more vehemently, ‘If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!’ And they all said likewise.” Peter made a very strong statement that he would not stumble that night and forsake Jesus. He certainly did not plan to forsake Jesus.

Peter had good intentions to protect Jesus and even used his sword to try and defend Jesus. However, Peter was depending on his own strength instead of asking the Lord to give him strength. Jesus warned Peter in Matthew 26:41 when Jesus said, “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” We will also fail when we depend on our own strength instead of yielding to the Lord. Romans 7:19-20 says, “For the good that I will *to do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not *to do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.” Jesus knew that Peter would fail and told him in Luke 22:31-32, “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.’” Jesus had prayed for Peter in advance knowing that he would fail but Jesus promised that his faith would not fail. His faith did remain strong and later the Lord gave Peter a great ministry.

Jesus told Peter what would happen that very night. Jesus said that before the rooster crowed twice that Peter would deny him three times. In his fear Peter did not remember what Jesus had said. Matthew 26:74-75 says, “Then he began to curse and swear, *saying*, ‘I do not know the Man!’ Immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ So he went out and wept bitterly.” Here we see that it was when Peter heard the rooster crow after he had just finished his third denial that Peter finally remembered what Jesus had said. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that when we depend on our own strength that we will also fail. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn about the danger of depending on their own strength.

Jesus Prayed in the Garden

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn that they will sin when they depend on their own strength. In contrast, at the times they yield to Christ, He will give them victory. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus gave an example of the importance of prayer by spending time praying to the Father to prepare for His coming trial and crucifixion.

Jesus and the disciples went to a garden because Jesus wanted to pray to the Father. Mark 14:32-34 says, "Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, *even* to death. Stay here and watch.'" Here we see that the garden was called "Gethsemane" which means "oil press". This garden was on the side of the Mount of Olives so the garden was named for the place where they squeezed the oil from the olives. The garden was just across a small valley from the temple in Jerusalem and it took only a few minutes to walk there from Jerusalem.

Jesus often went to this garden to pray when he was in Jerusalem because John 18:2 says, "And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples." Jesus left most of the disciples near the entrance to the garden. He said to this larger group of disciples, "Sit here while I pray." However, he took Peter, James and John with him further into the garden. We see what Jesus told these disciples in Luke 22:40 where we read, "When He came to the place, He said to them, 'Pray that you may not enter into temptation.'" There they were given the opportunity to see that Jesus began to be troubled and deeply distressed. This distress was not because of the physical suffering that Jesus was going to go through. Instead this distress was due to the fact that He was going to experience separation from the Father and experience the full wrath of God against sin as He took our sin upon Himself.

Isaiah had predicted in Isaiah 53:10, "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand." Here we see that Isaiah had predicted the distress that Jesus would experience. II Corinthians 5:21 explains in more detail, "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Here we see that the Father made Jesus who had never sinned to become sin for us. This means that all of our sins were placed on Jesus as He hung on the cross. Mark 15:33-34 says, "Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' which is translated, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' The reason why Jesus had to have all of our sins placed on Him was so that He could place His righteousness on us at the moment that we repented of our unbelief and placed our faith in Him.

After telling Peter, James and John to pray so that they would not enter into temptation, Jesus

went a little farther into the garden. Mark 14:35-38 says, “He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, “Abba, Father, all things *are* possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You *will*.” Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.” We see that Jesus was in great agony as He started to pray in the garden.

Luke 22:41-44 says, “And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” Isaiah 51:17 says, “Awake, awake! Stand up, O Jerusalem, You who have drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of His fury; You have drunk the dregs of the cup of trembling, *and drained it out*.” In Isaiah we see that Israel would experience the cup of God’s fury against their sin. In an even greater way, Jesus was going to experience the cup of the fury of the wrath of God against the sins of all mankind.

Jesus understood that cup and that was why He was in great agony as He prayed. That was why He mentioned to the Father that if He had any other way to pay for sin to do so. At the same time Jesus said, “Nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.” Hebrews 10:4-7 says, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.’” This was a quotation of Psalm 40:6-8 which showed why Jesus came to this earth. Jesus knew that He was going to do what animal sacrifices could never do. In John 6:38 Jesus added, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

After praying to the Father, Jesus returned to the place where He had left the disciples. He found Peter, James and John sleeping. Jesus then asked Peter two very important questions. He asked Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour?” The use of Simon instead of Peter was the second time that happened that night. A short time earlier Jesus had said in Luke 22:31-32, “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.’” Jesus was warning Peter that Peter would deny him three times as a result of the fact that Satan would be sifting him as wheat. Peter had boldly answered because he depended on his own strength in Luke 22:33, “But he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.” When Jesus first met Peter his name was Simon but Jesus changed it to Peter which means a “rock”. That night Jesus used the name Simon because he would not be like a rock in his own strength.

Jesus asked Peter and the others if they could watch and pray with Him for just one hour. They Jesus told the disciples why that was so important for them in their own lives. Verse 38 says, “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is

weak.” Neither the disciples nor Christians who are living today can have victory over temptation in our own strength. When we depend on ourselves we will fail. That is why Jesus told the disciples to watch and pray. He knew that they wanted to do what was right but Jesus also knew the weakness that we all face when we try to do things in our own strength.

Then Mark 14:39-42 says, “Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words.⁰ And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. Then He came the third time and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.’” Jesus then left the disciples and went away to pray again. Jesus showed by His example that the only way to prepare for the attacks of Satan is through prayer.

However, Peter, James and John did not learn from the example of Jesus. When Jesus returned they were asleep again. Jesus had warned Peter that Satan had asked to sift him as wheat. Jesus had promised Peter that his faith would not fail but Jesus had warned him so that he could prepare for the testing of Satan. Instead of preparing for the testing of Satan through prayer, Peter and the others were sleeping. After His first period of prayer, Jesus again reminded them of the need to be alert and pray so that they would not enter into temptation. This also reminds us how to have victory over temptation.

The disciples did not know how to answer Jesus as He left again to go and pray. When Jesus came back the third time they were sleeping again. This time Jesus did not remind them to pray. Instead Jesus told the disciples that it was time to go because the hour had come. I Corinthians 10:12 says, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” The time to prepare for temptation was past and the disciples were going to face that temptation in just a few minutes. The disciples would all fail to resist temptation that night. In fact just a few minutes later Mark 14:50 says, “Then they all forsook Him and fled.” Without prayer we will also fail when we are tempted.

Jesus told the disciples that the time had come and that the Son of Man was being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Since there was a small valley between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, the disciples could have seen people coming but apparently had not noticed. John 18:3 says, “Then Judas, having received a detachment *of troops*, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.” The group that came to arrest Jesus may have numbered between 300 and 600 people. A large crowd like that with lanterns and torches would have been very noticeable as they crossed that valley. Jesus then said the betrayer was at hand.

These verses teach a very important lesson that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand. Jesus made it clear that we will not have victory over temptation if we fail to pray. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand that the way to have victory over temptation is to pray when we are facing temptation.

Jesus was Betrayed by Judas

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn that the way to have victory over temptation is by prayer. If we fail to pray, we will fail and yield to temptation when temptation comes. In our topic today we are going to see what happened when Jesus was betrayed by Judas.

Jesus had just told His disciples that the time of His betrayal had come. Then Mark 14:43-45 says, “And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, ‘Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead *Him* away safely.’ As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi!’ and kissed Him.” The disciples were now going to learn why Jesus had told them to watch and pray.

We see that Judas came with a large group to arrest Jesus. Many people feel that this group included between 300 and 600 men since it is called a great multitude. John 18:3 says, “Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.” These men came ready to fight in case the disciples of Jesus tried to stop them from arresting Jesus. Their weapons included both swords and clubs. These men had been sent with Judas by the chief priests, the scribes and the elders. Here we see that most of the Jewish religious leaders were a part of this plan to destroy Jesus. The chief priests were Sadducees and most of the scribes were Pharisees. The elders were the 70 men from both groups that were known as the Sanhedrin.

Judas had told this group of men how he would betray Jesus to them so that they would know which of the men to arrest since it was dark. Judas said that he would betray Jesus with a kiss. ‘We see that Jesus spoke to Judas as he was coming toward him. Matthew 26:50 says, “But Jesus said to him, “Friend, why have you come?” Luke 22:47-48 says, “And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, ‘Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?’” Jesus knew that Judas was not giving Him a kiss that showed love. Yet Jesus still called Judas, friend. Then Jesus asked if Judas was betraying Him with a kiss. Here we see that Jesus loved Judas just as He loved every other person even though He knew exactly what Judas was doing. We see that Judas then walked up to Jesus and said to Him “Rabbi, Rabbi!” and kissed him.

Judas later recognized that Jesus still had a genuine love for him and that made it so that Judas could not live with the guilt of his conscience. Later Matthew 27:3-5 says, “Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’ And they said, ‘What is that to us? You see to it!’ Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.” Judas could not live with his conscience so we see that he committed suicide.

After Judas kissed Jesus, Mark 14:46-49 says, “Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him. And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.” The men with Judas faced no struggle by Jesus when they arrested Him. However, that was not true as far as one of the disciples was concerned.

We read that one of the disciples immediately drew his sword. He made an immediate attack on the servant of the high priest. As he swung the sword, he cut off the ear of the servant. Luke 22:49-51 says, “When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, ‘Lord, shall we strike with the sword?’ And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, ‘Permit even this.’ And He touched his ear and healed him.” Because Luke was a doctor, he mentioned that it was the right ear of the servant. We also see that the disciples asked a question but did not wait for Jesus to answer the question. When Jesus did answer, He said, “Permit even this”. Then Jesus showed His great compassion to the servant of the high priest by touching his ear and healing him.

Matthew tells us what Jesus said to the disciple. Matthew 26:52-54 says, “But Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?’” Here we see that Jesus made it clear that those who depend on the sword will eventually die by the sword. Many religions have used the sword to spread their religions. In contrast, Jesus offers eternal life as a free gift to all who will receive Him by repentance and faith. Jesus also said that He could ask the Father and the Father would immediately supply Him with twelve legions of angels. One legion was about 6,000 in number so twelve would be about 72,000 angels. It only took one angel to destroy all of the oldest children in Egypt at the time of the Exodus. Jesus then said that what was happening must happen the way it happened in order to fulfill the Scriptures.

Finally John 18:10-11 says, “Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?” John wrote the book of John long after the books of Matthew, Mark and Luke were written. As a result, Peter had already died by the time that John wrote. John also knew Peter much better than the others so he felt free to share his name since the Romans could no longer do anything to Peter for his crime of attempted murder. In addition, Jesus had also destroyed the evidence by healing the ear of the servant so that there was no evidence that the ear had been removed. John was known to the high priest and so John also knew that Malchus was the name of the servant who had lost his ear and then had it healed.

Jesus also questioned those who arrested Him. Jesus asked if they were looking for a robber since they had brought swords and clubs to arrest Him. Jesus said that He had been in the temple every day since He had arrived in Jerusalem so it would have been easy to arrest Him

without treating Him like a robber. This was a gentle rebuke of their fear. Mark 14:1-2 says, “After two days it was the Passover and *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put *Him* to death. But they said, ‘Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people.’” The religious leaders had not arrested Jesus in the temple because they feared the people. However, there was a much more important reason. Jesus said that they had treated Him like a robber so that they Scriptures would be fulfilled. Isaiah 53:12 says, “Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” By treating Jesus like a robber they fulfilled this verse.

Once Jesus healed the servant of the high priest and spoke these words the disciples let fear take control of their lives because they became afraid that they would also be arrested. Mark 14:50-52 says, “Then they all forsook Him and fled. Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around *his* naked *body*. And the young men laid hold of him, and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.” We see that all of the disciples, including Peter, fled. He had forgotten his bold statement just a few hours earlier when he said in Luke 22:33, “But he said to Him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.’” Peter was now depending on his own strength and he acted totally out of fear along with the rest of the disciples.

Mark records one event that was not mentioned by any of the other disciples. He wrote about what had happened to a certain young man that night. He was probably writing about himself and an event that he remembered very vividly from that night. Acts 12:12 says, “So, when he had considered *this*, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.” Here we see that Mary, the mother of Mark, had a house in Jerusalem where the disciples gathered for prayer after the church began. Some think that this may have actually been the location of the Last Supper where Peter and John had prepared the Passover.

If that is the case, Judas may have led the mob to that house before he went to the garden thinking that Jesus might still be there. If so, Mark may have quickly wrapped a sheet around him and followed the mob to see what was going to happen. Whoever, it was we see that some of the men who arrested Jesus grabbed this young man wrapped in a linen cloth. They had a better hold on the cloth than they had of the man wrapped in the cloth. That is why verse 52 says, “And he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.” This young man was not concerned about how he looked. He just wanted to escape.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand and be able to explain the tragic life and death of Judas. Here was a man who had every opportunity to get to know the love that Jesus had for him but he also had a heart that was deceitful and desperately wicked. We see the tragic results of such a sinful heart. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the hearts of rebellious people.

Jesus was Tried by the Sanhedrin

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the tragic results in the life of Judas because of the fact that his heart was controlled by sin and was desperately wicked. In our topic today we will see what happened as Jesus was taken to the home of the high priest and placed on trial before the Jewish religious leaders.

Once the disciples forsook Jesus and fled, Mark 14:53-56 says, “And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire. Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.” It was against the law for the Jews to have a trial in the middle of the night but that did not stop the Jewish religious leaders from convening a court of the entire Sanhedrin to put Jesus on trial so that they could carry out their evil under the cover of darkness. John 3:19 says, “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” We see that all of the chief priests, elders and scribes gathered together that night.

Meanwhile Peter had followed at a distance to see what they were going to do to Jesus. We see that he went right into the courtyard of the high priest. John 18:15-16 says, “And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in.” Peter then went and sat down by the fire with the servants so that he could keep warm in the cold of the night.

The council was the Sanhedrin. We see that the chief priests and the Sanhedrin asked people to come and give testimony about Jesus. They wanted to make it look like they had evidence against Jesus so that they could condemn Jesus to death. We see that many people were willing to give false testimony against Jesus because these were the very people that wanted to condemn Jesus to death. However, the testimony of these false witnesses did not agree. The Law was very clear about the requirement that witnesses must be in agreement in their testimony. Deuteronomy 17:6 says, “Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.” Then this same requirement is repeated in Deuteronomy 19:15 where we read, “One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.” The fact that the testimony did not agree meant that the testimony should have stopped immediately but these men were determined to condemn Jesus to death even if they broke every law in the Old Testament.

The chief priests were not going to stop the trial until they had an excuse to put Jesus to death. Mark 14:57-60 says, “Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, ‘We

heard Him say, “I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.” But not even then did their testimony agree. And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, ‘Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?’

Here we see that the chief priests brought forward additional false witnesses. These witnesses said what they claimed Jesus had said. John wrote what Jesus had actually said when He cleansed the temple three years earlier. The Jews had asked for a sign from Jesus. John 2:19-21 says, “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ Then the Jews said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’ But He was speaking of the temple of His body.” The chief priests were trying to get witnesses who would accuse Jesus of a plot to destroy the temple in Jerusalem. However, even their testimony did not agree. That meant that their testimony should not even have been considered.”

John made it clear that when Jesus made this statement early in His public ministry by saying that He was talking about the temple of His body. In I Corinthians 6:19-20 Paul wrote, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” The statement by Paul makes it clear that the people of that day used the word temple to speak of the human body so it was not a case that the religious leaders could not understand what Jesus meant. Instead it showed that they chose to misquote Jesus to further their case and give them a reason to destroy Jesus.

However, we see that the disciples of Jesus also lacked such spiritual understanding until after the resurrection. John 2:22 says, “Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.” Once the disciples saw Jesus and knew that He had risen from the dead, their understanding became clear about what Jesus had meant. Jesus promised the disciples and all future followers that one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit would be to give us understanding. John 14:26 says, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” We can depend on the Holy Spirit to give us spiritual understanding which the world cannot receive.

Finally the high priest stood up and began to question Jesus directly. Mark 14:61-65 says, “But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, ‘Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?’ Jesus said, ‘I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, ‘What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?’ And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, ‘Prophecy!’ And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.” Jesus showed all of the people gathered there that night that He was innocent by not trying to defend Himself against false witnesses.

The high priest then asked Jesus a direct question when he said, “Are You the Christ, the Son of

the Blessed?" The word "Christ" means "The Anointed One". In Daniel 9:25 we read, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times." The word translated "Messiah" is the exact same Hebrew word that is translated "Christ" in this verse. Then the high priest asked if Jesus was the Son of the Blessed. The high priest did not want to even use the title "Son of God" so he used "Son of the Blessed" which would still be a title for the fact that Jesus is God.

In answering the question, Jesus used the same words that are given in the title for Himself that John later used several times in the book of John. That title was first used of Christ in the book of Exodus. Exodus 3:14 says, "And God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' And He said, 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" Then Jesus went on to make it very clear that He is the Son of God. Jesus said that the day would come when the Son of Man would be sitting at the right hand of the Power. Jesus also said that the day was going to come in the future when He would be seen coming with the clouds of heaven.

The high priest reacted immediately by tearing his clothes. Leviticus 21:10 says, "He who is the high priest among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who is consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes." In this verse we see that the Word of God clearly forbid the high priest from tearing his clothes (something that was done by the Jews in times of great sorrow or grief). The Jewish Talmud said that a high priest who heard someone speak blasphemy against God was allowed an exception to the requirement in Leviticus. As a result, the high priest tried to pretend that he had great sorrow because he had heard Jesus speak blasphemy by saying that He is the Son of God. In actual fact the high priest was the person committing blasphemy because he was working to kill the Son of God to maintain his own power and control over the people.

In addition to tearing his clothes, the high priest also said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" By these words the high priest asked the Sanhedrin to pronounce the death penalty. The religious leaders agreed with the high priest that Jesus had just spoken blasphemy and they condemned Jesus and said that He deserved to be put to death. That was exactly what the high priest wanted them to say.

Then the religious leaders showed their total rejection of Jesus by spitting on Him. They also blindfolded Jesus and began to beat Him. They mocked Him by telling Him to "Prophecy" and the officers struck Him with their hands. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that the religious leaders broke many of their own laws in order to condemn Jesus to death. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand why the religious leaders rejected Jesus.

Jesus was Denied by Peter

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand and explain why the religious leaders broke many of their own laws in order to have an excuse to put Jesus to death. Meanwhile other things were happening in the courtyard of the high priest at the same time. In our topic today we are going to see that Peter denied Jesus three times that night.

Jesus had warned Peter earlier that night that Satan had desired to sift and test Peter. Luke 22:31-34 says, “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.’ But he said to Him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.’ Then He said, ‘I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.’” In these verses we see that Peter had boldly said that he was ready to go with Jesus to prison or even die with Jesus. These words show that Peter was depending on his own strength that night and thought that he could stand firm. Later in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus asked Peter, James and John to pray. Instead they went to sleep. Mark 14:37-38 says, “Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, ‘Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.’” Peter was not spiritually prepared when testing came later that night.

Then John 18:10-11 says, “Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, ‘Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?’” Here we see that Peter was ready to defend Jesus in his own strength. Luke 22:50-51 says, “And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, ‘Permit even this.’ And He touched his ear and healed him.” Mark 14:50 says, “Then they all forsook Him and fled.” However, Mark 14:54 says, “But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire.” Here we see that Peter is now sitting with those who were serving the religious leaders who were there to condemn Jesus to death that night.

Mark 14:66-68 says, “Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, ‘You also were with Jesus of Nazareth.’ But he denied it, saying, ‘I neither know nor understand what you are saying.’ And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed.” Peter gives us a real illustration of why we fail and commit sin when we depend on our own strength. Peter was sure he could stand for Jesus. He failed to pray when Jesus reminded him of the need to pray to have victory over temptation. He tried to protect Jesus in his own strength. He forsook Jesus and fled. He then followed Jesus from a distance. Now he was sitting in the courtyard of the high priest and warming himself by the fire with others. When he was sitting by the fire we see that one of the servant girls of the high priest came near where Peter was sitting.

The servant girl saw Peter sitting there warming himself by the fire. Peter was not thinking about any of the things that Jesus had said to him earlier that evening as he sat and warmed himself by the fire. Instead he was probably very conscious of the fact that the people sitting around him were a part of the group that had Jesus on trial in front of him at that very moment. The servant girl just said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth." Everyone there in the courtyard that night had probably seen Jesus at different times as He taught in the temple. Peter and the other disciples were usually nearby when Jesus was teaching and so anyone who had seen Jesus several times also recognized the disciples as people who had been with Jesus. Peter was depending on his own strength and when we depend on our own strength we will be driven by our own fear instead of being led by the love of Christ. I John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love." Peter spoke out of fear and answered, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying."

Peter spoke these words to the servant girl because of his inner fear. He did not even think about what Jesus had said earlier. Then he got up from the group sitting around the fire and went out into the porch. At the very moment that he was going out on the porch we see that a rooster crowed. In Mark 14:30 Jesus had told Peter, "Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." Jesus said that Peter would deny him three times before the rooster crowed twice. Here we see that the first time came after the first denial of Peter. In this way God was giving Peter a reminder of what Jesus had told him earlier. However, Peter probably did not even think about the earlier warning because of his fear.

Mark 14:69-70 says, "And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, "This is *one* of them." But he denied it again. And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are *one* of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows *it*." Here we see that it was probably the same servant girl who told the others that Peter was one of the followers of Jesus. This time the servant girl spoke to those who were standing there and said, "This is *one* of them." Her words may indicate that those gathered there had begun talking about the disciples of Jesus. The words of the servant girl indicate that she was just making a statement about Peter to the others but we see that he immediately denied that he was a follower of Jesus. Here we see an example of what happens when we become controlled by fear.

Romans 7:19-20 says, "For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me." Today Christians still face that same inner struggle when they are depending on their own strength and act out of fear instead of being led by the love of Christ.

However, Peter began to get more comfortable around this group of people who had Jesus on trial and he began to talk with the people around him. Then one of the people who had heard at least one of the denials of Peter said, "Surely you are *one* of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows *it*." Here we see that Peter's own words and accent showed that he was from Galilee and not from Jerusalem. One of those standing there recognized from the way that Peter spoke his words that he was from the area of Galilee. This person who spoke said that he could tell that Peter was from Galilee by the fact that his speech made it clear that he was from that region of the country. Here we see that some people can recognize many things about us just from the way that we talk.

Mark 14:71-72 says, “Then he began to curse and swear, ‘I do not know this Man of whom you speak!’ A second time the rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.’ And when he thought about it, he wept.” The words “curse” and “swear” are both strong words. The word curse means to say that God can bring His severest penalty on me if I am not telling the truth. The word is translated “oath” in Acts 23:12 where we read, “And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.” The word “swear” means to promise or to take an oath as a witness. Jesus had said just a few days earlier in Matthew 23:20-22, “Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.” Jesus had said earlier in Matthew 5:34, “But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne.”

Peter used these two words and then said, “I do not know this Man of whom you speak!” Here we see that Peter was inviting the judgment of God if he was not telling the truth. Just then the rooster crowed the second time. Luke 22:60-62 says, “But Peter said, ‘Man, I do not know what you are saying!’ Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ So Peter went out and wept bitterly.” Here we see that the rooster started crowing the second time as Peter was still speaking. At the same time Jesus began looking at Peter and kept looking until Peter noticed that Jesus was looking at him. Then suddenly Peter remembered the words of Jesus earlier that night.

In the same way, when we are being driven by our own fears instead of being led by the love of Christ, we will often sin before we even remember what Jesus taught about sin. In contrast, when we are being led by the Holy Spirit Galatians 5:16 says, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” This is why it is very important as Christians to learn to walk in the Spirit and be led by the Spirit moment by moment in our lives. That is the key in order to experience victory over temptation. In our own strength we will fail. Peter thought about the fact that he had failed and denied the Lord and immediately went out and wept bitterly. We also feel guilt when we depend on our own strength because we see how our sins affect ourselves and others.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to walk in the Spirit and be led by the Spirit so that they can enjoy victory moment by moment in their lives. Otherwise in their own strength they will also fail. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children by your example what it means to walk in the Spirit.

Jesus was Tried by Pilate

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to walk in the Spirit so that they are able to have victory when they experience temptation. In our topic today we are going to see that after the Jewish religious leaders condemned Jesus to death that they delivered Jesus to Pilate.

The Jews wanted to make it look like their actions had been done legally. Mark 15:1-5 says, “Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, led *Him* away, and delivered *Him* to Pilate. Then Pilate asked Him, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ He answered and said to him, ‘*It is as you say.*’ And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing. Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, ‘Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!’ But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled.” Here we see that the chief priests held a consultation early in the morning to make it appear that they had done everything legally and Pilate would not know that they condemned Jesus in the middle of the night.

After the consultation, the Jews then put Jesus in chains and led Him to the judgment hall of Pilate. There they delivered Him into the hands of Pilate and presented their charges against Him. Luke 23:2 tells us, “And they began to accuse Him, saying, ‘We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.’” Here we see that the religious leaders presented three charges against Jesus. First, they said that He was perverting the nation. The word translated “perverting” means to turn from the right path. Second, They accused Jesus of forbidding the people to pay taxes to Caesar. Third, they said He claimed to be Christ a King. As we look at the three charges, we see that the first was a total lie. Jesus was without sin and yet he was accused of trying to get the nation to sin.

The second charge was that He was forbidding the people to pay taxes to Caesar. Jesus had specifically said in Mark 12:17, “And Jesus answered and said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they marveled at Him.” Since Jesus said that to the Pharisees and Herodians many of the men accusing Jesus had personally heard Jesus speak these words. The third charge was that He called Himself, “Christ, a King.” This statement was true. In Mark 14:61-62 we see that the high priest asked Jesus, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” Jesus had answered, “I am.”

Pilate asked Jesus about this third charge. Jesus said in John 18:36-37, “Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.’ Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are You a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’” Mark gave the summary answer of Jesus to Pilate, “*It is as you say.*”

Then the chief priests accused Jesus of many other things. Jesus did not even answer their charges. Pilate finally asked Jesus if He was going to defend Himself against these additional charges. Since the charges were completely false, this time Jesus did not even bother to say a word to try to defend Himself. Isaiah 53:7 says, “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.” Jesus was more concerned to fulfill this and other Old Testament prophecies than He was to defend Himself. As a result, Pilate was amazed that Jesus did not try to defend Himself.

Mark 15:6-10 goes on to say, “Now at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested. And there was one named Barabbas, *who was* chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion. Then the multitude, crying aloud, began to ask *him to do* just as he had always done for them. But Pilate answered them, saying, ‘Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?’ For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.” It was the custom of the Romans to release one prisoner to the people at certain times if that was requested by the people. Pilate decided to try and see if he could get the people to ask for Jesus to be set free. He knew that just a few days earlier Jesus had ridden into Jerusalem and many people had followed Him.

The multitude began to ask Pilate to do what he had always done and release a prisoner. Pilate immediately thought this was his opportunity to get the crowd to reject the charges of the religious leaders against Jesus. As a result, Pilate began to ask the crowd if they would like for Him to release to them the King of the Jews. The answer that Jesus had given to Pilate a few minutes earlier caused Pilate to realize that Jesus was no threat to the Roman government because the kingdom of Jesus was not a worldly kingdom. Pilate may not have realized that most of the crowd there in the early morning had come with the religious leaders and were in agreement to condemn Jesus.

We see that the religious leaders had planted this question in the crowd to get Pilate to do what they had agreed because they had a plan and that plan was not to free Jesus. One of the men who was in the Roman prison was a man by the name of Barabbas. Mark tells us that this man was chained to his fellow rebels. This means that he was a part of one of several different groups that had tried to overthrow the Roman government. During the particular rebellion by this group Barabbas had committed murder. In addition, John 18:40 says, “Then they all cried again, saying, ‘Not this Man, but Barabbas!’ Now Barabbas was a robber.”

Pilate realized that the chief priests had delivered Jesus to him because of their envy. The word translated “envy” means the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing about the blessing of others. The religious leaders had seen the crowds following Jesus and they were filled with envy because they wanted to have complete control over the people. Titus 3:3 says, “For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.” The chief priests were filled with envy and it caused them to become hateful toward Jesus.

Matthew 27:17 says, “Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, ‘Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?’” This was the

question for which the religious leaders had been waiting. Mark 15:11-15 says, “But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them. Pilate answered and said to them again, ‘What then do you want me to do *with Him* whom you call the King of the Jews?’ So they cried out again, ‘Crucify Him!’

Then Pilate said to them, ‘Why, what evil has He done?’ But they cried out all the more, ‘Crucify Him!’ So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged *Him*, to be crucified.”

We see that the chief priests immediately stirred up the crowd of people who had come with them. The crowd immediately began to ask and demand that Pilate release Barabbas to them. That was not what Pilate had expected. He had expected that the crowd would ask for Jesus to be released. As a result, Pilate asked the question, “What then do you want me to do *with Him* whom you call the King of the Jews?” John 19:6-7 says, “Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, ‘Crucify Him, crucify Him!’ Pilate said to them, ‘You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.’ The Jews answered him, ‘We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.’” Here we see that Pilate told the chief priests and other religious leaders that he found no fault in Jesus.

The chief priests were finally forced to admit the charge of which they had convicted Jesus in the middle of the night by their answer, “We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.” Suddenly Pilate was forced to recognize that the charge that the Jews had against Jesus was a crime that was based on the Jewish law rather than the Roman law. However, that caused Pilate to be filled with fear. He had said three times that he found no fault in Jesus. Now the people were calling for Jesus to be crucified.

This caused Pilate to ask the crowd the question, “Why, what evil has He done?” Instead of answering the question of Pilate, the crowd just began to chant, “Crucify Him!” Pilate was more anxious to please the crowd than to do what he knew was right. Pilate made a choice that day just as the chief priests had earlier made a choice. He made the choice to release Barabbas to them. Here we see that the chief priests, the people and Pilate all chose to free a murderer and condemn the One who was without sin. Pilate then ordered the Roman soldiers to scourge Jesus. A scourge was a wooden handle that had leather thongs with pieces of sharp metal at the end of each of the thongs. A Roman scourging in itself often caused the person being beaten to bleed to death. Pilate gave the order that after the scourging that Jesus was to be taken out and crucified.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus was actually dying for all of our sins so that He could offer each of us forgiveness as a free gift. That is the message we want to help them learn to share with others. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to share this message.

Jesus was Crucified on the Cross

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to share the message that Jesus was crucified to pay the penalty for our sins and the sins of everyone in the world so that He could offer eternal life as a free gift to all. In our topic today we are going to see what happened as Jesus was taken to be crucified on the cross.

The religious leaders condemned Jesus and brought Him to Pilate. Pilate said at least three times that Jesus was innocent and then condemned Him to death and turned Him over to the Roman soldiers. Mark 15:16-20 says, “Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His *head*, and began to salute Him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.” Here we see that the Roman soldiers treated Jesus with a total lack of respect as they mocked Him.

The Roman soldiers in Jerusalem were stationed in the Fortress Antonia. The Praetorium was next to this fortress. The Praetorium had been built by Herod the Great and was a magnificent palace where he and the future Roman governors lived whenever they were in Jerusalem. As a result, that was the place where Pilate lived whenever he was in Jerusalem. A Roman cohort (about 600 soldiers) was normally stationed at this fortress. Here we see that the entire Roman garrison was called together to mock Jesus. Matthew gives us a more detailed summary of the way that these Roman soldiers mistreated Jesus. Matthew 27:27-31 says, “Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.” Here we see that they made a mockery of the fact that Jesus was called the King of the Jews.

The purple robe was normally the color of the robe of a king. The crown of thorns was made from long sharp thorns that were driven into the head of Jesus when the soldiers hit Him on the head with a reed. Then they put the reed in His right hand so that it was like the scepter of a king. Esther 5:2 says, “So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter.” Instead of a golden scepter like that used by the king, Jesus was given a reed which was like a stick. Then the soldiers got down on their knees in front of Jesus and with mocking voices said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” When they finished mocking they took off the purple robe and put His own clothes on Him and took Him out to the place where He would be crucified.

Roman prisoners were normally required to carry their own crosses to the place where they were going to be crucified. However, Jesus had been severely beaten and had lost much blood. As a result, Mark 15:21-24 says, “Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross. And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take *it*. And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them *to determine* what every man should take.” The Roman law allowed Roman soldiers to compel any person that happened to come along to carry their burden for a mile. Matthew 5:41 says, “And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.” This was the reason that the Roman soldiers could make Simon the Cyrenian carry the cross of Jesus to the place where Jesus was crucified.

Simon was originally from the city of Cyrene which is in North Africa. He did not live in Jerusalem but was just coming in the city from the country. As a result, he was the man that the Roman soldiers forced to carry the cross of Jesus. We see that Simon had two sons named Alexander and Rufus. The name of Rufus is mentioned again in Romans 16:13 where we read, “Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.” The fact Mark mentioned that Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus meant that these sons were known to the early church. Throughout the book of Mark he has explained the Jewish customs because of the fact that he originally wrote the book to Romans who had become Christians to tell them about the life of Jesus. Since Rufus was one of the leaders in the church at Rome, Mark here mentioned the fact that Simon was the father of Rufus and Alexander because the Roman Christians would have known the family.

Simon may not have known anything about Jesus prior to this time since he was originally from Cyrene. However, by being forced to carry the cross of Jesus he had the opportunity to meet Jesus and his life and family were changed for eternity as a result. This is a great example of how the Lord uses the circumstances that happen in our lives to bring the Gospel to others. Truly we can say in the words of Romans 8:28-29, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” The Lord had a plan for Simon and his family.

We see that the Roman soldiers took Jesus to a place called Golgotha to crucify Him and the two other men that were crucified with Him. The word Golgotha means “Place of a Skull.” We do not know the exact place where Jesus was crucified. There are two places one on the west side of the city and one on the north side of the city where the side of the hill looks similar to a skull. Many people think that it was one of these two places where Jesus was crucified. The one on the west was first suggested in the fourth century and the one on the north has been suggested in more modern times. Luke 23:33 says, “And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.” The word Calvary also means “a skull”.

The Roman soldiers offered Jesus wine mingled with myrrh to drink but Jesus did not take it. Matthew 27:34 says, “They gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.” Gall means something bitter. We see that Mark mentioned that

it was myrrh which was used as a temporary pain killer. The Jews did this to one dying because Proverbs 31:6 says, "Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to those who are bitter of heart." The Romans allowed this to be given because it made it easier to nail the person to the cross without a struggle. When Jesus tasted it He did not drink it because He did not want to dull His senses in any way. He had seven sayings that He would speak from the cross that day plus the fact that He was bearing our sins and He did not want His senses dulled in any way.

The soldiers took the clothes of Jesus from Him before they placed Him on the cross. Once Jesus was hanging on the cross we see that the soldiers guarding the cross cast lots for the clothes to see who would get which parts of that clothing. This fulfilled the prophecy given in Psalm 22:18 where we read, "They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." This allowed the soldiers guarding a prisoner on a cross to make a little extra money from the sale of the clothing that they received.

Mark 15:25-26 says, "Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. And the inscription of His accusation was written above: THE KING OF THE JEWS." We know that Jesus was actually the King of Kings. Here we see that it was the third hour (about 9 a.m. in the morning) that Jesus was placed on the cross. Mark 15:33 says, "Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour." It was during the time of the darkness that Jesus would have our sins placed on Him and He would pay the penalty for our sins so that we could receive forgiveness of sin.

However, before the darkness came, several other very important things happened that are mentioned in the other Gospels. Luke mentions two of those things. In Luke 23:34 we read, "Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' And they divided His garments and cast lots." Here we see that none of the people who were directly involved in the crucifixion of Jesus that day will not be held accountable for those particular sins that happened that day because Jesus asked the Father to forgive their sins of that particular day. II Corinthians 5:21 says, "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Jesus became sin for every person so we were all responsible for His death.

Luke 23:43 says, "And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'" Jesus was crucified between two others. One chose to ask Jesus for forgiveness and the other did not. The one who asked for forgiveness will be with Christ for eternity because of the choice he made that day. The other will spend eternity in the lake of fire and brimstone because of the choice that he made that day. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to explain to others that every person has a very important choice to make in this life. The choice that each one makes will determine whether they have eternal life or eternal judgment. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this choice to others.

Jesus Experienced Separation from the Father

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others the most important choice that they will ever make in their lives. That choice will determine where each person spends eternity. In our topic today we are going to see what Jesus did to make that choice possible.

The people had chosen to set Barabbas free and crucify Jesus. Barabbas was able to enjoy his freedom. However, there were two others who did not have that opportunity to be set free. Mark 15:27-28 says, "With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.'" Since there were three crosses already prepared it is probable that Barabbas would have been on the other cross if the people had not asked Pilate to free Barabbas and crucify Jesus. Luke 23:25 says, "And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will." Then Luke 23:33 adds, "And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left." It is very possible that these two men had also been involved with Barabbas in the murder and insurrection since the crime of robbery did not carry the death sentence under Roman law.

However, much more important was the fact that this fulfilled another Old Testament prophecy. Isaiah 53:12 says, "Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." The phrase "He was numbered with the transgressors," could only be fulfilled by Jesus dying with these criminals. Christ fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies throughout His ministry. Just on the day that Jesus was crucified He fulfilled more than 30 prophecies.

We see that many other people also reacted to the crucifixion of Jesus by mocking Him. Mark 15:29-32 says, "And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, 'ha! *You* who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the cross!' Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.' Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him." Some people were just passing though the area where Jesus was crucified and they blasphemed Jesus. These people mocked the statement of Jesus that He would build the temple in three days. They said that if Jesus was really God that He should prove it by coming down from the cross. This mocking by those who were passing by showed that they totally lacked spiritual understanding.

The chief priests and scribes were doing their mocking among themselves. The chief priests were Sadducees and most of the scribes were Pharisees. Although these two groups usually opposed each other they were certainly united in their opposition to Jesus. This was clearly

shown by the things which they said as they mocked Jesus. One of the ways that they mocked Jesus was by saying “He saved others; Himself He cannot save.” In their efforts to mock Jesus they did not realize that they also described His authority over demons, disease and even death when they said that He saved others. The chief priests and scribes certainly did not want to admit that Jesus had any authority at all but they did not realize that their mocking did recognize the authority of Jesus.

Then they said, “Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.” Again these words were only meant to mock Jesus. By these words of mocking the religious leaders claimed that they would believe that Jesus was the Christ if He came down from the cross. They showed that was not true and that their hearts were filled with unbelief when they said after the resurrection in Matthew 28:11-13, “Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, ‘Tell them, ‘His disciples came at night and stole Him *away* while we slept.’” The guard told the chief priests exactly what had happened. Instead of believing the chief priests paid the soldiers a large amount of money to get them to tell a lie that denied a miracle much greater than coming down from the cross.

We see that there was also a third group that mocked Jesus. That was the other two men that were crucified with Jesus. However, one of those two men later repented after He heard Jesus ask the Father to forgive those who had crucified Him. Luke 23:39-43 says, “Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, ‘If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.’ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.’ Then he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.’” The second thief showed that Jesus will forgive a person right up to the moment of death. In contrast, the first thief showed that there are many who will mock Jesus even in their dying breath.

Suddenly something happened that got the attention of everyone. Mark 15:33-37 says, “Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’ Some of those who stood by, when they heard *that*, said, ‘Look, He is calling for Elijah!’ Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put *it* on a reed, and offered *it* to Him to drink, saying, ‘Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down.’ And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.” Here we see that at noon the Father covered the whole land with darkness. This darkness lasted for three hours.

This was the part of His suffered that Jesus dreaded the most. In Luke 22:42-44 Jesus prayed, “saying, ‘Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.’ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” Jesus was in great agony as He prayed the previous evening because He

knew that He would experience separation from the Father when our sins were placed on Him as He hung on the cross. That was due to the fact that the Father cannot look on sin with favor. As Jesus bore our sins, He had to bear them alone without the fellowship of the Father.

When Jesus was first placed on the cross He said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." Then after the darkness was over Luke 23:46 says, "And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.' Having said this, He breathed His last." Here we see that after the payment for our sins that Jesus was again in fellowship with the Father and committed His spirit to the Father. However, during the darkness Jesus cried out, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Before and after the darkness Jesus could say "Father" because He was in fellowship with the Father. However, when Jesus had our sins placed on Him He had to say, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?," Because of His separation from the Father as He bore our sins. He experienced that temporary separation from the Father so that we could enjoy eternal fellowship with the Father.

However, the people who were standing near the cross did not understand what Jesus had said as He cried out in the darkness. Instead they thought that Jesus was calling for Elijah. Immediately someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put it on a short stick and raised it to the mouth of Jesus and offered Him the sour wine to drink. The one who offered Jesus the sour wine said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down." This was also a mocking statement. Malachi 4:5 says, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD." The Jews expected Elijah to come before the Messiah came. As a result, this statement was a form of mocking as the speaker was mocking and said "Let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down." Again this shows a total lack of understanding.

However, once the darkness was over there was no need for Jesus to suffer any longer. Jesus showed that He was still strong as we read that He cried out with a loud voice. The words that Jesus cried with a loud voice are given to us in Luke 23 46 which is quoted in the earlier paragraph, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." The fact that Jesus cried with a loud voice was a testimony to the fact that Jesus willingly gave His life and that no one took it from Him. We see what Jesus had said when He came into the world in Hebrews 10:5-7 where we read, "Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.' Then I said, 'Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.'" Jesus had completed the will of the Father but paying the penalty for our sins in full. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand and be able to explain that Jesus came to do the will of the Father by paying the full penalty for our sins so that we could receive forgiveness as a free gift. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to understand and explain this fact.

Jesus was Recognized as the Son of God

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the fact that Jesus had to experience separation from the Father during the time that our sins were placed on Him. In our topic today we are going to see that the death of Jesus had a great impact on the centurion who was guarding the cross.

We saw in the last topic that Jesus willingly gave up His spirit once He had paid the penalty for our sins. We also see that something else immediately happened. Mark 15:38-41 says, “Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, ‘Truly this Man was the Son of God!’ There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.”

Jesus had told His disciples as He introduced the Lord’s Supper during the Passover meal in Mark 14:23-24, “Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave *it* to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, “This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.” Once Jesus had paid the penalty for our sins He had fulfilled the Old Testament law and the Old Covenant was immediately replaced by the New Covenant that Jesus had promised the previous night. Christ came to do the will of the Father. Hebrews 10:10-13 says, “By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.” The blood of the Old Covenant sacrifices could never take away sin. In contrast, Jesus offered His blood once and His sacrifice for sins is forever. That is the blood of the New Covenant.

Once the blood of the New Covenant was paid there was no more need for any sacrifices for sin. Hebrews 8:13 says, “In that He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” That is why Mark 15:38 says, “Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” Once each year the High Priest had gone beyond the veil of the temple to offer blood as a covering for sins. Hebrew 9:7-8 says, “But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance; the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.” Then Hebrews 9:12 adds, “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” There was no more need for the veil to separate man from God because we can now come directly to the Father through Christ. That is why I Timothy 2:5 says, “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.”

The sufferings and death of Jesus also had a great impact on the Roman centurion who was in charge of the crucifixion of Jesus. As he saw how Jesus died he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!” The centurion also spoke for all of the soldiers that were with Him that day because Matthew 27:54 says, “So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God!” The word translated “truly” means most certainly so by this statement the Roman centurion and the men with him believed in Jesus and recognized him as the Son of God. Their lives were changed for eternity that day.

We also see that there were many women who had ministered to Jesus in Galilee were in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. They had been watching from a distance as Jesus suffered and paid the penalty for our sins. We will see that some of these women brought spices to place on the body of Jesus after the Sabbath Day had passed.

Meanwhile we also see that Jesus was recognized as the Son of God by Joseph of Arimathea. He was a prominent member of the Sanhedrin. However, he and Nicodemus were very different than the 68 other men on the Sanhedrin that had condemned Jesus to death. Luke 23:50-51 says, “Now behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. He had not consented to their decision and deed. *He was* from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God.” John 19:39-40 adds, “And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.” These men had been secret believers but now became bold believers.

Once Joseph saw that Jesus was dead we see that he took courage and went to Pilate and asked for permission to bury the body of Jesus. Pilate was amazed that Jesus was already dead. To make certain that fact was true he sent a messenger to get the centurion to verify the fact that Jesus was already dead. We see that one of the soldiers that Pilate sent made sure that Jesus was dead. We see what the soldiers sent from Pilate did when they arrived at the place of the crucifixion.

Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already dead. The Jewish leaders also wanted the bodies removed from the crosses before the sun set. John 19:31-34 says, “Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.” The soldiers who came also told the centurion that Pilate wanted him and he went to Pilate and confirmed the fact that Jesus was already dead and that Jesus had already been dead for a period of time. That could be clearly seen because the blood had already separated and become blood and water.

Mark 15:45-47 says, “So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses observed where He was laid.” Once the centurion had verified that Jesus was dead Pilate gave Joseph permission to take down the body from the cross and bury it. Then Joseph went and bought fine linen so that he could wrap Jesus in that linen for burial.

Matthew gives us additional details about Joseph. Matthew 27:57-60 says, “Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.” From these verses we see that Joseph was a rich man. We also see that he had become a secret disciple of Jesus. The place that Nicodemus and he buried the body of Jesus was the new tomb that he had prepared in advance for his own death. This tomb had been cut out of the rock. As a result, it was a tomb that had never been used.

This fulfills the second half of a prophecy that was mentioned in an earlier topic. Isaiah 53:9 says, “And they made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.” In the earlier topic we saw in Isaiah 53:12 that Jesus was numbered with the transgressors because He was crucified between two criminals. Here we see that although Jesus died between two criminals that He was buried with the rich. As a result, the second part of this prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus was buried in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

We also see that Nicodemus became a public disciple of Jesus that day and helped Joseph with the burial. John 19:39-41 says, “And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.” Here we see that Nicodemus got about one hundred pounds of spices to place on the body of Jesus when they wrapped Jesus in the fine linen cloth before they placed him in the tomb. The other disciples had fled and left Jesus alone the previous evening. Here we see that two who had been secret disciples because of the fact that they were the only two among the 70 men of the Sanhedrin that believed in Jesus had been secret believers until this time. Now they had become bold as they publicly buried Jesus.

In the same way we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to become bold as they tell others about the death and resurrection of Jesus. That boldness will not come from our own strength. Acts 4:29 says, “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word.” May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children the importance of praying for boldness.

Jesus Rose Again the Third Day

In our last topic we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children the importance of praying for boldness so that they will be able to share the Gospel with godly boldness instead of their own strength. In this topic we are going to see what happened on the day that the Father raised Jesus from the dead.

There were many women who had watched the crucifixion of Jesus. Mark 15:40-41 says, "There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem." At least two of those women followed Joseph and Nicodemus to see where they buried Jesus. Mark 15:47 says, "And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses observed where He was laid. Mark 16:1-3 goes on to tell us what some of those women did after the Sabbath when those verses say, "Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first *day* of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?"

The women had returned to where they stayed after they saw where the body of Jesus was laid. Luke 23:55-56 says, "And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment." Genesis 1:5 says, "God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day." Then Genesis 1:8, 13, 19, 23 and 31 say the same thing for days two through 6. Genesis 2:2-3 says, "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made." When God gave the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:8-9 He said, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work."

In that way God showed that there was to be a day of rest each week. The death and resurrection fulfilled the Law and so after the resurrection we read in I Corinthians 16:2, "On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come." Here we see that the church began to take its day of rest on the first day of the week. That is why Sunday is called the Lord's Day instead of the Sabbath.

Here we see what the women did once the sun went down on the day after Jesus was crucified since once the sun went down for the Jews the first day of the week began. At the place where they were staying they prepared a mixture of spices and fragrant oils to place on the body of Jesus the next morning. As a result, they started toward the place where Jesus had been laid in the tomb very early in the morning on the first day of the week. However, as they walked

toward the place of the tomb, they had a discussion among themselves and asked one another the question, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?”

Meanwhile the chief priests and Pharisees had not been resting on the Sabbath. Matthew 27:62-66 says, “On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, ‘Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise.’ Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead.’ So the last deception will be worse than the first.’” Pilate said to them, “You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.” So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.” Instead of resting on the Sabbath the chief priests and Pharisees were negotiating with Pilate to get guards placed at the tomb so that it would be impossible for the disciples to come and steal the body during the night. The women did not know what the priests had been doing so the only thing they thought that they needed was someone to roll away the stone. They did not expect to find it sealed by the Romans.

The tomb was no longer sealed by the time the women arrived. In addition, the Roman soldiers were no longer there. Matthew 28:2-4 says, “And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.” Then Matthew 28:11 adds, “Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened.” As a result of the earthquake and the angel rolling away the stone from the tomb the guards saw that the tomb was empty and fled for their lives. They went to tell the chief priests first because they knew that Pilate could choose to kill them when he found out that the body had disappeared from tomb.

Meanwhile Mark 16:4-5 says, “But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. By the time that the women arrived at the tomb they saw that the tomb was wide open. As a result, they went into the tomb to place their mixture of spices and precious ointment on the body of Jesus. However, they immediately received another surprise when they entered the tomb. Instead of finding the body, they found a young man wearing a long white robe and sitting on the right side of the place where the body had been laid. The women were immediately alarmed. The word translated “alarmed” means to be filled with terror or amazement. They were probably filled with a little bit of both. The women found out that the young man and a second person at the tomb were both angels.

Then the angels spoke to them. Luke 24:5-8 says, “Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’ And they remembered His words.’” Mark 16:6-8 tells us that the first angel spoke again, “But he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was

crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.” So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”

We see that the angel told the women not to be afraid. He told the women that he knew that they were looking for Jesus. He said it was true that Jesus had been crucified. However, the angel also told them that Jesus had risen from the dead. The words of the angel brought both fear and excitement to the women. They were filled with fear because it was probably almost impossible for them to believe what the angel had said. At the same time it brought great joy because they had a very great love for Jesus and they were filled with joy to hear that He was alive. The angel invited the women to see the place where Jesus had been laid in the tomb.

The angel also reminded the women of the words of Jesus. Luke 24:6-8 says, “He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’ And they remembered His words.” Jesus had told His followers in advance that He would rise again. However, they did not expect Him to be put to death so they heard those words but did not really understand them. Now the women remembered the words when the angel reminded them.

The angel told the women to go and tell the disciples and Peter. The women then quickly went out and fled from the tomb. They were shaking with fear as they went. Luke 24:10 tells us, “It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles.” Luke tells us that the women did obey the angel and tell the apostles but they did not tell anyone else. The reason for not telling anyone else was due to their fear. The word translated “trembled” means to shake with fear or to have great anxiety. At the same time they were filled with the feeling of amazement because they had heard that Jesus had risen from the dead.

We need to understand that many people today who are not Christians will also doubt when they hear about the resurrection. That is why it is so important to remember John 16:8-11 which says, “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” Jesus told the disciples that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict and convince those who do not believe that Jesus is the Righteous One who is now in heaven. We are to share what the Word of God says and then allow the Holy Spirit to do the convincing. That is also an important lesson that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand. We are to share the Word of God and then let the Holy Spirit do His work in the lives of others. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to work with the Holy Spirit in evangelism.

Jesus Appeared after His Resurrection

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn why it is so important for them to understand that the Holy Spirit is the One who will convince those who are not Christians that Jesus is alive. In our topic today we are going to see that there were also witnesses who saw Jesus after the resurrection.

In our last topic we saw that the angel had told the women that Jesus had risen from the dead. They obeyed the angel and went and told the disciples. However, they did not tell anyone else. Mark 16:9-13 says, “Now when *He* rose early on the first *day* of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told *it* to the rest, *but* they did not believe them either.” We see that the first person to whom Jesus appeared was Mary Magdalene.

Mary went back to the tomb after the women told the disciples. She was still filled with sorrow even though the angels had said Jesus had risen. John 20:15-17 says, “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?’ She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, ‘Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to Him, ‘Rabboni!’ (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’” Mary was filled with joy and returned to tell the disciples what Jesus had said to her.

The disciples did not believe that Jesus had risen even though the women had told them what the angel said. As a result, they were mourning and weeping. Mary told the disciples that Jesus was alive and that she had seen Him. However, the disciples did not believe that Mary had really seen Jesus. Later in the day Jesus appeared to two of the disciples who were returning to their home in Emmaus which was located about seven miles from Jerusalem. Luke 24:13-32 tells about the time that Jesus spent with these two disciples that day.

As they walked along the road Jesus gave the two a short review of the Old Testament. Luke 24:27 says, “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Then Luke 24:30-32 tells how Jesus revealed Himself to the two. Those verses say, “Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” The two immediately returned to Jerusalem and told the other disciples but they did not believe the two.

Mark 16:14-18 says, “Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.’” Jesus had to rebuke the disciples because of the fact that they did not believe the witnesses who had seen Him. Jesus rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart.

Then Jesus gave the disciples the commission to take Gospel to every person in the world. That commission still applies to us today because there are many in the world that have not yet heard of the salvation that Jesus provided through His death and resurrection. Jesus said that He wanted every person to have the opportunity to hear that message so that each one could make the choice to either receive or reject that message. Jesus promised that those who believe will be saved. Paul and Silas gave us an example of the power of that message as Acts 16:30-31 says, “And he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’” Jesus also warned that those who rejected that message would be condemned.

Jesus then gave the apostles signs to verify their message about His death and resurrection. Hebrews 2:3-4 says, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” Here in Mark 16 we see that Jesus told the apostles about the signs that He would give them to confirm their message about His resurrection.

Jesus said that they would cast out demons in His name. Acts 5:12 tells us, “And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch. Then Acts 19:11-12 says, “Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.”

God also exposed false teachers who tried to imitate the signs of the apostles so that they could use those signs to make money. Acts 8:18-21 says, “And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’ But Peter said to him, ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God.’” Then Acts 19:14-16 says, “Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?’ Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

The apostles did cast out demons and heal the sick. Acts 5:16 says, “Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.” The disciples did speak with new languages. Acts 2:6-11 says, “And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” Here we see that God gave them the ability to share the Gospel in languages that they had never learned.

Paul was even bitten by a poisonous snake and suffered no harm. Acts 28:3-5 says, “But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, ‘No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live.’ But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm.” The purpose of all of these miracles was to verify the witness of the apostles about the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The book of Mark concludes by showing us that the apostles were obedient and took the Gospel to people wherever they went. Mark 16:19-20 says, “So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.” First we see that Romans 8:34 tells us what Jesus is doing in heaven right now as that verse says, “Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”

Second we see that the apostles were obedient and went and preached everywhere. God confirmed their message with the signs of the apostles. We want to continue to follow the example of the apostles and share the Gospel wherever we go until every person has heard the message of the Gospel. Paul told Timothy in II Timothy 2:2, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Then Paul added in II Timothy 4:5, “But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” We want to share that same message with our physical and spiritual children and then show them by our example how to faithfully share that message with others until Jesus comes to take us to heaven. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to pass on the message of the Gospel to others.