

Helping Our Children Present Jesus as the King Part 4

**Growing Godly Family Series
Manual 34**

By

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Growing Godly Families Series

The “Growing Godly Families Series” is the result of weekly topics were prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. This series is especially designed for those who are already Christian leaders; to give them Biblical principles for the development of additional godly spiritual leaders. Because they give Biblical principles for growth in spiritual leadership, they are also helpful for Christians that want to grow and become godly spiritual leaders.

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.

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 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.” 1 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 make your life count for eternity by bringing glory to God.

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Jesus Described the Hearts of the Pharisees

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to be led by the love of Christ so that they feel free to come to Him with boldness. This is a great contrast to the Pharisees who became controlled by fear and were afraid to ask Jesus any more questions. In this topic, we will see that Jesus went on to describe the hearts of the Pharisees.

In Matthew 23:1-4 we read, “Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men’s shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.” Many of the scribes were also Pharisees. The scribes spent much of their time making copies of the various books of the Old Testament. As a result, they were considered teachers of the Law because they spent so much time making copies of it and teaching to the common people what was written. That was why Jesus said what He did in these verses.

The title “sit in Moses seat” was a title that they had given to themselves and was similar to calling themselves university professors. That is why this phrase could also be translated, they “have seated themselves in Moses seat.” It was this title that they had given themselves as the basis for claiming authority over the people. Hebrews 4:12 tells us, “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 of God has authority within itself and is able to reveal the thoughts and intents of the heart. As a result, the Word can speak to hearts even when someone who does not believe in Christ is reading it. As long as the scribes were reading the Old Testament, the Word would speak with authority and Jesus told the multitudes and His disciples that they were to keep and obey the Word.

Jesus went on to tell the multitudes not to follow the works of the scribes. This was due to the fact that the scribes did not practice the things that they read from the Scriptures in the services in the synagogues. The scribes and Pharisees had gone far beyond just reading and explaining the Word of God. They had added many of their own traditions to the Word of God and these traditions were the things that they were using to load heavy burdens on the people. A few of those traditions they practiced themselves were things such as the washing of hands. Mark 7:3-4 says, “For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.”

Jesus went on to say in Mark 7:9, “He said to them, ‘*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.’” Then Jesus added in Mark 7:13 that they were, “making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.” However, most of the traditions that the scribes taught they did not even practice and do themselves. That is why Jesus said in Matthew 23:4, “For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men’s shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.” Some of the scribes and Pharisees who later became Christians tried to place these same burdens on Gentile Christians. This is why Galatians 5:1 says, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” In this verse, we see that such legalism is called a

yoke of bondage and Paul warned the new Christians not to be deceived and get entangled in such bondage.

Jesus then explained why the Pharisees did what they did. Matthew 23:5-8 says, “But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. 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.” The Jewish men would wear leather boxes called phylacteries on their forehead and on their left arm just above the elbow during their times of prayer. These would contain parchment with the following four groups of verses from the Law written on them. Exodus, 13:1-10; Exodus 13:11-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Deuteronomy 11:13-21. The Pharisees made the leather straps that held these boxes larger so that they would be noticed by others. They also made the tassels around the bottom of their robes longer so that people would notice them when they walked.

In addition the scribes and Pharisees were also filled with pride. They wanted to be treated like they were the honored guests when then were at a feast. That is why Jesus said that they loved the best places at feasts. This pride also was clearly seen when they gathered at the synagogues because they wanted the best seats where they would be noticed. They also wanted to be shown special respect when they walked through the marketplaces. The Jews used the word “Rabbi” which means Master or Teacher as a title of respect for their teachers. This is illustrated in John 1:38 where we read, “Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, ‘What do you seek?’ They said to Him, ‘Rabbi’ (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), ‘where are You staying?’ However, the scribes and Pharisees wanted to be called “Rabbi, Rabbi”. The repeating of Rabbi twice made it a title which meant “most excellent Rabbi.” Jesus said that “the Christ” is the One who is your Teacher and we are to recognize that we are all brethren. Here we see that we are all brethren or equals as Christians and do not have spiritual authority.

Christ went on to explain to His disciples and the multitudes that they were to lead through humility. Matthew 23:9-12 says, “Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” All spiritual authority belongs to Christ. We read in Matthew 28:18, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” Based on the fact that Jesus is the One who has all authority, He gave us the following commission in Matthew 28:19-20, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age. Amen.”

In these verses, we see that Jesus gave specific things we are to avoid as we lead as Christians. First, we are not to call anyone on earth Father. Instead, we are to recognize that One is our Father and that is God, the Father. Second, we are not to seek to be called Teacher. Instead, we are to recognize that One is our Teacher, the Christ. These things are to remind us that all spiritual authority belongs to God the Father and God the Son and not to any of us. Then Jesus explained again how to be great in the sight of God. Jesus said that those who become servants are the greatest. A servant has no spiritual authority. Jesus said in Mark 10:43-44, “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.” We see that we become great in the sight of God by being a servant, the word used here in these verses in Matthew. We see that we become first by being a bonds slave to all.

A servant or a bonds slave does not have any spiritual authority. The only way a bonds slave can

influence others is by the attitude and example of his or her life. This is the exact opposite of worldly leadership because the world seeks greatness and authority. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:15-16, "For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me." In these verses, we see that Paul made a commitment to serve Christians by providing the love and example of a spiritual parent so that the Christians would see by his example what it means to follow Christ. However, he did not command the people to call him either father or teacher. Later he said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ." Here we see that a spiritual parent invites people to follow his example. A spiritual parent can give such an invitation when it is the goal of that spiritual parent to imitate Christ.

Christ said that those who exalt self will be humbled. In contrast, those who humble self on this earth will be exalted by God in heaven. This was illustrated by Jesus in Philippians 2:8-9 where we read, "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name." We are to lead by humbling ourselves and following the example of Jesus who chose to give His life for others. That was what Paul did as he used his life to bring glory to Christ and not to himself. Paul summarized his life in two verses. Philippians 1:21 says, "For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain." Then Philippians 3:10 says, "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." As we make those verses the goal of our lives, we will provide an example to follow. We can invite our physical and spiritual children to imitate our lives because we are making it our goal to imitate Christ. Christ showed by His example that such a humbling of self will provide a powerful example for others to follow. As our children see our example, they will see that our words and our walk agree. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children by your example the meaning of humility.

Jesus Warned the Pharisees of Seven Woes – Part 1

In our last topic, we saw that we want to lead our physical and spiritual children by our example. We are to invite our children to imitate us just as we imitate Christ. In order to lead in that way, we must make it our goal to imitate Christ. The Pharisees certainly did not lead that way. Instead, they drove the people by the use of fear. In this topic and the next, we will look at seven woes Jesus gave to the Pharisees.

Jesus said that the scribes and Pharisees tried to keep people from entering the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 23:13-14 says, “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in *yourselves*, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.” The word translated “woe” is an exclamation of grief. As a result, each time it is used in this chapter it is a warning that great grief is coming to the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus also said that they were hypocrites. The word was used to speak of actors who used different masks to speak the parts of different characters. In this chapter we will see that the scribes and Pharisees said one thing but their actions were very different. They told others what to do but they did not do those things themselves.

First Jesus said that they shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. The scribes and Pharisees were depending on their own works to try and earn their way to heaven. We saw in the previous topic that they did these works to be seen by people because of their pride. At the same time they rejected the righteousness of God and refused to come to Jesus in repentance and faith. As a result, Jesus made it clear here that they would not enter into the kingdom of heaven. In addition, Jesus said that they tried to prevent other people from entering into the kingdom. Luke 11:46 says, “And He said, ‘Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.’” The scribes, Pharisees and lawyers also gave the people all kinds of rules and traditions that they were to obey. However, these men did not even follow the rules that they gave to others. Instead, they used those rules to drive the people by fear and prevent them from coming to God in faith.

Jesus also said that there would be great grief to the scribes and Pharisees because they devoured the houses of widows. The scribes often offer to help widows learn how to manage their money after the husbands had died. Instead of helping the widows, they would convince the widows they should give their money to the scribe to help pay him for his work of copying books. At other times they would convince them that they should give most or all of their money to the temple for the work of God. However, they also received personal benefit from that money because they were paid for making copies of various books of the Old Testament. Either way the scribes received much of the money for their personal use. Here we see that Jesus made it clear that they were really stealing the money from the widows and that they would receive greater judgment as a result. The Pharisees tried to cover their sins by publicly praying long prayers in places where they could be seen by the people to make them think that they were very spiritual. Jesus said that they would have greater judgment for their sin and deceit.

Matthew 23:15-22 says, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing;

but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged *to perform it.*’ Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? And, ‘Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged *to perform it.*’ Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? 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.” Here we see some more reasons the Pharisees would have great grief.

We see that the scribes and Pharisees would travel great distances both by land and by sea to convince a Gentile to become a proselyte. A proselyte was a Gentile who became a convert to Judaism. The religious leaders recognized two types of proselytes. Proselytes of the gate were Gentiles who remained uncircumcised but promised to avoid seven sins: idolatry, blasphemy against God, murder, immorality, stealing, rebellion against the religious rulers and eating flesh with the blood still in it. A proselyte of righteousness was one who chose to be circumcised and then keep the whole Mosaic law including all of the feasts and ceremonies. These individuals would also be required to keep all of the traditions of the Pharisees even though the Pharisees were not keeping those traditions. That is why Jesus said that they made this second group of proselytes twice as much a son of hell as themselves. The Pharisees taught a religion of works.

The scribes and Pharisees would also swear by certain things as a way to convince others that they would keep a promise. Many times they would swear by the temple, the altar or even the throne of God. Jesus said that these men were blind guides which meant that they did not know where they were going so they certainly could not lead any others. The scribes and Pharisees would swear by these things but they would require other people to swear by the gold in the temple or the sacrifices offered on the altar.

Jesus used two words to describe the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus said that they were fools and blind. Psalm 14:1 says, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘*There is no God.*’ They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good.” In this verse, we see that a fool is a person that leaves God out of his thinking. The result is that the actions of a fool are corrupt. The works of a fool are so evil that they are totally hated by God. No person can do what is good in his own strength. However, the fool has no desire to please God and chooses to do works that are corrupt and hated by God. Jesus said that to swear by the temple was also to swear by the gold that was in it. To swear by the altar was to swear by the altar and all of the sacrifices that were offered on it. To swear by the throne of God was to swear by the throne and also by God who sits on that throne. Jesus said the scribes and Pharisees was also deceived by their own blindness.

Jesus went on to say in Matthew 23:23-26, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.” The scribes and Pharisees also showed they were hypocrites by the way that they gave to God. Leviticus 27:30 says, “And all the tithe of the land, *whether* of the seed of the land *or* of the fruit of the tree, *is* the LORD’s. *It is* holy to the LORD.” Here we see that the Jews were to give a tithe of all that grew in their fields and all that grew on their fruit trees to the Lord. In contrast, the spices like mint, anise and cummin were grown in small pots at their homes. The Pharisees carefully weighted their mint, anise and cummin and gave one tenth of those spices to God instead of their crops in the fields.

However, as they gave their tithes of these spices, they totally ignored the key teachings of the law like justice, mercy and faith. Justice means doing the things that are right in the sight of God. Mercy means to show kindness to the needy and afflicted. Faith means repenting and turning from the sin of unbelief, believing that Jesus is the Messiah and coming to God through Christ as a result of believing in His death and resurrection by faith. Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees that these were the things that they should do without leaving the smaller things undone. That is why Jesus called them blind guides. Leviticus 11:4 says, “But all *other* flying insects which have four feet *shall be* an abomination to you.” The gnat was the smallest unclean insect of these flying insects. In contrast, the camel was the largest of the unclean animals. The Pharisees would pour the things that they drank through a fine piece of cloth to remove any gnats while they neglected things like justice, mercy and faith.

Jesus went on to describe the actions of the scribes and Pharisees in another way. They carefully washed their cups and plates according to their traditions so that they would not eat or take anything into their bodies that was unclean. At the same time their hearts were full of extortion and indulgence. Extortion is the act of plundering or robbery. The word translated “indulgence” means to commit various sins because of a total lack of self-control. Jesus went on to say 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.” We will study this verse in more detail in the next topic. Here we will just summarize it. Jesus said the scribes and Pharisees did everything possible to look good on the outside. However, on the inside their hearts were full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand and learn to explain why Jesus pronounced these warnings of great grief and sorrow to the scribes and Pharisees. We are going to see that Jesus had great sorrow as He thought about the judgment that would come on them because of their unbelief and rejection. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.

Jesus Warned the Pharisees of Seven Woes – Part 2

In our last topic, we saw that we want help our physical and spiritual children understand the warnings that Jesus gave to the scribes and Pharisees because of their unbelief and rejection. In this topic, we will see that Jesus continued to warn the scribes and Pharisees about the consequences of unbelief and rejection.

Jesus spoke the final woes to the scribes and Pharisees. Matthew 23:27-30 says, “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. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’” Here we see that these woes again reminded the scribes and Pharisees that they were hypocrites.

We see that Jesus described the Pharisees by saying that they were like whitewashed tombs. Numbers 19:16 says, “Whoever in the open field touches one who is slain by a sword or who has died, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.” In this verse, we see that God told Israel that anyone that touched a grave would be unclean for seven days. The people usually tried to avoid touching graves in order to avoid being unclean. Numbers 19:17-19 told what such a person had to do to become clean again. Those verses say, “And for an unclean *person* they shall take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin, and running water shall be put on them in a vessel. A clean person shall take hyssop and dip *it* in the water, sprinkle *it* on the tent, on all the vessels, on the persons who were there, or on the one who touched a bone, the slain, the dead, or a grave. The clean *person* shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water; and at evening he shall be clean.” In order to prevent accidentally touching a grave and become unclean the people would paint the graves with whitewash.

Jesus used those whitewashed tombs to describe the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees. They would do everything possible to make the graves and themselves look beautiful on the outside. Jesus said that the whitewashed graves were beautiful on the outside but on the inside they were full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. In the same way, the scribes and Pharisees tried to appear righteous on the outside. However, in their hearts they were full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. The final woe was closely related. Jesus said that the scribes and Pharisees had built beautiful tombs for the Old Testament prophets. They made beautiful monuments for the righteous. Many of these prophets and righteous people had been killed by their ancestors because their fathers did not want to repent of their sins and the prophets were warning them about judgment for those sins. The scribes and Pharisees said that they built these beautiful tombs and monuments to show that they were not like their fathers. They said that they certainly would not have killed the prophets if they would have been alive.

Jesus went on to describe what the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees were really like. Matthew 23:31-36 says, “Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ *guilt*. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: *some* of them you will kill and crucify, and *some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah,

son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.” Jesus said that the fancy whitewashed tombs and monuments were actually witnesses of the fact that the scribes and Pharisees were the descendents of the men who murdered the prophets.

John 11:47 and 53 show what was actually going on in the hearts of these very men. Verse 47 says, “Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.” Then verse 53 adds, “Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.” These statements and this plot in the book of John were spoken and planned right after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead several weeks earlier. These verses show that these very men were just as guilty as their fathers because they were at that very moment planning the death of Jesus and they asked Pilate to crucify Jesus just a few days later. That is why Jesus went on to describe what these men were like and what their judgment would be. Jesus said that they were like snakes and a generation of poisonous vipers. Just as Satan had spoken through the snake to deceive Eve, these men were carrying out the work of Satan by their plot to put Jesus to death. They would not escape but would experience the same future judgment as Satan.

Jesus then went on to prophesy what the scribes and Pharisees would do to the disciples that Jesus would send to them in the coming years. Jesus used three words to describe the various kinds of ministry that His followers would have. Some would be prophets. This would include the New Testament writers as well as some who spoke before the New Testament was complete. 2 Peter 1:19-21 says, “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” The word translated “wise” speaks of wise or skilled teachers. The word “scribes” spoke of those who could both make copies of the Scriptures and also answer difficult question from the Word of God. These verses show how Jesus developed His followers into godly leaders.

Jesus said the scribes and Pharisees of the Jews would kill, would crucify, would scourge and would persecute His followers from city to city. The New Testament certainly records some of this persecution of the followers of Christ. Jesus said this would bring judgment on these men and they would be held accountable for their own evil deeds as well as those who killed throughout the Old Testament. Abel was the first to be killed. Genesis 4:8-9 says, “Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘Where *is* Abel your brother?’ He said, ‘I do not know. *Am* I my brother’s keeper?’” Zechariah 1:1 says, “In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying.” Here we see that Zechariah was the son of Berechiah and was the last of the Old Testament prophets to be killed. Jesus said that judgment for the blood of all of these men would come on that generation because of what they would do to His followers. Jerusalem was completely destroyed only 40 years later.

In Matthew 23:37-39 we read, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’” Even though Jesus had just warned the scribes and Pharisees about their coming judgment, we see the great love that Jesus had for the people of Jerusalem that would experience that judgment. That love included the scribes and Pharisees as well as the rest of the people of the city. Jesus made it clear the reason why that judgment would come.

The people of Jerusalem had killed many Old Testament prophets. They had stoned to death some of those that God sent to warn them. Jesus still loved the people even though He saw their great sin and rebellion. That is why Jesus expressed His great sorrow here.

Jesus said that many times He wanted to gather the people of Jerusalem together. He said His concern was like that of a mother chicken that will gather her chicks under her wings to protect the chicks from death. Many mother chickens have died in an attempt to protect her young chicks from wild birds, wild animals or dangers from severe storms or other things that would have destroyed them. Jesus then explained the reason why Jerusalem would be destroyed. Jesus said that the people were not willing to let Jesus show His mercy because of their evil hearts. In contrast, the king of Nineveh said in Jonah 3:9-10, “Who can tell *if* God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish? Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.” The people of Nineveh listened to the Word of God spoken through Jonah and repented. The religious leaders refused to listen to Jesus and in fact condemned Him to death that very week. Jesus said those Jews would see Him no more.

Jesus said that the temple would be left desolate. It was totally destroyed just 40 years later. At the same time Jesus gave a message of hope for those who will repent and turn to Jesus in the future. Jesus said this destruction would last until the people said, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!” Romans 11:26-27 gives us a wonderful promise for the Jews that will be fulfilled in the future. Those verses say, “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.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the great love that God will show to the Jews in the future. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this promise.

Jesus Answered Questions about the End of the Age – Part 1

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why Jesus warned the scribes and Pharisees of coming judgment because they refused to repent. We also saw that Jesus gave a wonderful promise about the love that God will show to Israel in the future when the people do repent and turn to Him. In this topic, we will see that Jesus answers some questions about the end of the age.

Jesus had just spoken to the multitudes and to His disciples in the temple about the judgment that was soon going to come on Jerusalem because the people continued in their rebellion against God. In Matthew, 24:1-2 we read, “Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.’” Jesus said at the beginning of His ministry in John 2:19-20, “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?’” It was now about three years later so they had now been building the temple for about 49 years and the work was not yet completed. In fact, they were still working on the rebuilding when the temple was destroyed forty years later.

However, by the time of Jesus the temple in Jerusalem was considered one of the most beautiful buildings in the world. The temple buildings were made of white marble. 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.” The marble stones were very large and beautiful. Some of the stones were 40 feet by 12 feet by 12 feet. Then these white marble stones were decorated with plaques, sculptures and other decorations of gold that added to the beauty. In fact, even Herod had donated a golden vine that had large clusters of golden grapes that were nearly six feet tall. The gold on the east wall reflected the morning sun so that the temple could be seen from a great distance in the morning.

The disciples pointed to the beauty of these buildings. That was why it probably came as a shock to His disciples when Jesus said that the buildings would be torn down so that there would not even be one of those large stones sitting on top of another. Over the next few minutes Jesus and disciples walked east across the Kidron Valley and up onto the Mount of Olives. From this point they had a perfect view of the temple and the city of Jerusalem. Matthew 24:3-8 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?” And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.” Here we see that the disciples asked Jesus three questions. They did not realize it but only the first question talked about what Jesus had just said about the temple.

Their first question was, “Tell us, when will these things be?” This question was about the time when the temple and Jerusalem would be destroyed. However the next two questions are about the time that is still to come. The first concern of Jesus was that the disciples would not be

deceived. The things mentioned in verses four through six did happen and will continue to happen. Jesus did not want the disciples to be deceived. Later John wrote in 1 John 2:26, "These things I have written to you concerning those who *try to* deceive you." We see that John did not want other Christians to be deceived. Earlier John had written in 1 John 2:18-19, "Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us." Here we see that there were many antichrists during the first century of the church just as there are today.

Jesus said that there would be many who would come claiming to be the Christ. The goal of false christs is always to deceive because they are seeking followers for themselves. Jesus also warned the disciples that they would hear of wars and rumors of wars. Jesus told the disciples not to be troubled by these rumors. Jesus said it was necessary for these things to happen. In the time of the disciples the Romans came and completely destroyed the city of Jerusalem. Jesus warned here that when these things happened that the end was not yet. Jesus went on to talk about things that would continue to happen until the time of the latter two questions that the disciples asked Jesus.

We continue to have nations rise up against one another. Such wars will continue to increase as the time gets closer to the coming of Christ to rule on the earth. One thing that is important to keep in mind here is that the Rapture is not the time when Jesus will come to rule. The Rapture will happen before the seven year tribulation on the earth. Revelation 3:10 says, "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth." 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 talks about the Rapture. Then 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4 says, "But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 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. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief." The Day of the Lord begins with the tribulation after the church is taken to heaven. The Second Coming of Christ to rule on the earth will happen after the seven year tribulation. His Second Coming is mentioned in Revelation 19:11-21 at the end of the tribulation. That is important to understand so that no one will deceive us.

We also see that there will be famines, pestilences and earthquakes in various places. These things are happening and will continue to happen. In fact, they will continue to increase as we get closer to the time of the Rapture and the tribulation that will follow. Jesus went on to say in Matthew 24:9-14, "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." The word translated "deliver you up" is a phrase meaning to deliver for punishment. This punishment will include suffering, death or both. This kind of punishment and death has happened ever since the church began but it continues to increase as the world gets closer to the time when the Christians will be taken to heaven in the Rapture and the tribulation begins.

Throughout the history of the church there have been professing believers who have not had genuine faith. This will continue to be true of many people until the time that Jesus takes the believers to heaven. These people will immediately be caused to stumble when they are not taken to heaven. 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 says, "And for this reason God will send them strong

delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” These, along with many others will turn against those who become followers of Christ during the tribulation. In fact, the tribulation saints will be hated by all of the nations because they have made the decision to become followers of Jesus.

As the time for the return of Christ gets closer, there will also be many false prophets who will appear. Such false prophets are already deceiving many. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 describes both the false teachers and the people that they deceive. Those verses say, “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” False prophets will increase even more once the Christians are taken to heaven.

The phrase translated “endures to the end” means to remain or abide in Christ even as there becomes growing opposition to Christ and His followers. True believers can know that they will be saved even though they see many people already being deceived by false teachers. In fact, true believers will continue to share the Gospel as opposition increases. Jesus says here that the plan of God is for the Gospel to be preached in the all the world as a witness to all of the nations. Even when the Christians are taken out of the world God will raise up two witnesses and later 144,000 Jews who will become tribulation saints and will preach the Gospel as a witness to all nations. However, most of those who will become saints during the tribulation will be killed for their faith before Christ returns to rule. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly understand and explain these things to those who are not yet Christians. The Lord wants us to have a part in spreading the Gospel to all nations until the Rapture comes. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to share this message.

Jesus Answered Questions about the End of the Age – Part 2

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what Christ taught His disciples about the end of the age. In the part that we will be studying today, we are going to see that Jesus explained to the disciples what will happen during the tribulation after the Christians are taken to heaven at the Rapture.

Christians will be taken to heaven in the Rapture before the antichrist is revealed. In 2 Thessalonians 2:7-9 we read, “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.” Here we see that the mystery of lawlessness was already present at the time that the New Testament was written. The One who restrains the lawless one is the Holy Spirit who lives in each Christian. Here we see that the Holy Spirit living in all Christians has to be taken out of the way before the lawless one can be revealed. As a result, the antichrist will not be revealed until the Christians are taken to heaven at the Rapture.

After that happens, Matthew 24:15-20 tells us what the antichrist will do once he has gained world power. Those verses say, “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 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 or on the Sabbath.” Here we see that Daniel wrote about the future antichrist.

Daniel 9:26-27 says, “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.” Here we see that Daniel said that there would be 70 weeks of years until the Messiah would reign. Verses 24 and 25 said that after the 7 weeks and 62 weeks (a total of 69 weeks or 483 years) the Messiah would be cut off. That was the very time that Jesus was crucified. This promise in Daniel was why the Jews were looking for the Messiah to come but the multitudes did not understand that Jesus would be put to death. They expected Jesus to set up the kingdom immediately.

The church was not revealed in the Old Testament. It was first revealed when Jesus told the disciples in Matthew 16:18, “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” However, once the church is taken to heaven at the Rapture this final week of years (7 years) can begin. Matthew 24:15 says that in the middle of this week the “abomination of desolation” spoken of by Daniel the prophet will be set up. By this time a new temple will have been built in Jerusalem where the antichrist can set up this image of himself (the abomination of desolation) which he will then command all of the people on the earth to worship. The Jews who are living in the area of Judea at that time will have to flee immediately or they will be killed by the antichrist once he

has set up his image. If they are on their housetop they will not even have time to go into their house to gather anything to take with them. If they are out in the field they will not have time to return to their house to get clothes. It will be worse for those who are pregnant or are nursing a child during that time. It will be difficult to escape so Jesus said that the people in Judea during the tribulation are to pray this will not happen in the winter or on the Sabbath.

We go on to read in Matthew 24:21-22, “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. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.” This period will be such a great tribulation that it will be greater than the world has ever seen before or will see in the future. We see that the Lord is going to limit this period known as the great tribulation to just three and a half years. Otherwise no one would survive. In addition, 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.” This suggests the possibility that God may supernaturally change the length of the days and nights which would make the days shorter.

They Jesus explained why the days will be kept short. Otherwise Jesus said that no one would survive. However, Jesus said that those days would be kept short for the sake of the elect. The elect in this verse speaks about the tribulation saints who will hear the message of the death and resurrection of Christ during the tribulation and turn to Christ in repentance and faith. Revelation 7:9-10 says, “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” Then Revelation 7:14 adds, “And I said to him, ‘Sir, you know.’ So he said to me, ‘These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’” These would suffer more than they could take if the time was not short.

We also see that during this time there will be many false teachers who will try to deceive these tribulation saints. Matthew 24:23-28 says, “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe *it*. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; *or* ‘Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!’ do not believe *it*.⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”

Jesus gives a warning here for the time when those tribulation saints will be on the earth. He tells them to expect false christs and false prophets and not to believe them. John 10:27-29 says, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father’s hand.” Tribulation saints do not need to be fearful just as we do not need to fear false christs or false prophets because Jesus said that no one is able to take His sheep out of His hand. Jesus gave this warning in advance so that all who become saints during the tribulation can know in advance that the statements of these false christs and prophets are not true.

Then Jesus illustrated some of the things that these false christs and prophets will say in their attempts to try and deceive the tribulation saints. They will say that Christ is already out in the desert and try to encourage the saints to go out to the desert to see Him. Others will say that

Jesus is in the inner rooms. The word translated “inner rooms” means secret rooms or storerooms where things are stored. Jesus spoke in advance to tell the tribulation saints not to believe such lies. Jesus told the religious leaders in His day in John 8:44, “You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.” These false teachers during the tribulation are also followers of Satan who will try to deceive the saints.

Then Jesus went on to describe the things that will happen when He returns at the end of the tribulation. His coming will be like the lightening that comes from the east and flashes across the sky to the west. It will be very sudden. In addition, we see that the eagles will be gathered where the carcass is. Zechariah 14:2-4 says, “For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. 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.” At the very moment that the antichrist and his armies are gathered together to completely destroy Jerusalem, Jesus will return from heaven and provide a way of escape for His saints. Revelation 1:7 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.” The tribulation saints and all others will see Jesus at His Second Coming.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly explain the difference between the Rapture when Christ meets the church in the air and His Second Coming seven years later when Jesus comes to rule on the earth and every eye will see Him when He comes to judge the nations and rule on the earth for a thousand years. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.

Jesus Answered Questions about the End of the Age – Part 3

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the things that will happen on the earth during the tribulation. We also want them to learn to explain the difference between the Rapture and the Second Coming of Jesus to rule on the earth for a thousand years. In our topic today, we will see what is going to happen at that return of Jesus right after His Second Coming to rule on the earth.

We see that some very unusual things will happen at the time that Jesus returns to the earth. Matthew 24:29-31 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. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Here we see that during the time leading up to and including the time that Jesus returns to the earth at His Second Coming there will be very unusual things happening in the heavens.

We saw in an earlier topic in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:2 that the tribulation will come right after the Rapture. In the tribulation, we see that the sun will be darkened. Isaiah 13:9-10 says, “Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine.” These verses also show that the moon and the stars will not give their light. We read that there will be stars that will fall from heaven. The powers of the heavens will also be shaken. These verses make it very clear that even the sun, moon and stars will be affected during this time.

We also see how the people on the earth will respond to the coming of Christ to rule. During the tribulation the antichrist will deceive the world with many false signs and wonders. In 2 Thessalonians 2:9 we read, “The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.” Here we see that Satan will give the antichrist power to perform signs and lying wonders. In contrast, we see the true sign that the Father will give. We read that the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven. Then we see what the sign will be. We read that all of the people of the earth will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Revelation 19:11-13 says, “Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.” This sign will be clearly seen by every person on the earth and is in great contrast to the false signs and wonders of the antichrist. The response on the earth will be mourning as the people of the earth mourn because of their rebellion against God and the judgment that they know is coming.

In contrast, the tribulation saints will be filled with joy as Christ will cause the tribulation saints who were killed for their faith in Christ to hear a great sound of a trumpet and rise back to physical life. Revelation 20:4 says, “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ

for a thousand years.” At the same time Jesus will send His angels to gather His elect. These will be gathered from the four winds and from the one end of heaven to the other.

Then Jesus gave a parable from the fig tree. Matthew 24:32-35 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 all these things, 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.” The disciples had seen many fig trees over the years. They knew that when the branch gets tender and the leaves start to appear on the fig tree that the summer is very close. In an earlier topic on Matthew 21:12-22 we saw that Jesus cursed a fig tree. We saw in Hosea 9:10 that the fig tree pictured Israel and showed why they would be judged.

Here we see just the opposite. Joel 2:18-22 talks about the time when Israel repents of their sins. Verses 21 and 22 say, “Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done marvelous things! Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; for the open pastures are springing up, and the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their strength.” Hebrews 8:10-12 says, “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” Here we see that Israel is promised great future blessing. This blessing for Israel will come during the thousand year rule of Christ on the earth. When Israel sees the tribulation even though it is described as the time of Jacob’s trouble the Jews will be able to know that this promised blessing in the future is getting close. In fact that blessing is described as being right at the door.

Then Jesus gave a wonderful promise to Israel about this future blessing. There is a time when the heavens and the earth will be destroyed. 2 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.” However, Jesus said that His Word will never pass away. This promise to Israel about their future blessing is certain and sure because the Word of Christ will certainly be fulfilled. It will not pass away. We can also rejoice in this statement because we know that everything that the Lord has promised will happen exactly as He has said it will happen.

Jesus went on to say in Matthew 24:36-39, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 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.” Many false teachers have predicted that Christ will return to the earth on a certain day. These verses show that such a person is a false teacher. Jesus said that no one knows the day or the hour when He will return. This includes even the angels.

After His resurrection the disciples asked Jesus in Acts 1:6-7, “Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.’” Here we see that Jesus did not even share that information with His disciples. In fact, Jesus told the disciples that the Father has reserved that information for Himself. The Father has not shared this information with any of the angels. As a result, anyone who claims to know when Christ will return is a false teacher and deceiver.

Jesus did say that we can know what the times will be like at the time of His coming. Jesus said that the basic time of His coming will be like the days of Noah. That time is described in Genesis 6:5 where we read, “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 continually.” We see that in the time of Noah that the hearts of the people were filled with evil continually. Because their hearts were totally controlled by evil, their thoughts and actions were also controlled by evil. These verses tell us that the people in the day of Noah were doing the normal activities of life without any thought about the future.

This will also be true at the time that Christ comes. In the time of Noah the people were not prepared and were totally unprepared when the flood came and took them away. This same thing will be true at the time that Christ comes to rule on the earth for a thousand years. Mark 13:35-37 says, “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!” In the time of Noah the unbelievers were all destroyed and taken off the earth. This same thing will be true at the time that Jesus comes to rule. People will be carrying out all of the normal activities of life. Jesus said that they did not know until the flood took them all away. The word translated “took” means to carry from its place or to remove. Here we see that all those who have taken the mark of the beast (the antichrist) will be removed from the earth. This means that they will die so that only the tribulation saints that Jesus will raise back to physical life will be alive when He begins to rule on the earth. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that this verse is talking about the unbelievers who will be removed when Jesus comes to rule. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this passage.

Jesus Answered Questions about the End of the Age – Part 4

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain that Jesus will take all unbelievers off the earth at the time that He comes to rule on the earth for a thousand years. In this topic, we will see that some will be prepared but that most will not be prepared for the return of Jesus to rule on the earth.

Jesus went on to give several illustrations of those who will not be prepared for His coming to rule that will be judged and taken off the earth just as the wicked were in the days of Noah. Matthew 24:40-44 says, “Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two *women* will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” These verses show us that people will be doing a variety of different things at the time that Christ comes to rule on the earth.

Field work is something that is commonly done on almost any day of the week in many parts of the world. The same is true for the grinding of wheat and other grains to make flour for all different kinds of breads. At the time of Jesus these were two of the most common forms of work throughout the world. Jesus used these two very common forms of work to illustrate the need to be ready when He comes. People will be working together when Jesus comes. Those who are unprepared will be judged and taken off the earth. Those who are prepared will enter into the kingdom when Jesus will rule for a thousand years.

However, the lesson that Jesus wanted to make clear was the need for people to be ready at the time when He comes because it will be too late to try and prepare once He comes. Jesus had said earlier in Matthew 24:36-37, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” Jesus said that no one knows when He is coming. That is why He said to watch. The word translated “watch” means to be ready so that a person is not surprised by a sudden calamity. 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8 says, “Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation.”

Jesus then said that if a thief would send an announcement of the time that he was coming that the master of the house would be ready for his coming. However, the thief never sends an advance notice. Instead, he comes when the owner is unprepared. Jesus said that the same thing will be true when the Son of Man returns to rule on this earth at the end of the age. He is coming at an hour when the people of the earth lacking faith certainly do not expect Him to come. As a result, they will not be prepared for the coming of Christ to rule on the earth because their focus will be on the antichrist.

In contrast, Jesus went on to talk about the wise servant. Matthew 24:45-47 says, “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.” In these verses, we see that Jesus is looking for people to serve Him that have two characteristics. The first characteristic that Jesus wants in His servants is individuals who are faithful. A person that is

faithful is one that can be trusted or relied upon. In 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 we read, “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” In these verses, we see that Paul wanted to be recognized by the Lord as a steward that was faithful as he shared the message of the Gospel. Here we see that should be our same desire as long as the Lord leaves us on this earth.

The second characteristic that Jesus wants in His servants is individuals who are wise. The word translated “wise” means sensible or prudent. Matthew 7:24-25 says, “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.” When Jesus sent out the twelve in Matthew 10:16 He said, “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” Normally when sheep go out in the middle of wolves, the wolves have lunch. In contrast, when the sheep are following close behind the shepherd you see dead wolves because the shepherd protects the sheep. We are told what to avoid in Romans 12:16 in order to be wise. That verse says, “Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.” In order to be wise we must have a humble attitude and share the Word of God instead of our own opinions.

Jesus taught here that there will also be tribulation saints that are faithful and wise servants at His second coming to rule on the earth. In these verses, we see that such servants will be placed in charge of various responsibilities in the kingdom. These places of responsibility will be a reward for faithful service. In fact, as Jesus gives these places of responsibility to the tribulation saints Matthew 25:21 tells us what He will say, “His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’” This is a reminder of the fact that Christ will reward His servants from any period of time for their faithful service to Him.

We go on to read about those who will not be faithful because they have not placed their trust in Christ. Matthew 24:48-51 says, “But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” We see that these are called evil servants. The word translated “evil” means wicked or bad in nature. This makes it clear that these will not be servants of Christ. Instead, they will be the servants of the antichrist that have taken the mark of the beast during the time of the tribulation.

We see the lifestyle of these followers of the antichrist. First, we see that they have no desire to prepare for the coming of the Lord as they say He is delaying His coming. Isaiah 22:12-13 says, “And in that day the Lord GOD of hosts called for weeping and for mourning, for baldness and for girding with sackcloth. But instead, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating meat and drinking wine: ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!’” This is an example of the attitude that the people in rebellion against God will have during the time of the tribulation. Their desire will be to live for the moment and not even think about what will happen in the future. They will not even have thoughts about the need to repent of their rebellion and sin.

Second we see how they will treat others. We see that those who have evil hearts will beat and mistreat others. Here we see that it will be a time of great violence against one another on the earth. Matthew 24:37 says, “But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” 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 continually.” In the days of Noah the hearts of the people were filled with evil continually. Then Genesis 6:11 adds, “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.” The earth will be a very violent place during the tribulation especially against those who become tribulation saints. Third, we see that the earth will be full of drunkenness. Proverbs 31:7 says that one of the main reasons that people drink is that they drink to forget. That verse says, “Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.”

We see that these verses conclude with a warning to the evil followers of the antichrist. The Lord will return to rule on the earth suddenly. The evil followers will not be looking for His coming. In fact, they will not even be thinking about the possibility of His coming. We see that all of the evil people of that day will receive the same judgment that earlier hypocrites have received. The phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is commonly used to describe the judgment of hell. Matthew 22:13 says, “Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’” Here we see that hell is described as the place of outer darkness. 1 John 1:5 says, “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” Outer darkness means that there is no presence of spiritual light.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain in love what is going to happen in the future to all those who do not come to Christ, the One who is the Light of the world. We want to equip them to share clearly with relatives, friends, co-workers and other acquaintances the need to come to God through Christ in repentance and faith so that they will not have to face that judgment. In fact, even those who treat us as enemies need to hear the message of God’s love for them. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to explain these things about the future to others.

Jesus Gave the Parable of the Ten Virgins

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the judgment that will come on every person that is not prepared for the coming of Christ to rule on this earth. Jesus went on to give a parable about ten virgins. Five of these will prepare for the coming of Christ to rule and five will not. In this topic, we will see how to help our children learn to explain this parable to others.

In this parable we see that Jesus used the pattern for a Jewish wedding during the time He was on the earth to teach a very important lesson about the coming of the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 25:1-5 says, “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.” The first events of a wedding happened at the home of the bride when the groom came to the home of her parents to get the bride. This was followed by the wedding procession that went from the home of the bride’s parents to the home of the groom. Then the completion of the wedding and the celebration happened at the home of groom which became the home of the new couple.

Most weddings happened in the evening so the virgins (bridesmaids) would each bring a lamp or a torch to provide light for the wedding procession from the first home to the second home. In this parable we see that five of the virgins were wise and five were foolish. All the virgins took their lamps. The difference between the two groups was that five took oil for their lamps and five did not take any oil for their lamps. Jesus illustrated an important lesson about oil when He began His public ministry in Nazareth by quoting from Isaiah 61:1-2a. In Luke 4:18-19 we read, “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.” Here we see that oil is used to speak of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The night of the resurrection of Jesus, John 20:22 says, “And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” Then before Jesus returned to heaven Luke 24:49 says, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” This was the promise to the disciples that all followers of Christ would receive the Holy Spirit to give them power to share the Gospel and serve the Lord. The promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. For us today, Ephesians 1:13-14 says, “In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Here we see that the Holy Spirit is the down payment and guarantee of our eternal salvation. As a result, the lack of oil represents the lack of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the five foolish virgins.

Since the wedding was at night the virgins all were falling asleep and some even were sound asleep. Matthew 25:6-10 says, “And at midnight a cry was *heard*: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘*No*, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those

who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.” This is a reminder of the fact that no one knows the time when Christ will come.

Suddenly we see that the foolish realized that they were unprepared for the wedding. They had no oil in their lamps to give them light so that they could join in the wedding procession. Luke 11:34-35 says, “The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when *your eye* is bad, your body also *is* full of darkness. Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness.” Those virgins without oil were in spiritual darkness because they had no light. We see that they tried to borrow oil from the wise virgins. Today, we see many people who think that because they have family members or friends who trust in Christ that the faith of family or friends will be enough for them to have eternal life. These verses make it clear that those lacking spiritual life cannot depend on the spiritual life of others.

In contrast, we saw that the wise virgins took oil in their containers with their lamps. This is a reminder that these virgins have spiritual life. At the same time they realized that others could not depend on their spiritual life to have spiritual life. They instructed the foolish virgins to go to those who sold oil and to purchase oil for their lamps. We see that only the Lord can give salvation. Isaiah 55:1-3 says, “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for *what is* not bread, and your wages for *what* does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat *what is* good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you—the sure mercies of David.” Here we see that God said that He offers that salvation at no cost because that salvation can be received without money and without price.

However, the foolish virgins waited too long. The bridegroom came and those who were ready went into the wedding celebration and the door was shut. This is illustrated by what happened in the time of Noah. Genesis 7:16 says, “So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in.” Throughout the time that Noah was building the ark, 2 Peter 2:5 says, “And did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.” Here we see that God provided the opportunity for the ungodly to hear the message of righteousness and repent of their sin of unbelief. That opportunity was available right up to the moment when God shut the door. In the same way here we see that the virgins have the opportunity to enter into eternal life until the door is shut. Those who do not believe before Christ comes to rule will have no opportunity after He has come.

Then we see that Jesus went on to give a warning to the unprepared. Matthew 25:11-13 says, “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.” Here we see the key message of this parable. Jesus made it clear that each individual must be prepared for His coming because no one knows the day or the hour of His coming. When a person comes to Jesus in repentance toward their sin of unbelief and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, his or her name is written in the Book of Life.

Philippians 4:3 says, “And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life.” Here we see that all those who come to Christ in repentance and faith have their names written in the Book of Life. In fact Revelation 3:5 promises, “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of

Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” White garments are the robes of righteousness that each Person receives at the moment of repentance and faith. In this verse, we see that no one who has this white garment will have his name blotted out of the Book of Life.

However, only those who have their names written in the Book of Life can enter into eternal life. Revelation 21:27 says, “But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” Here we see that every person who has eternal life has his or her name written in the Book of Life. In contrast, Revelation 20:11-12 warns about the final judgment, “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.” This is the judgment of all who do not believe and repent of their sin of unbelief. They will be judged out of the books that have recorded all of their sins.

That is why this parable concludes with the warning to watch. The word translated “watch” means to give strict attention to so that calamity or destruction will not overtake a person. We could say that it means to get ready in advance so that a person is prepared. This is essential when Christ returns because no one knows the day or hour that Christ will come to rule. Only those who are prepared will enter into the kingdom where Christ will rule for a thousand years. Those unprepared will be taken off the earth by death and will be in the place of torment until the great white throne judgment. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain these things clearly so that they can use the Word of God to warn every person about the importance of being ready when Christ comes. For us this will be the time of the Rapture. For those alive in the tribulation it will be the time when Christ comes to rule for a thousand years. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.

The Parable of the Talents

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to explain clearly the fact that people need to be prepared because no one can get ready after Christ comes at either the Rapture or later to rule for one thousand years. In our topic today, we will learn how to explain the parable of the talents to our children.

In Matthew 25:14-19 we read, “For *the kingdom of heaven* is like a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who *had received* two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.” Jesus was answering the questions of His disciples about the future as He gave this parable. As a result, Jesus compared Himself to a man traveling to a far country. His servants would include His disciples alive at that time as well as all who would profess to become His followers in the future.

A talent was a measurement of weight that varied from 50 pounds to as high as 200 pounds depending on the country and the period of time. These weights were used to measure metals like silver or gold. A gold talent would have a much greater value than a silver talent because the value of gold is much greater than silver. In this parable Jesus pictures Himself as a man traveling to a far country. The disciples did not yet understand that He would return to heaven soon after His resurrection. As a result, it is Christ who gives each person different backgrounds, different skills, different personalities, different mental capacities, different teachers and many other differences so that no two people on the earth are exactly alike. In this parable we see that the different amounts of talents that are given are based on the different abilities that each person has been given because of all of these differences. 1 Corinthians 4:2 says, “Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” A steward is someone who manages what belongs to another. The key to this parable is to understand what each person did with what they were given because Christ is looking for faithfulness.

The first servant received five talents and used them to gain five more talents. The second servant received two and used them to gain two additional talents. Here we see that each servant was equally faithful in using what he had been given to serve to Lord and do the things that God had for him to do in this life. These two servants both showed an equal amount of faithfulness in using the combination of things that Christ had given to them to do things that had eternal value. Hebrew 11:8-10 says, “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.” Here we see that Abraham was faithful in doing what God called him to do because his focus was on the things that would have eternal value. In contrast, the third servant took what he had received, went and dug a hole in the ground and buried what he had received. He just lived for the moment and was not faithful. This chapter is talking about the time when Jesus will return to this earth to settle accounts.

Matthew 25:20-23 says, “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents

besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’” Here we see that Jesus will reward the faithful servants after He returns.

We see that Jesus will give each servant the opportunity to tell what he or she has done to gain things of eternal value with all of the things that Jesus has given to each person to use. The first two servants had been given different amounts of talents but each had doubled what he had been given. They had both been equally faithful in using the particular set of abilities that God had given to each of them. As a result, Christ made it clear that He will reward both equally because they were equally faithful in using what God had given to them to accomplish things that have eternal value. In this parable Jesus spoke the same words of praise to each of these servants. To both servants, Jesus said, “Well *done*, good and faithful servant.” The word translated “well done” can mean you acted well or did well. The word translated “good” means excellent or honorable. The word translated “faithful” means that one has acted in a way that is worthy of trust.

Second, Jesus said, “You were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things.” Here we see that whatever has been done in the past is compared to a few things. However, in the future the Lord promises that He will make those who have been faithful over a few things rulers over many things. Jesus makes it clear in this passage that rewards will be based on faithfulness rather than the size of the ministry of each person. The Lord also tells all those who have been faithful to enter into His joy. This entrance into the joy of the Lord speaks of the fact that our faithful service brings great joy to the Lord. We can look forward to being a part of His joy throughout all eternity because of the fact that we have been His faithful children.

In contrast, we go on to read about those who will not enter into the joy of the Lord. Matthew 25:24-30 says, “Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is* yours.’ But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. ‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’” Here we see that the unfaithful servant has a wrong view of Christ because those who have a wrong view of Christ never come to Him for forgiveness because of their lack of repentance and faith.

First we see that those who never come to Christ in repentance and faith view Christ as a hard man. The word translated “hard” means harsh, stern or violent. Jude 14-15 says, “Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” Here we see that ungodly sinners often speak many harsh things against Christ. Instead of understanding that the love of Christ for them caused Him to go to the cross to pay the penalty for their sins, they accuse Christ falsely because of the evil in their own hearts. Proverbs 23:7a says, “For as he

thinks in his heart, so *is* he.” Those who are evil have their hearts controlled by fear and they have buried the things Christ has given them.

We see that Christ goes on to describe the heart and character of all those who reject Him and fail to come to Him in repentance and faith. First, Jesus said that all individuals who reject Him are wicked. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Then Romans 3:10-12 adds, “As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.’” Second, we see that Jesus said that such servants are lazy or slothful. They try to blame Christ for their own failure to repent. Jesus said the least the servant could have done was deposit the money with bankers so that it have earned interest. However, he just buried the talent and did nothing with it.

Jesus said to take the talent from the unfaithful servant and give it to the servant that had ten talents. Jesus said that those who have been faithful will be rewarded with even more. 1 Corinthians 3:14 says, “If anyone’s work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward.” Here we see that the works do not produce salvation. However, Jesus promises that there will be rewards for all believers who have works that have eternal value.

In contrast, we see that the unfaithful servants will be judged. We see that the eternal judgment of unbelievers is described as outer darkness. Revelation 20:15 says, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” A fireman friend told me that any time you are in the middle of a fire that it is pitch black inside the fire. We also see that in this eternal judgment that there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. We see that this parable shows both the reward for the faithful and the judgment of those who reject the free gift of eternal life. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly explain both so that they can be effective both in warning the unbeliever and encouraging those who are faithful servants of Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this parable.

The Judgment of the Gentiles when Jesus Returns to Earth

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain how Jesus will reward those servants who are faithful and the judgment of those who reject Christ and His offer of forgiveness of sins and eternal life. In this topic, we will see what Jesus says about the judgment of the Gentiles at the time that He returns to the earth after the tribulation.

Jesus will come back to this earth in all of His glory when He comes at the end of the tribulation. Matthew 25:31-36 says, “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I *was* naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’” Here we see that Jesus will gather all of the nations for judgment at the time of His coming to rule on the earth.

All nations will be gathered but it will be the individuals that are separated at that time. Jesus compares this judgment to the time when a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. In several places in the Bible those who believe are compared to sheep. In Ezekiel 34 God talked about the unfaithful shepherds of Israel. Then in Ezekiel 34:11-12 God said, “For thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day.’” Then in John 10:16 Jesus talks about those who would become His followers who were not a part of Israel. That verse says, “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.” As a result, the sheep represent those who believe in Jesus while the goats represent those who do not believe.

In these verses, we see that Jesus calls Himself both the Son of Man and the King. First we see that Jesus promises blessing for those who the sheep (the righteous). This blessing includes inheriting the kingdom. We also see that this kingdom was planned before the world was ever created. We also see some of the things for which believers will be rewarded. In each of the things that Jesus mentions, He says that righteous have done these things to Him. Jesus will tell the righteous gathered there that day that they gave Him food. They gave Him something to drink when He was thirsty. They took Him in when He was a stranger. They clothed Him when He was naked. They visited Him when He was sick. They came to Him when He was in prison. We will see in the next few verses that the righteous will not understand what Jesus means at first.

Matthew 25:37-40 says, “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ 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.’” Here we see that righteous will not understand when they did these things to Jesus. This shows there is a great difference between the righteous and the unrighteous. Proverbs 12:10 says, “A righteous *man* regards the

life of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked *are* cruel.” Here we see that the righteous even show kindness to the animals. In contrast, even when the wicked try to show tender mercy they are still cruel. Here we see that what is in the heart of a person will be shown by the actions of that person.

The righteous have a new nature that causes them to show kindness to others without even thinking about the fact that they are showing kindness. Even when the wicked try to show kindness, they cannot show real kindness because their actions are controlled by their sin nature. The righteous are motivated by the love of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” In contrast, the unrighteous are driven by the fear of man. This is illustrated so well by the parents of the blind man to whom Jesus gave sight. John 9:22 says, “His parents said these *things* because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed *that* He *was* Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue.” Here we see that the parents had a greater fear of being put out of the synagogue than their desire to tell who healed their son.

Since the righteous show kindness without even giving thought to it, the righteous when Christ returns to the earth will question and ask, when did we see you hungry or thirsty? When did we take you in or clothe you? When did we visit you when you were sick or in prison? This is a reminder that those who serve the Lord do not keep a record of all the acts of kindness that they show to others. Matthew 5:16 says, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Galatians 6:9-10 says, “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” These verses make it clear that good works are a very important part of the lives of those who serve the Lord.

We also see how Jesus will answer that question when He returns as the King. He will say, “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 makes it clear that the good works that His followers do to others are actually being done to Christ and for Christ. The word translated “the least” means those who are unimportant and are not even noticed by the world. Luke 16:10 says, “He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what is* least is unjust also in much.” Those who are true followers of Jesus have a desire to be faithful to the Lord even in the things that are not noticed by others. The opposite is true for those who do not follow Christ.

Matthew 25:41-46 says, “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.’ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” These verses make it clear that the goats picture those who reject Jesus.

These verses explain the consequences for all those who fail to repent of their sin of unbelief and personally place their faith in Christ. First, they will be told to depart from Christ eternally. Second they are cursed. Third they will be cast into the everlasting fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels. Here we see a key lesson. Jesus said that this eternal judgment has

been prepared for the devil and his angels. All those who refuse to repent of their unbelief and wait until it is too late to repent will share the judgment that God has prepared for the devil and his angels. John 16:8-11 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.” In these verses, we see that the one sin that keeps people from receiving eternal life is the sin of unbelief. In addition, we also see that Satan has already been judged and that those who continue to follow him will share in his judgment.

Those who are promised this judgment will ask Christ when they saw Him hungry or thirsty, a stranger, without clothing, sick or in prison. Jesus will respond that the very fact that they failed to do these things to the people who they did not even notice meant that they failed to do these things to Christ. Proverbs 12:10 says, “A righteous *man* regards the life of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked *are* cruel.” The wicked have no concern for those who have no power or influence. In fact, the opposite is usually true. They take advantage of the poor and the powerless for self gain. That is why Proverbs says that even their tender mercies are cruel.

We also see that there will be two totally different futures for the righteous and the unrighteous. The unrighteous will go into everlasting punishment. The judgment of Satan is described in Revelation 20:10 where we read, “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Then Revelation 20:15 adds, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Here we see that all who continue in unbelief will share that eternal judgment with Satan. In contrast, all the righteous will enter into eternal life. Revelation 21:4 promises, “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain clearly the judgment that will come to the unrighteous and the blessing prepared for the righteous. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.

Jesus was Anointed by Mary of Bethany

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what will happen to the righteous and the unrighteous at the time that Jesus comes back to rule on the earth. When Jesus finished explaining these things to His disciples, we see that He went on to tell the disciples what would happen just two days later because the religious leaders had rejected Him.

Matthew 26:1-5 says, “Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, *that* He said to His disciples, ‘You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.’ Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill *Him*. But they said, ‘Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.’” Jesus had finished explaining to His disciples what was going to happen at His coming to the earth to rule. Then Jesus told this opportunity to remind the disciples about His coming death.

Jesus reminded the disciples that it was just two days until the Passover. The Passover was the feast that had been established to help the Jews teach their children about their deliverance from slavery in Egypt. 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.” Here we see that Jesus said that at the time of the Passover the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified. The original Passover celebrated deliverance from bondage and slavery. In contrast, 1 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.” This verse makes it clear that Jesus was our Passover to deliver us from the bondage of sin. That bondage to sin is a much greater bondage than slavery because bondage to sin produces eternal consequences.

We see that about this same time the chief priests, the scribes and the elders gathered together at the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest. However, even though they were the religious leaders of the Jews, they were not talking about celebrating the Passover. Instead, we see that they had gathered together and were planning how they could catch Jesus by trickery and kill Him. However, they had one thing that they wanted to avoid as they plotted to put Jesus to death. They did not want to kill Jesus during the feast of the Passover. During the Passover, a half million or more Jews from other parts of the world would come to Jerusalem for the Passover. The religious leaders feared what might happen if Jesus was killed during that time. In contrast, God had planned that very moment for Jesus to die before the creation of the world. God had publicly announced His plan through John the Baptist when he said in John 1:29, “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’” As a result, Jesus would say, “It is finished!” at the very time of the evening sacrifice at the time of the Passover.

However, there were other things that had to happen during those two days in order to fulfill the plan of God. Matthew 26:6-9 says, “And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured *it* on His head as He sat *at the table*. But when His disciples saw *it*, they were indignant, saying, ‘Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to *the poor*.’” Bethany was the village where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived. Simon is called a leper so this had to be one of the people that Jesus had cured of leprosy because lepers

normally had to stay outside the towns and cry “Unclean” when anyone came near unless a priest certified that they had been cleansed from leprosy.

While they were sitting at the table, a woman came to Jesus. She had very expensive oil in an alabaster flask. The woman came to the place where Jesus was seated and poured the oil on His head. Mark 14:4-5 says, “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.” These verses point out the fact that this fragrant oil was worth about one year’s wages. 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.” These verses show that Judas was the one who criticized the woman sharply because he carried the money box and wanted to steal the money. He had no concern for the poor.

Many people wonder why Jesus allowed Judas to carry the money box since Jesus knew that Judas was a thief. The concern of Jesus was that Judas knew his own evil heart. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Even though Judas could deceive the other disciples, He could not deceive Jesus. Since Jesus could feed the five thousand with the lunch of a young boy, He could provide anything that was needed by the disciples. However, every time Judas took money from the money box, he was made aware again of his own evil heart. Instead of repenting of his sin of unbelief, we will see that Judas chose to betray Jesus in an effort to get some additional money.

Jesus knew what Judas has said, Matthew 26:10-13 says, “But when Jesus was aware of *it*, He said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did *it* for My 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.” In John 12:2-3 we see that the woman who poured this fragrant oil on Jesus is identified. Those verses say, “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.” Here we see that the one who anointed Jesus at this time was Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha.

This is a different anointing of Jesus than the anointing mentioned in Luke 7:36-39. Those verses say, “Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at the table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw *this*, he spoke to himself, saying, ‘This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman *this is* who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.’” Notice several differences from the anointing here in Matthew. First, it was in the home of a Pharisee who had invited Jesus to dinner. Second, it was a woman of the city while Bethany was a village. Third, this woman was known as a sinner. Fourth, she stood behind Jesus so that her tears began to fall on His feet. Fifth, she washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Sixth, she was condemned by the Pharisee who had invited Jesus to dinner. In the event in Luke Jesus said in Luke 7:47-48, “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.’”

In this case, we see that Jesus first rebuked Judas although not for the fact that he wanted to steal the money. Instead, Jesus told Judas not to trouble Mary. Jesus then added that she had done a good work by anointing Jesus. Then Jesus explained a key lesson which none of those there at that moment understood. However, when they looked back to this event later they would have full understanding. Jesus said that they would always have the poor and could show mercy to them. Then Jesus said that they would not always have Him. None of them realized at that moment that it would only be two days later that Jesus would be placed on the cross and die for their sins and for the sins of the whole world. It was certainly a good work that Mary had done even though she did not understand fully what was going to happen in a very short time.

Then Jesus went on to explain that Mary had anointed His body for His coming burial. Here we see that Jesus was again telling His disciples that He would soon die. Mary probably did not fully understand that Jesus would soon die but she wanted to show her love for Him. By saying that she did it for His burial, Jesus took this action which was an act of love and gave it the full meaning of what her anointing meant. Jesus then went on to explain that wherever the Gospel was preached throughout the entire world that this action of Mary would be remembered. Throughout the Old and New Testament we see that God often explained the meaning of things that happened by their future results and not what was happening at that time. An illustration was when Jesus in an Old Testament appearance changed the name of Jacob to Israel. Israel means God rules. Then over the next fifteen chapters we gradually see the name Jacob used less and the name Israel used more. In the same way we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to look at people from God's viewpoint and see what God can help them become and not focus on what their lives have been like in the past. Jesus is able to change and transform the life of any person as that person learns to yield to Him. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to see others as Christ sees them.

Jesus Had Two Disciples Prepare the Passover

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the lessons that Jesus taught when He was anointed by Mary just two days before the Passover. In our study today, we will see that Jesus sent two of the disciples with instructions to go and prepare the Passover meal so Jesus could eat that last meal with His disciples before He went to the cross..

In the previous verses Judas had complained about the waste of money when Mary anointed Jesus with expensive oil. We saw that he complained because he was a thief and carried the money box for the disciples. Now we see that Judas showed the true condition of his heart by what he did as a result. Matthew 26:14-16 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. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.” Here we see that Judas was willing to do whatever he did for self gain. He knew that the chief priests wanted to destroy Jesus. As a result, he went to them to see what they would pay him for delivering Jesus to them when no one was around to see it. 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.” We see that the chief priests were glad when they heard his offer to betray Jesus to them.

In Exodus 21:32 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.” This verse shows us that thirty shekels of silver was the price that the Jews were to pay to the owner of a slave that was killed by the ox. Then Zechariah 11:12-13 adds, “Then I said to them, ‘If it is agreeable to you, give *me* my wages; and if not, refrain.’ So they weighed out for my wages thirty *pieces* of silver. And the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter”—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty *pieces* of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter.” We will see in chapter 27 that the chief priests used the money given to Judas to buy a field in which to bury strangers that died in Jerusalem. This shows us that Judas had no more respect for Jesus than he had for a slave.

Judas immediately began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus to the chief priests when none of the people were there to see it happen. Luke 22:6 says, “So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.” The chief priests realized that there was the possibility of a riot if they arrested Jesus in front of a large group of people. That is why we go on to read about the way that Jesus kept it a secret from Judas where He was going to eat the Passover. Matthew 26:17-19 says, “Now on the first *day of the Feast* of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, ‘Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?’ And He said, ‘Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.”’ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.”

Luke gives us more details about the way that Jesus kept the place where they would eat the Passover a secret from Judas. Luke 22:8-12 says, “And He sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.’ So they said to Him, ‘Where do You want us to prepare?’ And He said to them, ‘Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. Then you shall say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, “Where is the guest room where I may eat

the Passover with My disciples?” Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.” Normally it was the women who carried the water pitchers. The fact that Peter and John were to look for a man carrying a water pot and follow him told them how to find the right place to prepare the Passover. In this way Judas could not betray Jesus while He was eating the Passover with His disciples.

We see that Peter and John followed the instructions of Jesus and found the house where there was a large upper room that Jesus and His disciples would use that night to eat the Passover. This upper room apparently became the place where the disciples continued to gather after the resurrection. Luke later wrote in Acts 1:12-13 just after Jesus ascended into heaven, “Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey. And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James *the son* of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas *the son* of James.” Peter and John talked to the owner of the house with the large upper room and then spent the day preparing the Passover meal that Jesus and the disciples ate that evening.

Jesus also told Peter and John to tell the owner of the house that His time was at hand. We are not given any information in the Bible about how this man would know what the disciples meant. Possibly God had revealed this information to him just as God revealed other things to those who were true followers. When Jesus was just 40 days old we read in Luke 2:25-28, “And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name *was* Simeon, and this man *was* just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said.” God had revealed this information to Simeon through the Holy Spirit.

We go on to read about the Passover meal in Matthew 26:20-25 where we read, “When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. Now as they were eating, He said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.’ And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, ‘Lord, is it I?’ He answered and said, ‘He who dipped *his* hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. 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 not been born.’ Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, ‘Rabbi, is it I?’ He said to him, ‘You have said it.’” Here we see that it was while Jesus and the disciples were talking together during the Passover meal that Jesus mentioned that one of them would betray Him.

We notice one very interesting response from the various disciples. We see that each of them began to question, “Is it I?” This makes it clear that Jesus had shown the same love and respect for Judas that He had for each of the other disciples. None of the other disciples even suspected that Judas was going to betray Jesus. Instead, each of them was concerned that he might be the one who would betray Jesus. Then Jesus explained what the one who would betray him would do. Mark 14:20 says, “He answered and said to them, “*It is* one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish.” Here we see that Jesus told what the one who would betray Him would do. In this way Jesus could let Judas know that He knew without the other disciples finding out at this time.

Obadiah 1:7b says, “*Those who eat* your bread shall lay a trap for you. No one is aware of it.” In this verse, we see that none of the disciples would recognize that Judas would be the only one who knew that Jesus knew when he dipped his bread at the same time Jesus did. John 13:27-30 says, “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. Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.” Here we see that the other disciples had two thoughts. Some thought Judas had gone to get something for the feast. Others thought that he went to give something to help the poor. The disciples did not understand until the moment Judas betrayed Jesus.

Jesus also warned of the judgment that would come to the one who betrayed Him. Jesus said, “Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.” The word translated “woe” is an expression of great grief. Later that evening Jesus said in His prayer in John 17:12, “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” In Philippians 3:18-19 we read, “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.” Judas had set his mind on earthly things and the result was that his end would be destruction.

When Judas asked if he was the one who would betray Jesus, we see that Jesus just answered, “You have said it.” The other disciples did not even understand this statement and realize that Judas was the one who was going to betray Jesus. We will see that Jesus continued to treat Judas with respect even at the moment that Judas betrayed Him. In the same way we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to show respect even to those who treat them with a complete lack of respect. That is the love that Jesus demonstrated by the respect that Jesus showed to Judas. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children grow in learning to show respect to others.

Jesus Introduced the Lord's Supper

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn from the example of Jesus to show respect even to someone who treats them with a total lack of respect. In our topic today, we will see that Jesus used the Passover meal to teach the disciples about the New Covenant and introduce the Lord's Supper.

Jesus taught the disciples many different lessons during their last evening together before His death. In Matthew 26:26-30 we read, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.' And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives." Here we see that one of the things that Jesus explained to the disciples was that He was going to shed His blood as the blood of a new covenant.

The disciples were eating the Passover together. During the meal Jesus took some of the bread, blessed it and then gave the bread to His disciples. Then Jesus gave a whole new meaning to that bread when He said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Here we see that Jesus used a piece of ordinary bread to represent His body. 1 Corinthians 11:24 says, "And when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Then 1 Peter 2:24 adds, "Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed." Jesus wants us as Christians to regularly remember that our sins were placed on His body as He hung on the cross. He died in our place and for our sins so that His righteousness could be placed on us at the moment of salvation.

After the bread, Jesus took the cup, gave thanks and then passed the cup to the disciples. As He passed it Jesus said, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Here we see that Jesus gave a whole new meaning to the cup. During the Passover the Jews drank the juice in the cup to remember the blood placed on the top and sides of their doors in Egypt so that the death angel passed over their houses without killing the firstborn as he did to the firstborn of all the Egyptians. In that case the firstborn was spared from physical death. In this case Jesus said that this cup was to represent the blood of a new covenant. That new covenant was to give spiritual life and not just physical life.

This made it possible for us to be healed from the spiritual death that was passed on to every person by the sin of Adam and Eve. Romans 5:12 says, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." Then Hebrews 9:22 adds, "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission." In this verse, we see that the same word is used for the remission of sins that is used in our verse in Matthew. This is the same word that is translated "forgiveness" in Ephesians 1:7 where we read, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Each time we take the cup we are remembering that the cup represents the blood that Jesus shed for us and in our place so that we could receive the forgiveness of sins. That is why this is called the blood of a new covenant.

Jesus went on to tell the disciples that He would not again drink of the fruit of the vine until the time when He will drink it with the disciples and all believers in His Father's kingdom. Until that time we are to eat the bread and drink the cup each time that we do it in remembrance of what Jesus did for us that day. Paul explained the results of that action for each one of us when he said in Acts 26:18, "To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me." Here we see that we are remembering the fact that Jesus made possible five things for us: our eyes to be opened; to now walk in the light instead of darkness; to be turned from the power of Satan to God; to receive the forgiveness of sins; and to receive an eternal inheritance. After hearing the new meaning that Jesus had given these events, we see that Jesus and the disciples sang a hymn and went out into the Mount of Olives.

We go on to read in Matthew 26:31-32, "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 of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." Here we see that Jesus told the disciples several things that would happen that night and gave them instructions about what they were to do after His resurrection. Jesus told the disciples that they would all stumble that night. We will see in the next verses that Peter said that He would never stumble. However, Mark 14:50 says, "Then they all forsook Him and fled." Matthew 26:58 adds, "But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end." We will see in a few paragraphs what happened there.

Jesus then 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 said that those against Him would strike the Shepherd. Less than 24 hours after Jesus said this His body was placed in the tomb. We also see that Jesus predicted that His followers and particularly the disciples would be scattered. When they fled to get away from the men who arrested Jesus their only concern was to escape before they were also arrested.

However, at the same time Jesus also gave a promise. He spoke of what was to happen after He was raised. Here we see that Jesus pointed forward to His resurrection to give the disciples hope. The disciples did not really understand that hope until they saw Jesus after His resurrection. Instead, they were filled with fear. John 20:19 says, "Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace *be* with you.'" The disciples were controlled by their fear of the Jews until they saw Jesus after His resurrection.

Jesus also told the disciples that He would meet them in Galilee. This was the same message that the women were told to give the disciples the morning of His resurrection. Matthew 28:7 says, "And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you." We see in John 20 that the disciples did not leave to go meet Jesus in Galilee for at least a week as Jesus appeared to them both on the day of His resurrection (John 20:19) and also a week later (John 20:26). In 1 Corinthians 15:6 we read, "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." Since Acts 1:15 says, "And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty)," it is probable that the appearance to more than 500 brethren at once happened in Galilee.

Jesus had just told the disciples that they would all stumble that night. Matthew 26:33-35 says,

“Peter answered and said to Him, ‘Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ Peter said to Him, ‘Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!’ And so said all the disciples.” We see that Peter depended on his own strength that night and did just exactly what he said that he would never do. In Matthew 26:69-73 we see the first two denials of Peter. Then 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 Peter did the very thing that he said that he would never do as he denied Jesus three times that night.

This teaches us a very important lesson. A few hours earlier in John 15:5 Jesus had said, “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” Peter boldly defended Jesus when he was standing next to Jesus when the religious leaders came to arrest Jesus. However, when he and the others fled, Luke 22:54 says, “Having arrested Him, they led *Him* and brought Him into the high priest’s house. But Peter followed at a distance.” Here we see that Peter was no longer standing with Jesus but was following at a distance. Luke 22:61 tells us what Jesus did after Peter denied Him the third time. That verse says, “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.” Here we see that Peter did not even remember until he had already denied Jesus the third time. When we depend on our own strength we will also deny Jesus by our words, actions or both. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to yield to Christ moment by moment instead of depending on their own strength. Only as we yield to the Holy Spirit moment by moment will we be able to stand in the strength of Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand this important lesson.

Jesus Prayed in the Garden

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand the danger of depending on their own strength. We saw that only as we learn to yield to the Holy Spirit moment by moment can we look forward to experiencing victory. In our topic today, we are going to see what happened as Jesus spent time praying in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus and the disciples left the upper room where they had eaten the Passover meal. Matthew 26:36-38 says, “Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, ‘Sit here while I go and pray over there.’ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.” The Garden of Gethsemane was on the Mount of Olives which was across a small valley from the part of Jerusalem where the temple was located. Luke 22:39 says, “Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him.” Here we see that this was a place where Jesus often took the disciples when He was in Jerusalem. In fact, John 18:2 says, “And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples.” In this verse, we see that Judas expected Jesus to go to that particular place.

Jesus had most of the disciples remain near the entrance to the Garden. However, He took Peter, James and John a little further with Him into the Garden. Once the four were alone we see that Jesus began to be sorrowful and very distressed. The word translated “very distressed” is the strongest of the three Greek words used in the New Testament for depression. As a result, we see that Jesus was experiencing great depression. The reason for that depression is explained in Matthew 26:39 where we read, “He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.” The phrase “this cup” is used in various places in the Bible to speak of the anger of God against sin. Habakkuk 2:16 says, “You are filled with shame instead of glory. You also—drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised! The cup of the LORD’s right hand *will be* turned against you, and utter shame will be on your glory.” Jesus was going to bear that cup of God’s anger for sin in just a few hours. 2 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.” Christ who had never sinned became sin for us as all of our sins were placed on Him.

Then we see that Jesus explained what He was feeling to these three disciples. He told the three, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.” Jesus freely shared with them fact that He was experiencing great depression at the thought of bearing the sins of the whole world on Himself. In Luke 22 42-44 we read, “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.” Here we see that the father sent an angel to strengthen Jesus as He went through that period of great depression because of the fact that He would soon experience the full fury of God against sin. Jesus asked the three to give strict attention to or to be vigilant in prayer for Him as He prepared for this cup of God’s wrath against sin.

Then Matthew 26:39-41 says, “He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, ‘O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.’ Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, ‘What! Could

you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.” Jesus then left the three and went a little farther into the Garden to pray to the Father. In agony He fell on His face to pray. Jesus told the Father that if there was any other possible way to pay for sin to let the cup pass from Him and be paid in some other way. However, at the same time Jesus knew that there was no other possible way. That is why He then said, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.”

Jesus made it clear to His disciples early in His ministry that He came to carry out the will of the Father. In John 4:34 we read, “Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.’” Then in John 5:30 Jesus told the Jews, “I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.” In these and other verses Jesus continued to say that He came to do the will of the Father. In fact, Hebrews 10:5-7 quotes from Psalm 40:6-8 when Hebrews says, “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 made it very clear that He came to do the will of the Father including experiencing the full wrath of God against sin as He bore our sins on the cross.

In contrast, the three disciples could not even keep awake and pray with Jesus. Instead, when Jesus came to them He found them sleeping. Peter had said earlier that He would never deny Jesus. As a result, Jesus spoke to Peter and said, “What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.” Luke 22:45 says, “When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow.” Then Jesus explained a key lesson to Peter. Peter is told to do two things to have victory over temptation. The word translated “watch” means to give strict attention to, to be cautious or to be vigilant. This is a reminder that temptation often comes when we are not expecting it.

Jesus also told Peter to pray so that he would not enter into temptation. James 1:14-15 says, “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.” The word translated “to enter” means to come near or to come in. That is why 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 says, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.” When we think that we can stand in our own strength we are coming close to temptation because we are not watching and praying. Then Jesus made one other key statement. Jesus said that the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. We may have the desire to do what is right but in our own strength our flesh is weak.

Matthew 26:42-46 says, “Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, ‘O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.’ And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, ‘Are *you* still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.’” Here we see that Jesus showed Peter by His own example the importance of watching and praying. He went away again to pray.

Jesus showed His submission to the Father by His prayer when He said, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.” Jesus knew that the cup of

wrath of the Father against sin would not go away by itself. He understood that He was the only One who could drink that cup because of the fact that He was without sin. As a result, Jesus said as He prayed, “Your will be done.” Hebrews 10:5-7 says, “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.’” Then Hebrews 10:10 adds, “By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.” Jesus showed by His prayer that He was willing to pay for our sin once for all.

When Jesus came back to the disciples, He found them sleeping again. He again left them and went and prayed a third time telling the Father that His will be done. After the third prayer, Jesus came to the disciples a third time. They were still sleeping. Jesus said that the time for preparing for temptation was past. The hour had come when the Son of Man was going to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Jesus had said in Matthew 26:31, “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 of the flock will be scattered.”’” The disciples had not watched and prayed. As a result, Jesus said that they would all stumble that night. In contrast, Jesus had prayed that the will of the Father would be done that night and He was prepared to drink the cup of the fury of the wrath of God against sin. Jesus was ready to take the full fury of the Father in our place and for our sin so that we could be freely forgiven.

Then Jesus said, “Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.” At that very moment the disciples could see the torches of the men who were coming to arrest Jesus approaching them. They were being led by Judas as he came to betray Jesus to this large group of men. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to have victory over temptation so that they can have victory over sin moment by moment and not stumble as the disciples did that night. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children by your example the importance of watching and praying.

Jesus was Betrayed and Arrested

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to pray and watch so that they do not enter into temptation and stumble. In this topic, we will see that Jesus was betrayed by Judas and arrested by a large group of men that had been sent by the chief priests.

Jesus loved all of His disciples including Judas. At the very moment of betrayal we see that Jesus showed His love for Judas. Matthew 26:47-50 says, “And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.’ Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, why have you come? Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.’” Jesus was still speaking when Judas arrived with a large group of men to arrest Jesus. We see that there was a very large group of men and they were armed with swords and clubs which show that they were expecting Jesus and His disciples to fight against them. This large group of men had been sent by the chief priests and elders.

Judas had told this large group of men how he would betray Jesus to them since it was dark and they would not be able to recognize Jesus. Judas said that He would give Jesus a kiss to betray Him to this mob and that they were to seize the One that he kissed. Psalm 55:13-14 says, “But *it was* you, a man my equal, My companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, *and* walked to the house of God in the throng.” Here we see that Judas fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy made by David about the fact that it would be one of the close companions of Jesus that would betray Him. That is exactly what Judas did that night as he led this group of men right to Jesus.

We also see how Judas betrayed Jesus. He walked up to Jesus and said, “Greetings Rabbi,” and then kissed Jesus. The word translated “greetings” means to rejoice or be glad. This word is used in Matthew 5:12 where we read, “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Even the words that Judas used showed his lack of respect for Jesus. In contrast, Jesus continued to show His love for Judas. Even though Jesus had just received the kiss of betrayal, Jesus said, “Friend, why have you come?” The word translated “friend” means a partner or companion. This word is used four times in the New Testament and all are in Matthew. Matthew 22:12 says, “So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless.” In this case Jesus used the word in the parable about the wedding feast about a man that was depending on his own efforts instead of the righteousness of Jesus for eternal life. Those who are spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins have never understood the love of Christ and come to Him in repentance and faith. Without spiritual life their focus is on this world instead of eternal values. That was very true in the life of Judas.

We go on to read in Matthew 26:51-54, “And suddenly, one of those *who were* with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. 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?’” Later Luke wrote about this event and said in Luke 22:50-51, “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.” Here we see that Jesus healed the ear that had been cut off. Many years later after all of the other disciples were dead John also wrote about this event. John 18:10 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.” Here we see that the disciple who cut off the ear of Malchus was Peter. Peter could have been charged with attempted murder except for one thing. Jesus touched the ear and healed Malchus. As a result, there was no evidence and Peter could not be charged with attempted murder.

Then Jesus spoke to Peter and told him to put away his sword. Jesus said that all those who depend on the sword will die by the sword. This is an important lesson for all true Christians to understand and apply in their lives. Jesus said in Matthew 5:44, “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” Here we see that true Christians are told to respond to the evil actions of others by doing four things: love; bless; do good; and pray for those who mistreat and persecute you. That is exactly what Jesus did to Judas. Jesus treated Judas with love and respect even though Judas had betrayed Him to gain money for himself.

Jesus also explained to Peter that He could be protected if that was what He had chosen to do. He said that He could pray to the Father and the Father would immediately provide Him with twelve legions of angels to protect Him. At that time a Roman legion normally had about 6,000 soldiers in a legion. As a result, Jesus said that the Father could provide Him with 72,000 angels if that was what He had chosen. In the time of Hezekiah 2 Kings 19:35 says, “And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when *people* arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead.” At the time of the Exodus of Israel from Egypt the Lord killed the oldest child in every Egyptian home in one night. As a result, Jesus did not need His disciples to fight.

Then Jesus taught Peter and the other disciples one final lesson before He was taken away by the large group of men that had been sent by the chief priests and elders. Jesus said, “How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?” In his very first sermon on the day that the church began Peter said in Acts 2:23-24, “Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.” Later as the disciples prayed in Acts 4:27-28 they said, “For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.” Psalm 2:6-8 explained that this was God’s plan and purpose when those verses said, “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD has said to Me, ‘You *are* My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give *You* the nations *for* Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.” We see that Peter and the disciples had learned what Jesus said.

Then Jesus turned and spoke to the men who had come to arrest Him. Matthew 26:55-56 says, “In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, ‘Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.’ Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.” Here we see that Jesus spoke directly to the crowd that had come to arrest Him. He asked why they were treating Him like a robber. When people are trying to capture a robber they usually take weapons with them to protect themselves and to capture the robber. That was exactly the way this great multitude came to arrest Jesus.

Then Jesus gave a gentle rebuke to the multitude by reminding them that they had been given

the opportunity to arrest Him any day that they would have wanted to do so. Jesus reminded them that He sat daily with them in the temple. They did not seize Jesus in the temple because Mark 12:12 says, “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.” Then Luke 22:4-6 adds, “So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. 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.” Here we see that the religious leaders were controlled by fear. They wanted to destroy Jesus but they wanted to do in without the rest of the people finding out until Jesus was on the cross because of their fear.

Jesus then explained, “All this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Psalm 2:1-3 says, “Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*, ‘Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.’” In these verses, we see that it was prophesied in the book of Psalms that the religious rulers would plot together to destroy Jesus. At the same time this was also the plan of God. Acts 2:23-24 says, “Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.” The religious leaders only planned to destroy Jesus. They did not realize they would also fulfill the plan of God.

We see that when the disciples saw that Jesus was being arrested that they all forsook Jesus and fled for their own lives. This also fulfilled Scripture. Zechariah 13:7b says, “Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.” That was exactly what happened that night. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that God fulfilled His plan even using the rebellious who only wanted to destroy Jesus. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.

Jesus was Tried by Caiaphas

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain that God carried out His plan even though the only goal of the religious leaders was to destroy Jesus. In this topic, we will see what the religious leaders did to have their excuse to destroy Jesus.

We see what happened after the men had arrested Jesus and the disciples had fled. Matthew 26:57-60 says, “And those who had laid hold of Jesus led *Him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest’s courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward.” The men who had come to arrest Jesus then took hold of Him and led Him away to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest. We see that in addition to Caiaphas that the scribes and elders were also gathered at the home of the high priest. They had gathered to condemn Jesus to death.

We also see what happened after the disciples forsook Jesus and fled. We see that Peter followed Jesus at a distance to see where the multitude was going to take Him. Then Peter saw that Jesus was taken into the courtyard of the high priest. Peter went into the courtyard of the high priest and sat down with the servants to see what the final result was going to be for Jesus.

In John 11:47-50 we read, “Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, ‘What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.’ 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.’” The council was the group of seventy men plus the high priest that was known as the Sanhedrin in the time of Jesus. Numbers 11:16-17 says, “So the LORD said to Moses: ‘Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you. Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that *is* upon you and will put *the same* upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear *it* yourself alone.’” This group of seventy men was considered the ruling body of the Jews. They had already determined that Jesus should be put to death.

However, these men wanted to make it look like their plan to murder Jesus was legal. As a result, they looked for many false witnesses who would give false witness about Jesus and provide them with an excuse to put Jesus to death. Mark 14:56 says, “For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.” Here we see that even though they looked for false witnesses that they could not find any false witnesses that agreed in their false testimony about Jesus. Finally, we see that two false witnesses came forward who could both agree about something that they had heard Jesus say. Matthew 26:61-63 writes, “And said, ‘This *fellow* said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’ And the high priest arose and said to Him, ‘Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?’ 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!’” Mark 14:57-59 gives greater detail about what the two witnesses said when those verses say, “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.”

We see that the many false witnesses could not agree because of the fact that their witness about Jesus was just the thoughts in their own minds and not something that they had heard Jesus say or had seen Jesus do. Both times that the Ten Commandments were all given in the Old Testament they both make exactly the same statement. Exodus 20:16 and Deuteronomy 5:20 both say, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” These false witnesses were willing to break one of the Ten Commandments in order to have an excuse to put Jesus to death. However, they could not reach agreement about their false testimony.

The final two witnesses gave a similar testimony about something Jesus had said but even their testimony did not fully agree. One said, “I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.” Mark gives the testimony of the other which says, “I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.” John 2:19-21 tells exactly what Jesus said, “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.” In these verses, we see that they had the words right but they totally misunderstood the meaning. Jesus was actually talking about His death and resurrection. Jesus did not even bother to answer their accusations because there was no crime even committed by Him saying those words.

The high priest then took control since He could not get any witnesses to even give a false reason why Jesus should be put to death. He asked Jesus if Jesus had no answer to give about the charges that was made against Him. Jesus just kept silent. Suddenly the high priest had a new idea and said, “I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!” Here we see that the high priest thought he could get Jesus to talk by placing Him under oath. Number 30:2 says, “If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.” This verse talks about a vow to the Lord so the high priest said that he put Jesus under oath by the living God. Here we see that the high priest was trying to cover up his own sin of saying it was expedient that Jesus should die so that the religious leaders would not lose their power. The high priest said, “Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God.”

Matthew 26:64-66 says, “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.’” Jesus agreed that He was the Christ, the Son of God. Then He combined the thoughts of two Old Testament verses to show that He truly is the Son of God. Psalm 110:1 says, “The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” Jesus had used this very verse just a few days earlier to silence the Pharisees so that they were afraid to ask Jesus any more questions. Matthew 22:43-45 says, “He said to them, ‘How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘*Lord,*’ saying: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’? If David then calls Him ‘*Lord,*’ how is He his Son?’” By using this verse again with many of the same men there, Jesus made it clear that David recognized Him as Lord.

The second Old Testament passage that Jesus included is from Daniel 7:13 where we read, “I

was watching in the night visions, and behold, *One* like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.” Jesus used the phrase “Son of Man” several times in the book of Matthew to make it clear that He was and is the Messiah. The Jews knew that the Ancient of Days is the Father who would crown the Christ as the Eternal King. Daniel 7:14 goes on to say, “Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom *the one* which shall not be destroyed.” Jesus made it clear in His answer to the high priest that He is the One who will rule forever.

We see that the high priest immediately tore 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 the verse we see that the high priest was specifically forbidden to tear his clothes. Later the Jews had chosen to violate this verse when they wrote in the Talmud that a high priest who witnessed a blasphemy was allowed to tear his clothes. In making this statement the Jews showed that they valued their traditions and made them of more importance than the Word of God. As a result, the high priest was the one who actually committed blasphemy that night. After tearing his clothes, the high priest said, “He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?” The high priest and the rulers had their excuse to put Jesus to death and so the rulers answered, “He is deserving of death.”

We saw in the first part of this topic that Caiaphas and the rulers had decided several weeks earlier that Jesus should die so that they would not lose their power and control. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why the religious leaders chose to put Jesus to death instead of recognize Jesus as the Messiah who will rule for all eternity. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.

Jesus was Denied by Peter

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why the high priest and the religious leaders had decided several weeks earlier that Jesus should die so that they did not lose their power and control. In this topic, we will see that Peter denied Jesus three times as he sat with the servants of the high priest.

We begin this topic by seeing what the religious leaders did immediately after they condemned Jesus to death. Matthew 26:67-68 says, “Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck *Him* with the palms of their hands, saying, ‘Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?’” Mark gives us further details about the way that the religious leaders treated Jesus immediately after they condemned Him to death. Mark 14:65 says, “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.” In these verses, we see that several things happened to Jesus right after He was condemned by the religious leaders. They blindfolded Jesus and began to spit in the face of Jesus. They apparently thought Jesus would not know who did what if He could not see them. They showed that they failed to understand that He knows all things.

Here we see that the religious leaders acted more like an out of control mob than like the religious leaders that they were supposed to be. The hearts of these men were controlled by their hatred for Jesus because they did not want to recognize Him as Lord. In addition, they also mocked Him as they said, “Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?” They refused to accept the statement of Jesus when He said that He is the Christ. At the same time they treated Jesus with a total lack of respect as they mocked and made fun of Him. These men were showing by the way that they treated Jesus that their hearts were totally controlled by evil.

Meanwhile Peter was sitting with the servants of the high priest so that he could see what would happen to Jesus. Matthew 26:69-72 says, “Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, ‘You also were with Jesus of Galilee.’ But he denied it before *them* all, saying, ‘I do not know what you are saying.’ And when he had gone out to the gateway, another *girl* saw him and said to those *who were* there, ‘This *fellow* also was with Jesus of Nazareth.’ But again he denied with an oath, ‘I do not know the Man!’” Jesus had warned Peter that he would deny Jesus three times that night. Mark 14:29 gives us the words of Peter when he said, “Peter said to Him, ‘Even if all are made to stumble, yet I *will not be*.’” Instead of praying for strength when he was in the garden with Jesus, Peter had been sleeping. After trying to defend Jesus with the sword he then fled. He followed afar off as the mob took Jesus to the house of the high priest. Now he was in the courtyard of the high priest sitting with the servants of the high priest.

One of the servant girls came to Peter as he sat with the servants. This was not a soldier or even one of the mob that had come to arrest Jesus. It was not even someone who was looking for followers of Jesus that could also be arrested. Mark 14:66-67 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.’” Instead, this was a servant girl who had recognized Peter as he sat there with the other servants. She just said that he was a follower of Jesus of Nazareth. Peter had been boastful when he said he would not stumble. In 1 Corinthians 10:12 we read, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” Here we see that Peter fell as he said in front of all of the servants that were there, “I do not know what you are saying.” He had not prayed and prepared for this time

of testing and so he could not stand because he was trying to stand in his own strength.

We see that Peter immediately moved away from warming himself by the fire and moved to the gateway that led into the courtyard. However, as he stood near the gate another girl saw Peter standing there. She said to the people who were standing near the gate, “This *fellow* also was with Jesus of Nazareth.” This time Peter denied with an oath. Jesus had taught the disciples in Matthew 5:33-37, “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.” Here we see that Peter was under the influence of the evil one. The fact that Peter used an oath meant that he did not even think about what Jesus had taught earlier. Instead, he chose to give an oath followed by his statement, “I do not know the Man!”

So far it was just two servant girls that had caused Peter to deny Jesus because of the fact that he was depending on his own strength. This is a reminder of the danger that all Christians face when we depend on our own strength. Jesus had told the disciples earlier that night in John 15:5, “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” Peter was certainly not bearing any fruit for Jesus that night. Instead of speaking boldly for Jesus, even the words of two servant girls had filled Peter with fear and caused him to deny that he even knew Jesus. However, the worst denial was yet to come.

Matthew 23:73-75 says, “And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, ‘Surely you also are *one* of them, for your speech betrays you.’ 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.” Luke tells us that a period of time had passed before the third denial. Luke 22:59-60 says, “Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, ‘Surely this *fellow* also was with Him, for he is a Galilean.’ But Peter said, ‘Man, I do not know what you are saying!’ Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.” From Luke we see that this third denial happened about an hour after the second.

During this time, Peter had begun to talk with the people who were around him. One of the people who had been standing nearby heard Peter speaking. This person came up to Peter and said, “Surely you also are *one* of them, for your speech betrays you.” Here we see that Peter was recognized by the very way that he talked. Every language has local accents that the people use when the people are talking. That night they were gathered in the courtyard of the high priest in Jerusalem. Peter was from Galilee and had a different accent and pronounced some words differently than the people of Jerusalem. This same thing was recognized on the Day of Pentecost just fifty days later. Acts 2:6-8 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?’” Verse 4 tells us that these people were Jews from different parts of the world but they all recognized that those who were speaking were Galileans.

This time Peter began to curse as well as take an oath. The word translated “curse” here and the even stronger word used in Mark 14:71, “Then he began to curse and swear, ‘I do not know this Man of whom you speak!’”, means to pray against or wish evil on a person. This means that Peter was saying that God should judge him with death if he was not telling the truth. God

showed His mercy to Peter that night because God did not strike him dead. Jesus had just told Peter a few hours earlier in Matthew 26:41, “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.” At that very moment the rooster began to crow. Suddenly Peter remembered what Jesus had said earlier.

One other thing also happened at that very moment. Luke 22:61-62 says, “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.” We see that Peter remembered what Jesus had said when the Lord looked at him. Suddenly Peter felt the tremendous pain of knowing that He had denied his Lord in spite of the promise that he had made earlier. The word translated “bitterly” is only used in these two verses in Matthew and Luke and means to cry with great grief.

This word speaks of the fact that Peter was truly repentant for his sin of denying Jesus. This shows the great contrast between Judas and Peter. In Matthew 27:3-5 we read, “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 had a false repentance that leads to death. In the case of Judas we see that his sin led to both physical and spiritual death. In 2 Corinthians 7:9-10 we read, “Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.” In contrast, Peter had the sorrow that led to true repentance. Peter would be greatly used only 50 days later on the day of Pentecost. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the difference between the false repentance of Judas and the true repentance of Peter. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this total difference.

Jesus Knew Judas Could not Live with his Guilt

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the difference between true repentance and false repentance. In our topic today, we will explain what is meant by false repentance as we look in more detail at what Judas said and did because of his false repentance.

It was against the Jewish law to hold a trial or to condemn a man to death in the middle of the night. As a result, we see what the religious leaders did as soon as it began to dawn in the early morning. Matthew 27:1-2 says, “When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.” Mark 15:1 gives us a little more detail about the events in the early morning when that verse 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.” In these verses, we see that the Jewish religious leaders wanted to make it look like they had followed all of the laws as they condemned Jesus.

We also see that the real goal of the chief priests and elders was to get Jesus put to death. However, they did not want to be held responsible by the people for murdering Jesus. As a result, they delivered Jesus to Pilate so that he could give the death sentence. The religious leaders were not actually allowed to carry out an execution because they were under Roman rule. Later on the religious leaders even violated that rule. In Acts 6:12-7:1 we see that Stephen was brought before the council and the high priest. Then Acts 7:54 says, “When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with *their* teeth.” Then Acts 7:57-59 adds, “Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’” Here we see that their hatred against Jesus was so great that they started killing His followers without permission from the Roman government.

Meanwhile we see that Judas felt guilty when he saw that Jesus was condemned. 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 felt guilty when he saw that Jesus was condemned. In the previous topic we said that Peter had true repentance while Judas had false repentance. Here we see that the verse says that Judas was remorseful.

In 2 Corinthians 7:8-10 we read, “For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.” In these verses, we see that Paul did not rejoice because the Corinthians were made sorry. Instead, he rejoiced because their sorrow led to repentance. Here we see that there is a clear difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow.

Godly sorrow is defined in 1 Thessalonians 1:9 where we read, “For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” In this verse, we see that godly sorrow involves a turning from idols (or sin) and a turning to God. That kind of turning is true repentance. In contrast, we see that Judas felt remorse or guilt. There is no turning to God or confession of sin to God. Instead, Judas repented himself (felt guilty within himself) and confessed his sin to the chief priests and elders. No priests or elders can forgive sin because they are all sinners. John 8:7-9 says, “So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.’ And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard *it*, being convicted by *their* conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest *even* to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.” All the religious leaders present that day were convicted by their own sins.

In contrast, Hebrews 4:14-16 says, “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Jesus is the only High Priest who did not sin. He is the only One that is able to enter into the presence of God and make intercession for us. Hebrews 9:27-28 adds, “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” Every priest throughout history has either died or will die if he is still alive. Only Christ rose from the dead because the Father was satisfied with the payment that He made for our sins.

When Judas tried to confess his sin of betraying innocent blood to the chief priests and elders, the only thing that they could say was, “What *is that* to us? You see *to it!*” Judas now had no way that he could get rid of his guilt because he was unwilling to go directly to Jesus. Jesus had said just a few hours earlier in John 14:6, “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” Although Judas had already left the upper room when Jesus made this statement, Jesus made it very clear that He is the only One who can come to the Father on behalf of anyone. Judas knew that there was no way for him to get rid of his guilt. As a result, he threw the thirty pieces of silver down in the temple and went out and hanged himself.

That created a new problem for the chief priests. Matthew 27:6-10 says, “But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.’” And they consulted together and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, ‘And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter’s field, as the LORD directed me.’” The chief priests had to admit that the money paid to Judas was the price of blood.

We see that the chief priests had to admit their own guilt to one another. Here we see one of the many consequences of all sin. In Genesis 3:10 Adam said to God, “So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’” Here we see that Adam was immediately filled with fear, guilt and shame when he committed the first sin. In addition, Adam also experienced separation from God and tried to blame God and Eve for his sin. Those five things – fear, guilt, shame, separation from God and blame – controlled the chief priests and caused them to do what they did to Jesus. Now when Judas threw the money back at them they had to admit to themselves that they were guilty.

As a result, the chief priests talked together and decided to buy the potter's field as a place to bury strangers that died in Jerusalem. Because of the fact that this field had been purchased with the money thrown down in the temple by Judas, the field became known as the Field of Blood. The sins of Judas and the chief priests could not be hidden from the people. Moses had reminded the two and a half tribes that stayed on the east of the Jordan River about the importance of keeping their promise. Numbers 32:23 says, "But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out." That statement made to the two and a half tribes was also certainly true for Judas and the chief priests. The name of this field continued to point to their sin.

Their actions also fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy. Zechariah 11:12-13 says, "Then I said to them, 'If it is agreeable to you, give *me* my wages; and if not, refrain.' So they weighed out for my wages thirty *pieces* of silver. And the LORD said to me, 'Throw it to the potter'—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty *pieces* of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter." The chief priests certainly did not understand that they were fulfilling an Old Testament prophecy right down to the smallest detail by sin and their decision of what to do with the money. We saw that when Judas went to the chief priests that he was willing to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Exodus 21:32 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." This verse shows us that thirty shekels of silver was the price that the Jews were to pay to the owner of a slave that was killed by the ox." In that topic we saw that Judas had no more respect for Jesus than he had for a slave since that was the Old Testament price for a slave.

In the same way the chief priests also showed their total contempt for Jesus by offering to pay Judas the price of a slave to betray Jesus. The fact that the field became known as "The Field of Blood" was really a message to all of the people about the contempt of the chief priests for Jesus. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why this action showed the total rejection of Jesus by the chief priests. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this rejection.

Jesus was Examined by Pilate

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children explain why Judas committed suicide and what that action also showed about the chief priests. In our topic today, we will see what happened when Jesus was examined by Pilate.

We saw that in the morning the Jews officially condemned Jesus and then took Him to Pilate. In Matthew 27:11-14 we read, “Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus said to him, ‘*It is as you say.*’ And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, ‘Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?’ But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.” Here we see that the religious leaders had brought Jesus to Pilate because they wanted Pilate to put Jesus to death since the Romans did not allow them to put a prisoner to death.

As Jesus stood before Pilate we see that Pilate asked Jesus the question, “Are You the King of the Jews?” John 18:34-35 says, “Jesus answered him, ‘Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?’ Pilate answered, ‘Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?’” Here we see that Jesus chose to make it clear that this was a charge that was being made by the Jews. Jesus gave a very simple answer when He said, “*It is as you say.*” Jesus did not try to deny who He was. However, then John tells us that Jesus went on to explain what it meant for Him to be the King of the Jews.

John 18:36-38 says, “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.’ Pilate said to Him, ‘What is truth?’ And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, ‘I find no fault in Him at all.’” Jesus explained that the kingdom that He had was not a worldly kingdom.

Then we see that Jesus explained why He came into the world. Jesus explained that He came into the world to bear witness to the truth. Then Jesus explained who the people were that are a part of His kingdom. Jesus said that all those who are followers of truth hear His voice. Suddenly this raised a question in the mind of Pilate. He did not know how to be a follower of truth because He did not know what truth is. As a result, Pilate asked the question, “What is truth?” Since Jesus is the One who is truth, we see that He did not even give any answer when the chief priests and other religious leaders made false accusations against Jesus. Pilate pointed out the fact that the religious leaders were making many charges against Jesus. Jesus did not even bother to answer the charges that were being made against Him. This caused Pilate to be filled with amazement. It caused Pilate to realize that the charges were all false. That is why Pilate said in the last part of John 18:38, “I find no fault in Him at all.” Pilate repeated this same phrase two more times in John 19:4 and 19:6.

However Pilate was controlled by fear of the Jews and did not do what He knew was the right thing to do. As a result, he tried to shift the decision from himself to the Jewish religious leaders. Matthew 27:15-18 says, “Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner

called Barabbas. 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?’ For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.” As a result, we see that Pilate decided to give the religious leaders a choice.

One of the criminals that Pilate was planning to crucify that day was a notorious prisoner by the name of Barabbas. Luke 23:18-19 says, “And they all cried out at once, saying, ‘Away with this *Man*, and release to us Barabbas’— who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder.” Pilate may have thought that the religious leaders would certainly not want a murderer released and given his freedom so that he would be free to kill others. What he did not understand is that the religious leaders were just as evil as Barabbas. They had already decided to get Pilate to murder Jesus so they were choosing to free someone with the same evil attitudes.

We see that the religious leaders chose to free a murderer in order to kill Jesus. Pilate knew that choice was due to envy. We see that Pilate understood that Jesus was innocent and that the religious leaders wanted to murder Him because of the fact that their hearts were controlled by envy. Romans 1:29 says, “Being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers.” Galatians 5:19-21 says, “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” In both of these passages on the works of the flesh we see that envy is followed by murder. The passages make it clear that those who practice such sins will not inherit the kingdom of God. The religious leaders were making it very clear by their choices that they were religious but had hearts filled with evil.

Pilate knew that the right thing to do was to release Jesus because he knew that Jesus was innocent. However, Pilate was controlled by fear of the religious leaders. He knew that they would complain to the Roman emperor and he would lose his position of political power if he chose to release Jesus. Pilate was actually in bondage to Satan. Hebrews 2:14-15 says, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” This verse points out the fact that those who are controlled by Satan and fear are living in bondage.

Meanwhile, Pilate also received a message from his wife. Matthew 27:19-21 says, “While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, ‘Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.’ But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, ‘Which of the two do you want me to release to you?’ They said, ‘Barabbas!’” Pilate received a message while he was sitting on the judgment seat. This was the throne from which Pilate would make his official decision. We see that the wife of Pilate gave him a warning not to make a judgment against Jesus because he was a just man.

This was actually a warning not to act out of fear. The word translated “just man” means one who is righteous. A just or righteous person is one who has a right relationship with God because he or she is without sin. Once Adam sinned no one other than Jesus has been righteous in himself. When we come to God in repentance and place our faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, we have His righteousness placed to our account. In 2 Corinthians 5:21

we read, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Christ became sin for us so that we can now stand in the righteousness of Christ.

The wife of Pilate said that she had suffered many things that day in a dream because of Jesus. The word translated ‘suffered’ is used most commonly to speak of the sufferings of Jesus or the sufferings of His followers. The first use of this word in the New Testament is found in Matthew 16:21 where Jesus told the disciples, “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.” Then 1 Peter 2:19-21 says, “For this *is* commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.” The wife of Pilate must have experienced a very terrible dream to use this word.

However, Pilate did not listen to this warning by his wife because of his fear of the religious leaders. We also see the tremendous envy and hatred of the chief priests and elders caused them to start demanding the release of Barabbas and the destruction of Jesus. Mark 15:11 says, “But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them.” The chief priests were willing to do anything to maintain their power and control. Pilate did what he did to satisfy the chief priests and the multitude. Mark 15:15 says, “So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged *Him*, to be crucified.” The chief priests and elders got what they wanted that day but they will experience the consequences that will last for an eternity. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others that sin may give pleasure for a short time but sin will also give consequences that will be eternal for all those who do not come to Christ in repentance and faith. The religious leaders and Pilate made choices that day that had eternal consequences for their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain that sin brings temporary pleasure but eternal consequences.

Jesus was Condemned by Pilate

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why those who condemned Jesus to death received temporary pleasure for their sin but reaped eternal consequences that will last for eternity. In our topic today, we will see that Jesus was condemned by Pilate even though he declared Jesus innocent.

In the previous topic we saw that the religious leaders had asked Pilate to release Barabbas. Matthew 27:22-24 says, "Pilate said to them, 'What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said to him, 'Let Him be crucified!' Then the governor said, 'Why, what evil has He done?' But they cried out all the more, saying, 'Let Him be crucified!' When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather *that* a tumult was rising, he took water and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see *to it*.'" Here we see why the religious leaders had asked for Barabbas to be released. They had already secretly condemned Jesus to death and now they wanted Pilate to carry out their plan by crucifying Jesus.

Pilate asked the question, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" The word translated "Christ" means the Messiah, the Son of God or the Anointed One. By the use of this title Pilate made it clear that he knew why the religious leaders wanted to put Jesus to death. He knew that Jesus was a threat to their power and control over the people. The multitude immediately answered, "Let Him be crucified!" Jesus had said to Nicodemus three years earlier in John 3:14, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Just a few days earlier Jesus had said in John 12:32-33, "'And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself.' This He said, signifying by what death He would die." In their hatred these religious leaders were now fulfilling what Jesus had said in advance.

Pilate then asked the question, "Why, what evil has He done?" The religious leaders did not answer the question of Pilate. Instead, they just cried out even more, "Let Him be crucified!" The word translated "tumult" means an uproar of riotous persons or a breach of public order. When Pilate saw that a riot was about to start, he quickly decided to give the crowd what they wanted even though he knew that he would be killing an innocent person. Then Pilate tried to clear himself of guilt in the crucifixion of Jesus. We read that he, "Took water and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see *to it*.'" Pilate was not innocent even though he washed his hands. Every person in the world including Pilate was guilty that day because it was our sins for which Jesus died that day. However, no one will be personally charged for the sins that were committed that day. Those sins have been forgiven. Luke 23:34a says, "Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.'" Here we see that as Jesus hung on the cross He asked the Father to forgive the sins of Pilate, the religious leaders, the soldiers and everyone else involved that day for the sins that they committed that day. As a result, those specific sins will not be held against anyone involved that day. Even though no one will be charged with those specific sins, the people involved that day will never be able to get rid of their guilt. Pilate could not get rid of his guilt by washing his hands.

We go on to read how the religious leaders and the rest of the multitude responded to the words that Pilate spoke. Matthew 27:25-26 says, "And all the people answered and said, 'His blood *be* on us and on our children.' Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *Him* to be crucified." Here we see that the whole multitude there that

morning including the religious leaders said that the blood of Jesus would be on them and their children. However, the religious leaders later tried to avoid taking the responsibility for the words that they spoke that day. Acts 5:27-28 says, “And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, ‘Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!’” Here we see that the high priest tried to deny what he and the other religious leaders had told Pilate. Instead, we see that he tried to accuse the apostles of bringing the blood of Jesus on them. This is an indication that he was already trying to deny the guilt he felt.

Pilate tried one other way to satisfy the crowd. In Luke 23:22 we read, “Then he said to them the third time, ‘Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let *Him* go.’” Once the multitude said that the blood of Jesus would be on them and their children Pilate was ready to do exactly what the multitude requested because he thought that he would be free from any guilt. Pilate immediately released Barabbas to the religious leaders. Then Pilate showed his own attitude toward Jesus by what he did next. We read that he told the soldiers to scourge Jesus before they crucified Him. The whip used for a scourge had several pieces of leather with a sharp piece of bone or metal on the end of each piece of leather. As a result, a severe scourging could even kill a prisoner. Here Pilate showed his own contempt for Jesus by giving the command to scourge Jesus before he crucified him.

The soldiers also showed their contempt for Jesus by what they did. Matthew 27:27-32 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. Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross.” The Praetorium was the Roman headquarters in the city of Jerusalem. When Herod the Great was the Roman ruler in the city of Jerusalem he had built a very beautiful and expensive palace. This was the place that the Roman governors used as their headquarters when they were in Jerusalem.

The Roman soldiers then gathered the whole Roman garrison around Jesus. This was a total of about 600 Roman soldiers. They chose to show their contempt for Jesus by mocking him. They took his clothes off of him and put a bright red robe on him. This was usually the color of the robe of a ruler. Many times a ruler would have a crown on his head during the time that he was seated on a throne. As a result, the soldiers made him a crown to put on his head. However, they made a crown of thorns and not a crown of beauty. Many of the thorns in that area are long and sharp like needles. As a result, these thorns were able to cause serious injuries to the head and face of a person. This was followed by putting a reed in His hand. Here we see that they were making Jesus look like He was a ruler. However, they had no plans to recognize Him as a ruler.

Instead, the soldiers decided that was the best way for them to mock Jesus. We see that they got down on their knees and began to say, “Hail, King of the Jews!” The soldiers then began to spit on Jesus to show their contempt. After doing this for a short time, the soldiers took the reed from the hand of Jesus and used that reed to strike Jesus on the head. This probably drove some of the sharp thorns into the head of Jesus. Once they had finished mocking Jesus, they took off the scarlet robe and then placed His clothes on Him again. Then the soldiers led Jesus away to be crucified.

Normally a prisoner was forced to carry his own cross to the place where he was going to be crucified. However, if the prisoner was in a weakened condition, the soldiers were allowed to make someone else carry the cross to the place of crucifixion. Jesus had been scourged by the Roman soldiers. This probably caused Him to lose a large amount of blood. As a result, Jesus was in a very weak physical condition. Isaiah 53:5 says, "But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." This verse reminds us that Jesus experienced much physical suffering during the time that He was suffering in our place and for our sins. Although Jesus experienced all of this suffering and physical weakness, He did not sin. That is why Hebrews 4:15 says, "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin." That is why He could pay for our sins.

We learn more about the man that was forced to carry the cross of Jesus. Mark 15:21 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." Cyrene was a city in North Africa. This was the city from which this man came. That city is several hundred miles from Jerusalem which means this man was a visitor to the area of Jerusalem. We see that Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus. The fact that the names of his two sons are mentioned would be an indication that at least part of the people who originally received the book of Mark were familiar with these two sons. It may be that the Lord used this event in the life of Simon to draw his entire family to Christ for salvation. If so, this may be the Rufus that is mentioned in Romans 16:13.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand and explain why the Jewish religious leaders, Pilate and the Roman soldiers all showed their contempt for Jesus by the choices that they made that day. At the same time we also want to help them learn to explain that the Lord worked through every event that happened that day to change and transform the lives of those who became His followers. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.

Jesus was Crucified

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why the Jewish religious leaders, Pilate and the soldiers all showed their contempt for Jesus by the choices that they made that day. In this topic, we will learn about some of the events that happened while Jesus was on the cross.

In Matthew 27:33-35 we read, “And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted *it*, He would not drink. Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: ‘They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.’” We see that the place where Jesus was crucified is described. The place was called Golgotha which means, Place of a Skull. It may have been given that name because it was the side of the hill that looked like the skull of a person. The name Calvary also means “skull.” 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.” As a result, both names that are used for the place mean skull.

We see that Jesus was given wine mixed with gall to drink. Mark 15:23 says, “Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take *it*.” In this verse, we see that the gall is called myrrh. The word “gall” means something bitter. Myrrh was a drug that would lessen the pain and dull the senses. As a result, when Jesus tasted the mixture He refused to drink it. Here we see that Jesus was focused on what He had come to do as He paid the penalty for our sins. He also had seven things that He would say from the cross as a part of His ministry on the cross. As a result, He did not want to drink anything that would hinder that ministry. This is a great example for our own ministry.

We see that the soldiers placed Jesus on the cross and then divided His clothes as they watched Him. John 19:23-24 says, “Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,’ that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: ‘They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.’ Therefore the soldiers did these things.” The soldiers were allowed to have the clothes of those that they crucified as a bonus for this particular kind of duty. The soldiers divided most of the clothing into four parts so that each soldier could have a part. However, the coat of Jesus was woven without a seam so that it was one complete piece of material. That gave the coat more value. As a result, the soldiers decided to cast lots to see which one of them would receive the coat. They did not realize that they were fulfilling the words of Psalm 22:18.

Matthew 27:36-40 says, “Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’” It was the responsibility of the soldiers to watch until the person being crucified died. They also had another responsibility. They were to put a sign over the head of a person being crucified listing the crimes for which he was being crucified. Jesus had committed no crime and so Pilate had the soldiers write the charge that the religious leaders brought against Jesus.

We see that the religious leaders were not happy with the words that Pilate had written. John 19:19-22 says, “Now Pilate wrote a title and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, *and* Latin. Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, ‘Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘He said, ‘I am the King of the Jews.’” Pilate answered, “‘What I have written, I have written.’” Pilate had decided to please the Jews and put Jesus to death because of fear. However, Pilate wanted to try and show the Jews that he was the one still in control by refusing to change the wording on the sign.

Meanwhile, there were also two robbers that were crucified with Jesus. We see that Jesus was placed between these two other men so that there was one cross on His right side and the other on His left. These two men heard what those who were mocking Jesus were saying to Jesus and later began to mock Jesus as well. We see that those who were walking by the place where Jesus was being crucified blasphemed Jesus. The word translated “blasphemed” means to speak evil of, to revile or to blaspheme. The word translated “wagging” means to shake from side or side or to move. One of the ways that they blasphemed Jesus was to say, “You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save Yourself!” Here we see that they did not understand what Jesus had said. John 2:19 says, “Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” Then John 2:21-22 adds, “But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 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.” Here we see that those walking by the cross changed the words to accuse Jesus of destroying the temple. Then they told Him to prove who He was by doing a miracle.

However, their greatest blasphemy was the second statement, “If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” Those who made this blasphemy just showed that they were imitating their leader, Satan. Matthew 4:3 says, “Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’” Satan first questioned the fact that Jesus is God and then followed that question by tell Jesus to prove it by performing a miracle. That is exactly what those who were passing by the cross were doing here. In John 6:38 Jesus said, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” In both cases Jesus could have proved He was God by doing a miracle. However, He came to do the will of the Father and it was the will of the Father that Jesus die on the cross in our place and for our sins.

We see that the religious leaders also came to the cross to mock Jesus. Matthew 27:41-44 says, “Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.” In this verse, we see that the chief priests, the scribes and the elders all came to watch Jesus die on the cross. Their hatred for Jesus caused them to want to come and see Him die.

However, they came to do more than just watch Jesus die. We see that they also came to mock and blaspheme Jesus. Even in their blasphemy the religious leaders were forced to admit that Jesus was able to do miracles that it was impossible for them to do. Their first statement was, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save.” The word translated “saved” means to rescue from destruction, to save from suffering or to save from eternal judgment. In Mark 5:34 we see that this word is used when Jesus healed a woman from an infirmity that had lasted for twelve years and no doctor was able to heal. Mark 5:34 says, “And He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.’” However, Jesus came to save

people from eternal judgment. John 3:17 says, “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” Luke 19:10 adds, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Jesus did save others both physically and also spiritually. In addition, He had the power to save Himself if He so chose.

Second, the religious leaders said, “If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. This statement makes it clear that the religious leaders did not recognize Jesus as the King of Israel. However, the religious leaders showed by their actions just three days later that they would not have believed Christ if He would have come down from the cross. These same religious leaders in Matthew 28:11-13 said, “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.’” Here we see that they did not believe when they heard Jesus rose from the dead.

Third, the religious leaders said, “He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” Just a few days earlier John 12:28 tells us, Jesus had said, “‘Father, glorify Your name.’ Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, ‘I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again.’” The religious leaders were unwilling to believe that Jesus is God. We see that the mocking of the religious leaders also caused the two robbers to also mock Jesus. However, one of them later repented. Luke 23:42-43 says, “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.’” We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain how the religious leaders and many others showed their contempt for Jesus. At the same time we want to help them learn to explain that those who repented such as the one thief received forgiveness of sins and eternal life even at the last moment. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.

Jesus Died for Our Sins

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain how the religious leaders and many others showed their contempt for Jesus. We also saw that we want to show that Jesus will forgive anyone regardless of their past. In this topic, we will see that Jesus died for our sins.

We see that Jesus was forsaken by the Father during the time that our sins and the sins of the whole world were placed on Him. Matthew 27:45-48 says, “Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’ Some of those who stood there, when they heard *that*, said, ‘This Man is calling for Elijah!’ Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled *it* with sour wine and put *it* on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.” These verses remind us that God the Father can never look on sin with favor. As a result, during the time that Jesus was bearing our sins we see that the Father covered the whole land with darkness even though it was the middle of the day.

We see that our sins were placed on Jesus from the sixth hour until the ninth hour. Finally as this time was coming to a close Jesus cried out with a loud voice. The very fact that Jesus could cry out with a loud voice at this time shows that Jesus was still strong even during the time that He was forsaken by the Father. This is also a reminder that no one took the life of Jesus from Him but instead He willingly gave up His life to pay for our sins. He came to do the will of the Father. Hebrews 10:5-7 says, “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 fulfilled the will of the Father even though it meant broken fellowship and separation from the Father.

That broken fellowship is why Jesus cried, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” We see that Jesus quoted this statement from Psalm 22:1 which says, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning?” We see that Christ was forsaken so that we could be forgiven. He was forsaken so that we can enjoy fellowship with the Father. Isaiah 53:10-11 says, “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. He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.” The Father was satisfied with the payment that Jesus made for our sins.

Some of those who were standing near the cross did not understand when Jesus cried out in the darkness. They thought that Jesus was calling for Elijah. As a result, one of those present ran to get Jesus some of the sour wine that He had earlier rejected. Matthew 27:34 says, “They gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted *it*, He would not drink.” In that verse we saw that Jesus did not want to lessen the pain or dull His senses. Here Matthew 27:49-53 says, “The rest said, ‘Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.’ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.” John 19:30 says, “So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is

finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.” Jesus had finished paying the penalty for our sins. There was no longer any need to suffer more. He then willingly gave up His spirit.

We see that five things happened after Jesus voluntarily gave up His spirit. First, we see that the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. The purpose of that veil is explained in Exodus 26:33 where we read, “And you shall hang the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring the ark of the Testimony in there, behind the veil. The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy *place* and the Most Holy.” Here we see that the veil separated man from God. The high priest could only go into the Most Holy place one day each year and place blood on the mercy seat until the blood of Jesus could take away sin. In contrast, Hebrews 10:18-22 says, “Now where there is remission of these, *there is* no longer an offering for sin. Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” These verses show us that Jesus became our sacrifice once for all as Hebrews 10:10-14 also says.

Second, we see that the earth quaked. This was the first of two earthquakes. The second is recorded in Matthew 28:2 where we read, “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.” The first earthquake announced the death of Jesus. The great earthquake announced the resurrection of Jesus. Third, we see that the rocks were split. Fourth, we see that the graves were opened. The third and fourth things that happened were the result of the first earthquake. However, the graves being opened prepared the way for the final thing that happened after the great earthquake.

Fifth, after the resurrection, we see an event happened that showed the power of the resurrection to many people in Jerusalem. Matthew 27:22b-23 says, “And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.” Notice that the word many is used twice in these verses. Many bodies of saints were raised after the resurrection. Then these saints appeared to many people living in Jerusalem. The Lord may have used this appearance to many to prepare people for the great response on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:41 says, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.” The three thousand may have included many that saw these resurrected saints after the resurrection of Christ. Those raised experienced an early rapture which all Christians will experience when Christ comes to take us to heaven in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

The earthquake and the other things that happened that day also had a great impact on the centurion and the other soldiers that were at the cross. Matthew 27:54-56 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!” And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.” We see that when the centurion and the other soldiers who were guarding Jesus felt the earthquake and saw the other things that were happening, they were filled with great fear.

As Roman soldiers they had seen many things happen. However, this was different from anything that had happened in their past. They had never seen a person on a cross ask the Father to forgive those who had so mistreated Him. The darkness in the middle of the day for three hours was also something they had never experienced. They had seen the darkness and

heard Jesus give that cry of victory, “It is finished.” They had also seen Him commit His spirit to the Father and then bow His head and die. This was followed by the earthquake that was so powerful that the rocks were split. The Roman soldiers chose to respond in a totally different way than the religious leaders. They responded by recognizing that Jesus truly was the Son of God. This is an example of the fact that the Father can work through any circumstance to draw people to Christ.

We also see the response of many others who truly followed Jesus. We see that there were many women from Galilee who had ministered to Jesus when He was in Galilee. The ministry of many of these women is recorded in Luke 8:1-3 where we read, “Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve *were* with Him, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance.” Here we see that many women from Galilee gave their money to Jesus and the twelve to provide what they needed as they traveled throughout Galilee bringing the good news about the kingdom of God. These women all watched Jesus from a distance.

We see that the women who provided finances for Jesus and the disciples to share the good news came from many backgrounds. Mary Magdalene had been possessed by seven demons and Jesus had cast the demons out of her. Joanna was the wife of the man who handled the financial affairs of Herod. Some of these women were the mothers of disciples of Jesus. We know nothing about most of the women who provided from what they had to help Jesus and His disciples. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the very important ministry that these women had as they served Jesus by providing money for Jesus and the disciples. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn about the many people that helped Jesus in His ministry.

Jesus was Buried in a Tomb

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that there were many who followed Jesus even though the religious leaders rejected Him. In our topic today, we will learn that there were also some of the rich and some of the religious leaders who loved and followed Jesus.

Matthew 27:57-61 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. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.” Joseph of Arimathea is mentioned in each of the four Gospels and each one teaches us something about Joseph. Here we see that he was a rich man that had also become a disciple of Jesus.

Mark 15:43 says, “Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.” Here we see that Joseph was a prominent council member (the Sanhedrin) and had become a disciple of Jesus. 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.” Luke mentions several things about the character of Joseph. He was a good and just man. He had not consented to the decision and deed of the Sanhedrin. He was waiting for the kingdom of God.

John 19:38-40 says, “After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave *him* permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. 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 verses tell us that Joseph had been a secret disciple because of fear. However, at this point we see that he became a bold follower of Jesus. We also see that there was a second member of the Sanhedrin that publicly revealed that he was also a disciple of Jesus. Nicodemus had secretly talked alone with Jesus in John 3 early in the public ministry of Jesus. Here we see that he joined Joseph to prepare the body of Jesus for burial.

Luke also tells us one additional detail about the place where Jesus was buried. Luke 23:53 says, “Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb *that was* hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before.” We see that this was a special burial place that had been hewn out of the rock. This meant that someone had worked for many weeks or even months to create this tomb in the rock. We saw that Joseph was a rich man. He had probably paid someone to chip away the rock until there was a tomb large enough for Joseph and his family to be buried when they died. This tomb had not yet been used because none of his family had died yet. However, this tomb also fulfilled another Old Testament prophecy. 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.” Jesus died between two criminals but He was buried in the tomb of a rich man fulfilling every detail of this prophecy.

The religious leaders had heard Jesus say that He was going to rise from the dead. As a result,

Matthew 27:62-64 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.” Jesus had said several times to the disciples that He was going to rise from the dead on the third day. The disciples did not really understand what Jesus meant until after the resurrection. However, here we see that the religious leaders had also heard what Jesus said and they were fearful that Jesus would rise from the dead.

That is why the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together the next day to go and talk to Pilate. They told Pilate that they remembered what Jesus had said while He was still alive. They called Jesus a deceiver but their fear was very strong. They were afraid that what Jesus had said would happen because everything else that Jesus had said during the previous three years had happened just exactly as He had said. As a result, they really wanted these guards to make sure that the tomb would not be opened. The chief priests and Pharisees told Pilate that they were afraid that the disciples might come by night and steal the body from the tomb. The chief priests said that then the disciples would say to the people that Jesus had risen from the dead. Again we see that the religious leaders were controlled by fear.

The religious leaders said that if such a deception occurred that the last deception would be worse than the first. The word translated “the first” means the first in time or place or the first in rank. They said that everything that Jesus had done including raising people from the dead was a deception. Here they said that if the disciples could steal the body and claim that Jesus had risen from the dead that one thing would be a greater deception than all of the things that Jesus had previously done. They were right about the impact of the resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:19-20 says, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” That is why the Father provided more than five hundred people with the opportunity to see Christ after His resurrection.

The religious leaders called Jesus a deceiver but we see that they were the ones who became the real deceivers when Jesus rose from the dead. Matthew 28:11-15 says, “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.’ And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.’ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.” Here we see that the religious leaders were willing to pay the soldiers a large amount of money to deny that the resurrection had happened. They also promised to protect the soldiers so that Pilate would not kill them.

Here we see that the religious leaders requested that Pilate send soldiers to guard the tomb until after the third day. We see the response of Pilate to their request. Matthew 27:65-66 says, “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.” A Roman guard was made up of four to sixteen soldiers. Each group of four soldiers would stand with their backs to each other and by doing this were able to hold off a much larger army while they also protected one another. As a result, sixteen soldiers could stand off a very large army.

However, Pilate said something very unusual to the religious leaders when he said, “Go your way, make *it* as secure as you know how.” Pilate had heard enough about what Jesus had done during the previous three years as well as hearing Jesus say to Pilate directly that His kingdom

was not of this world to know that Jesus was no ordinary man. John 19:7-8 says, “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.’ Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid.” Pilate was probably not at all sure that the religious leaders could make the tomb secure. In spite of that fact he gave them the soldiers that they had requested.

We see what the religious leaders did to make the tomb secure. They set a seal on the rock. The word translated “seal” to set a seal or a mark on an object so that it cannot be changed or moved. Then they set the guard in place so that they could watch to make certain that no one broke that seal and tried to move the rock. The only problem for them was the fact that God was the One in control. Matthew 28:1-4 says, “Now after the Sabbath, as the first *day* of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. 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*.” The angel did not roll back the stone to let Jesus out of the tomb but rolled the stone back so that everyone could see that Jesus was not in the tomb but had risen from the dead.

The religious leaders feared the resurrection. Pilate was filled with fear because he realized that Jesus was no ordinary man. The disciples had no thought of stealing the body because they were afraid of the Jewish religious leaders. Everything was ready for the greatest event in the history of the world, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others why the resurrection is so important to the history of the world. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain the importance of the resurrection.

Jesus Rose from the Dead

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why the resurrection is so important. In this topic and the next, we will learn how to help our children explain what the Word of God teaches about the resurrection so that they can explain the resurrection from the Word of God.

Matthew 28:1-4 says, “Now after the Sabbath, as the first *day* of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. 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*.” The Sabbath lasted from sundown on Friday night to sundown on Saturday night. Here we see that this chapter began as the day began to dawn which means it was very early on Sunday morning. It was at this time that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. John 19:25 says, “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.” Mary, the wife of Clopas is the same Mary mentioned in Matthew 27:56 where we read, “Among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.” This Mary is the mother of James known as James the Less.

As these three women were going to the tomb we see that there was a great earthquake. At the same time an angel of the Lord came down from heaven. This angel was not concerned about the seal that the chief priests and Pharisees had placed on the tomb. The angel just rolled the stone away from the entrance to the tomb and sat on the stone. We are also given a description of the angel. The appearance of the angel was as bright as the lightning. The clothing of the angel was as white as snow. These verses make it very clear that the angel was very bright. The Roman soldiers knew how to fight against armies of people or soldiers that included many more people than the Romans. However, this was not a human army. This was an angel and the Roman soldiers were so fearful that they could not even think about trying to stop the angel from rolling the stone away from the tomb. We see that the guards became so fearful that they began to shake with fear. Then they became like dead men.

By the time the women arrived at the tomb the angel had moved inside the tomb. Mark 16:3-5 says, “And they said among themselves, ‘Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?’ 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.” We see in these verses that the angel was now sitting inside the tomb on the right side. The angel began to speak to the women to tell them what had happened.

Matthew 28:5-8 says, “But the angel answered and said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.’ So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.” We see that the first thing that the angel told the women was to not be afraid. These were common words to those who were followers of the Lord. Luke 1:13 says, “But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.’” Luke 1:30 says, “Then the

angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.’” Luke 2:9-10 adds, “And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.’”

Once the angel told the women to not be afraid, the angel then said that he knew why the women were at the tomb. The angel said that he knew that the women were looking for Jesus who had been crucified. Then the angel told the women something that sounded amazing to them. The angel said, “He is not here; for He is risen.” Even though Jesus had said that He would rise again on the third day, this message came as a great surprise to the women. A little later Mary Magdalene stood weeping outside the tomb. Two angels inside the tomb asked her why she was weeping. John 20:13b gives her answer as she said, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.” Mary did not believe until Jesus personally called her by name. A few minutes later John 20:16-17 says, “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.’”

The angel also told the women, “Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.” Here we see that the angel told the women to look but also told the women to take the message of the resurrection to the disciples. In addition, they were to tell the disciples that Jesus would meet them in Galilee. Jesus had told the disciples at the Last Supper in Matthew 26:32, “But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.” This was a reminder to the disciples. However, we see that the disciples did not go to Galilee for more than a week after the resurrection. John 20:26 says, “And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” This was the second appearance of Jesus to the disciples and they had still not begun the trip to Galilee.

The women did follow the instructions that the angel gave to them at the tomb. We read that they quickly left the tomb. Their hearts were filled with both fear and great joy. This was such good news that they ran to tell the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead. This is still a message that is such good news that everyone needs to hear this message today. That is why it was a part of most of the recorded messages of the apostles and others in the book of Acts. Acts 1:21-22 says, “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” This was the message of Peter to the 120 meeting in the upper room before the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Peter shared this same message with the religious leaders when they tried to stop the apostles from preaching about Jesus and his death and resurrection. Acts 5:29-32 says, “But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.’” Paul told Agrippa and Festus that this message was the same message he preached. Acts 26:22-23 says, “Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come— that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” Here we see that Paul said that He was being obedient to the Lord by sharing this message.

Matthew 28:9-10 goes on to say, “And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, ‘Rejoice!’ So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. Go *and* tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.’” Here we see that Jesus met the women as they went to tell the disciples. The word translated “rejoice” means to be glad or to rejoice exceedingly. Happiness is the response of people to what is happening around them and can quickly change from happiness to sadness. In contrast, joy is what is happening within our lives because we are yielding our lives to the Lord. This is illustrated in Acts 5:41 where we read, “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.”

Here we see that the joy that developed in the hearts of these women immediately caused them to worship Jesus. We see that they came and held Jesus by the feet and worshipped Him. In order to hold the feet of Jesus the women had to get down on their knees in front of Him. As a result, we see that they held His feet as they worshiped Him. Jesus said in John 4:23-24, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” We worship the Father in our hearts as we recognize the greatness of His love in sending His Son to die for our sins. Then Jesus gave the women the same instructions that the angel had given them when He said, “Go *and* tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.” Here we see that both the angel and Jesus gave very clear instructions.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to worship God and recognize the greatness of His love in sending His Son to die for our sins and rise again for our justification. Truly we can rejoice together as Christians because of the fact that Christ is indeed risen from the dead. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children grow in their understanding of what it means to worship the Lord.

Jesus Commissioned His Disciples

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to worship the Father for sending His Son to die for our sins and show that He was satisfied by raising Jesus from the dead. In this topic, we will learn about the commission that Jesus gave to the disciples and all followers as He met on the mountain in Galilee with the disciples after His resurrection.

We saw in the last topic that the Roman soldiers became like dead men when the angel came and rolled the stone from the door of the tomb. Matthew 28:11-15 says, “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.’ ’ And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.’ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.” The Roman soldiers really had no choice but to tell the chief priests exactly what had happened. They could face death for failing to guard the tomb.

Once the chief priests heard that Jesus was risen they had to decide what to do. They immediately called the Sanhedrin together to decide how to respond to the resurrection. We see that the chief priests and elders decided to pay a large amount of money to the soldiers to get them to tell a lie in order to try and deny the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead. The religious leaders paid the soldiers a large amount of money to say, “His disciples came at night and stole Him *away* while we slept.” The religious leaders also gave the soldiers a promise, “If this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.” The promise meant more to the soldiers than the money.

A Roman soldier who went to sleep while guarding someone or something was put to death. The soldiers all knew that they would die if Pilate heard that they had gone to sleep while guarding the tomb. This is illustrated in Acts 12:18-19 where we read, “Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that *they* should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed *there*.” Herod had become the governor by the time of Acts 12 and we see that he ordered the death of all of the soldiers guarding the prison when Peter escaped.

The soldiers faced death either way so they had to choose to tell the lie that the religious leaders wanted them to tell because their only hope of survival was the promise of the religious leaders. In addition, they would receive a large amount of money for telling that lie. However, the story the religious leaders suggested made no sense. First, all of the soldiers would not go to sleep since they knew that meant death. Second, how could they know what happened if they were asleep. They chose to take the money and tell the lie. We see that among the unbelieving Jews this story continued to be repeated even at the time that the book of Acts was written.

Matthew 28:16-18 says, “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. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” We saw in the last topic that it was more than a week before the disciples followed the instructions to go to Galilee. However, we see that they did go to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus told them to go. We do not know for sure if the events at the Sea

of Galilee recorded in John 21 happened before or after they went to the mountain. However, it is possible that they went fishing first. John 21:15 says, “So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs.’” The very fact that Jesus asked Peter if he loved Jesus more than he loved the fish might indicate that they went fishing first.

The time that Jesus spent on the mountain in Galilee probably included more than just the eleven. 1 Corinthians 15:6 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.” It is very possible that the meeting on the mountain included this group of more than five hundred followers. We see that some who saw Jesus on the mountain doubted until they saw Jesus. The eleven had their doubts answered while they were still in Jerusalem. John 20:25-28 says, “The other disciples therefore said to him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ So he said to them, ‘Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.’ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace to you!’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ And Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’” The eleven had their doubts settled in Jerusalem.

We see that those on the mountain worshiped Jesus. Those who doubted had their doubts turned to belief when they saw Jesus on the mountain. As a result, the five hundred all became witnesses of the resurrection. Jesus gave what has become known as the Great Commission to those who were gathered on the mountain. However, before giving the commission, Jesus reminded those present of the authority that the Father had given to Him. Jesus said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. The word translated “authority” means the power of choice, authority or rule of government. Here we see that the Father has given Jesus all power to rule over everything that is in heaven or earth. Colossians 1:15-16 is speaking about Jesus when those verses say, “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” Christ is the Creator who has been given authority over all things.

Based on that authority given to Him by the Father, Jesus went on to say in Matthew 28:19-20, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen.” Here we see that the commission given to the disciples and all future Christians has one command and three participles which tell how to carry out that command. The one command in these final two verses of Matthew is: Make Disciples. We see that we are to make disciples in all nations. The word translated “nations” (*ethnos* is the Greek word from which we get the word *ethnic*) means a multitude of people of the same group. Here we see that disciples are to make more disciples among every ethnic group in the world. Jesus made it clear by this statement that the command is for all future Christians.

The three participles which tell how to carry out that command are going, baptizing and teaching. The first part of verse 19 could be translated, as you are going. In this phrase we see that as Christians we are to be sharing the Gospel with those we come in contact in our daily lives. Jesus then said just before He returned to heaven in Acts 1:8, “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.” To take the Gospel to our Jerusalem (the people we know), we have to yield to the Holy Spirit to cross the barrier of fear. To take the Gospel to our Judaea (the people of our culture we do not know), we have to cross the barrier of making contacts. To take the Gospel to our Samaria (the people of another culture, religion or ethnic group), you have to learn to cross the barrier of understanding another culture, religion or ethnic group. To take the Gospel to the end of the earth (the people of another language), you have to learn how to cross the barrier of another language.

The second participle, baptizing, means that we are to help those who become Christians identify themselves as followers of Christ. We also want to help them to become a part of a local church (family of Christians). The third participle, teaching them to observe (obey) all that I have commanded you, means that we walk alongside all those who become Christians, teach them the Word of God and then show them how to obey it. The word translated “observe” means to carefully guard or to make certain you do it. Here we see that we are to pass on the Word of God to those we are helping become disciples by showing them how to fully obey all that Jesus has commanded. Matthew 13:52 gives us the definition of a disciple when that verse says, “Then He said to them, “Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old.” The word translated “instructed” is the command make disciples. In this verse, we see that a disciple has become the head of a spiritual household (is leading a spiritual family). A disciple has a treasure (the Word of God). A disciple brings out of that treasure new things (he or she is continuing to grow in his understanding of the Word of God). A disciple brings old things out of that treasure (he is able to help other Christians grow in their understanding of the basics of Christianity). We also want to continually remind Christians that Christ is with them.

We see that the book of Matthew concludes by giving every Christian a real purpose in life. We want to show our physical and spiritual children how to Make Disciples by our example as we help them to become reproducing disciples. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to become reproducing disciples.