

The Gospel of Luke

A Study Book by

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The cover photo: "Fishermen on the Sea of Galilee (between ca. 1890 and ca. 1900)."

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I. The Reason For The Gospel of Luke, 1:1-4

Verses 1-2— *Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.*

If Paul did not write Hebrews, Luke wrote more of the New Testament than any other author. His two volumes (Luke and Acts) make up about 28 percent of the New Testament. Luke's gospel was not the first written, but it is unique in that it was written from his personal research rather than as an eyewitness of Jesus' life and ministry. Matthew and Mark were written in the 50s and Luke sometime between 58 and 60. Luke was a Gentile physician (Colossians 4:10-14) from Antioch (according to Eusebius and Jerome), and he seemed to write primarily to Gentiles because there are many unique explanations, which Jews would not require (like, Capernaum, a city of Galilee).



Luke's name is not mentioned in either book, but tradition solidly ascribes him as the author. The only places where his name occurs in the New Testament are in Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; and Philemon 24. Luke does include himself personally with the pronoun "we" in the sections of Acts (16:10-17; 20:5-21; 27:1–28:16) where he seemed to have joined Paul and Silas and Timothy on the second missionary journey. From then on, he seemed to have stayed with, or very close to, Paul the rest of his life. Most of Luke was probably written from Caesarea (or possibly Rome) while Paul was in prison there. Luke was with Paul until the end of Paul's life (2 Timothy 4:11), but we do not know anything about Luke after the death of Paul.

Verses 3-4— *it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.*

Unlike the other gospel writers, Luke stated his method and purpose for writing:

- His method was historical research. He investigated everything carefully from the beginning.
- His purpose was two-fold:
 1. *To write it out ... in consecutive order,* and
 2. *That you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught*

And this was addressed to *Theophilus*, who we can speculate was a public official (because of the title *most excellent*) from Antioch (assuming Luke was from Antioch).

Comments and Applications from Luke 1:1-4

Luke and Acts are filled with historical details. It actually makes them vulnerable in that so much of them can be checked by other sources. It also confirms the inerrancy of these works because there is not one error in any reference, even though it is packed with people, places, and events.

The stated purpose of Luke is to (1) write out the life and ministry of Jesus Christ in chronological order and (2) to make sure Theophilus knew *the exact truth about the things you have been taught*. The apostles and their disciples evangelized by teaching, and they defined Christianity as the exact truth about the things which they taught. This is no religion of fuzzy tolerance and emotional meetings. It is teaching about the truth of what actually happened in the real world.

Questions for Discussion

From the Table of Contents and Luke 1:1-4

1. Luke was accepted as authoritative because
 - A. He was one of the 12 apostles.
 - B. He was an apostle, like Paul and Barnabas and James.
 - C. He was a disciple of an apostle.
 - D. He was a messenger of an apostle.
2. How many of Luke's 24 chapters are not found in the other gospels?
 - A. About 2
 - B. About 5
 - C. About 10
 - D. More than 10
3. True or false? The incident of Jesus teaching in the temple at age 12 is only in Luke.
4. Approximately how much of the New Testament did Luke write?
 - A. Almost 10%
 - B. Almost 20%
 - C. Almost 30%
 - D. Almost 40%
5. Luke was written approximately how many years after Jesus died and rose from the dead?
 - A. 10 years
 - B. 15 years
 - C. 20 years
 - D. 25 years
6. We know Luke wrote this Gospel because
 - A. His name is in the book.
 - B. His name is in the book of Acts.
 - C. Paul said he wrote the book.
 - D. Historical records say he wrote this book.
7. We know Luke was a Gentile physician because
 - A. He said so.
 - B. Paul said so.
 - C. Peter said so.
 - D. Historical records say so.

Answers: (1) C [Luke was not an apostle, he was a disciple of Paul. There is no example of his being a messenger of Paul.] (2) D [Luke 1:5–2:52 and 9:51–19:27 are unique to Luke.] (3) True. (4) C [Luke wrote approximately 28% of the New Testament.] (5) D [if Jesus died in A.D. 33 and Luke was written in A.D. 58.] (6) D. (7) B [Colossians 4:10-14].

II. The Prelude to Jesus' Ministry, 1:5-4:13

Luke Chapter 1:5-80, Miraculous Conceptions

Read Luke 1:5-25, The Conception of John the Baptist

Luke began his account with 21 verses on the birth of John the Baptist. First he told us about John's parents, Zacharias and Elizabeth. They lived during the reign of Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.), and they were both from the priestly line. Therefore, John the Baptist was a Levite priest, so he could have gone to serve at the Temple, but he chose not to. Zacharias was of the division of Abijah (Luke 1:5; cf. 1 Chronicles 24:10), and that line was on duty at the time. This division was one of 24 groups of priests drawn up in David's time (1 Chronicles 24:7-18).

This time, Zacharias was chosen by lot to be the priest who offered the incense. Most commentators believe that because of the large number of priests, this would be the only time in Zacharias' life when he was allowed to perform this task. The angel Gabriel told Zacharias that John would *go as a forerunner before Him [the Messiah] in the spirit and power of Elijah*. The relationship between John and Elijah is a bit mysterious, but it is best explained by Gabriel's statement. John was not Elijah, but he came *in the spirit and power of Elijah*. Because of his unbelief, Zacharias was struck dumb until John was born. So Zacharias was punished for his unbelief and the miraculous judgment came from the angel. Apparently, angels can hand out miraculous punishment.

Read Luke 1:26-45, The Conception of Jesus the Christ

In verse 26, the scene changes. *Now in the sixth month [of Elizabeth's pregnancy] the [same] angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth to a virgin [παρθένον (parthenon) can only mean "virgin," not "young woman"] engaged [literally, betrothed] to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David [from the tribe of Judah] and the virgin's name was Mary*. In verse 33, Mary received two different predictions about her son: (1) *His kingdom will have no end* and (2) *the holy Child shall be called the Son of God*. Mary also received a prediction about her conception: *The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you*. So the Son of God will come via a virgin birth and have an eternal kingdom.

Next, Mary went south to the Judean Wilderness to see Elizabeth. Elizabeth had been told that John would be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb (verse 15). When she saw Mary, John *leaped in her womb*, and Elizabeth herself *was filled with the Holy Spirit* and declared to Mary: *Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!*

Read Luke 1:46-55, The "Magnificat"

This is called the "Magnificat" of Mary, from the first word of the Latin translation of this passage. There are 15 quotations from the Old Testament in the Magnificat, so we can see how prominent Scripture was in the home Jesus grew up in.

Read Luke 1:56-80, The Prophecy of Zacharias

Here the focus returned to Zacharias, who received his voice back when John was circumcised (not at his birth, but 8 days later). Then Zacharias was also filled with the Holy Spirit and blessed God with a poem—verses 68-79. Finally, verse 80 turns our attention to the childhood of John the Baptist. We learn he continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he *lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel*.

Comments and Applications from Luke 1:5-80

Luke told us that John's father, Zacharias, was chosen by lot. So he was chosen by a random chance event. Yet the whole point to the account is to show us that this event was part of the sovereign plan of God to announce the birth and ministry of John the Baptist. So it was 100% random chance and 100% the sovereign plan of God. The same could be said of any event.

It is interesting that Zacharias was struck dumb for his unbelief, yet Mary was not reprimanded in Luke 1:34 when she asked, *How can this be, since I am a virgin?* Also, Gideon was not reprimanded at all when he asked the Lord for proof by putting out the fleece (Judges 6:37-40). I suggest the reason is Gideon and Mary did not doubt the Word of God. Gideon only wanted to confirm that it was indeed God who was giving him the message, and Mary wanted to know how she was to do that. When she found out, she said, *may it be done to me according to your word*. But Zacharias doubted the words, which he knew came from God. Gabriel said his judgment was: *because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time*. We can, therefore, conclude that we should never doubt the Word of God, but we should make sure that we know it is indeed the Word of God, then take action according to God's Word.

Questions for Discussion from Luke 1:5-80

1. True or false? Luke chapter 1 tells us all of the following people were filled with the Holy Spirit:
 - Elizabeth
 - Zacharias
 - John
 - Mary
2. Was the filling of the Holy Spirit in Luke chapter 1 more like that of Old Testament Israel or more like that of the New Testament church? _____
3. When Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, she traveled:
 - A. About 10 miles
 - B. About 30 miles
 - C. About 50 miles
 - D. About 70 miles
4. Mary was chosen to bear the baby Jesus because she was
 - A. Holy
 - B. Humble
 - C. Fortunate

Answers: (1) True. (2) It was like Old Testament Israel because only a few select believers were filled by the Holy Spirit. (3) D [From Nazareth to the Dead Sea is over 60 miles, and she went south of there into the hill country, in the deserts of the Judean Wilderness.] (4) B [verse 48].

Luke 2, The First Christmas

4 or 5 B.C., in Bethlehem and Jerusalem

Read Luke 2:1-7, The Birth of Christ

Here we have more of Luke's historical details. He told us Jesus' birth was in the reign of Caesar Augustus (27 B.C. to A.D. 14) and when *the first census [was] taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria* (A.D. 6-7). Because Herod the Great's reign ended in 4 B.C., Jesus was born before that time. There are two possibilities: Quirinius may have had a previous governorship before 4 B.C. or the word "first" could mean "before" (as in John 15:18). Luke 2:2 would then read, "this was the census that took place before Quirinius was governor of Syria."

Read Luke 2:8-20, The Shepherds

The revelation to the shepherds gives us no clue to the date of Christ's birth, since they watched sheep year round. The angels told the shepherds, *Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased* (verse 14, NASB), not "to men on whom His favor rests" (NIV) nor "good will toward men" (KJV).

Read Luke 2:21-24, The Purification Presentation

Joseph and Mary were required by the Mosaic Law to have Jesus circumcised (Leviticus 12:3), and to present their firstborn to God (Exodus 13:2, 12). So they traveled the short distance from Bethlehem to Jerusalem for the presentation and purification at the Temple. Mary remained unclean for 33 days following the circumcision, after which she presented a sin offering for purification after childbirth (Leviticus 12:1-8).

Read Luke 2:25-35, The Presentation to Simeon

All we know of Simeon is what Luke told us here. He was looking for the consolation of Israel, i.e. the Messiah. Simeon had been told by the Holy Spirit that he would live until he saw the Messiah.

Read Luke 2:36-40, The Presentation to Anna

Here Luke told us that an 84-year-old prophetess widow named Anna *continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem*. The point is, she was telling all those sensitive enough to be looking that the Messiah had come.

Read Luke 2:41-52, The Temple and the 12-Year-Old

Now His parents went to Jerusalem [a trip of about 60 miles each way] every year at the Feast of the Passover [so it was at our "Easter" time]. And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast. But Mary and Joseph probably had several other children to care for (Mark 6:3) and supposed Him to be in the caravan [it seems the families traveled together for safety and fellowship] and went a day's journey [north into the Samaritan hill country] and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. [Apparently, it was common for the children to stay with and play with other friends in the caravan].

Jesus had been missing for four days altogether before they found Him. Mary was obviously angry when she said: *Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You*. This is followed by the first recorded words of Jesus. His first statement declared His deity, and that He was aware of it at age 12. He said: *Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's [house]?*" The last phrase here reads: ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου δεῖ εἶναί με, literally, *in that which is my father's I had to be*.

Comments and Applications from Luke 2

Luke 2:19 says, *But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.* Luke 2:33 says, *And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.* Comments like these sound like Luke interviewed Mary personally. Possibly this is where he got the unique information in chapter 2.

Luke 2:13-14 reads, *And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.* The birth of Christ was a big event in heaven. Multitudes of angels penetrated our dimension to announce it. So both the conception and the birth of Christ were significant, but life begins in a unique way at birth. We don't know when Jesus became aware of who He was (certainly by age 12), but by leaving heaven to become a baby, *He emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant ... being made in the likeness of men* (Philippians 2:7).

Questions for Discussion from Luke 2

True or false? (True means it is in the Bible. False means it is not. Consider all four gospels.)

1. Because a census was being taken, Joseph and Mary traveled from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.
2. Jesus was born when Herod was king.
3. Mary rode a donkey to Bethlehem.
4. The innkeeper told them that there was no room in the inn.
5. Therefore, they stayed in a stable.
6. The shepherds glorified and praised God on their way back to the sheep.
7. Shepherds saw the star over the place where Jesus was born.
8. Jesus was born in December.
9. Only one angel talked to the shepherds.
10. There were three wise men.
11. The wise men followed the star from Jerusalem to find Jesus.
12. Jesus was in a house when the wise men gave Him their gifts.
13. The shepherds were the first people to proclaim to other people that Christ had come.
14. Jesus was born the night Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem.

Answers: (1) False [They traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem (Luke 2:4).] (2) True [Matthew 2:1]. (3) False [There is no donkey in the biblical account.] (4) False [There is no innkeeper in the biblical account.] (5) False [There is no stable in the biblical account. Mangers could be anywhere.] (6) True [Luke 2:20]. (7) False. [The wise men, not the shepherds, saw the star.] (8) False [We do not know when Jesus was born.] (9) True [Luke 2:10]. (10) False [There were three gifts, but we do not know how many wise men there were.] (11) True [Matthew 2:1 and 9]. (12) True [Matthew 2:11]. (13) True [Luke 2:17-18]. (14) False [We do not know on which day Jesus was born.]

Luke 3, The Ministry of John

A.D. 29, In the South Jordan River Valley

Read Luke 3:1-6, The Time of John's Ministry

True to form, Luke gave us lots of historical data. He told us John's message began in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. Tiberius ruled over the Roman Empire from A.D. 14 to 37. So John began preaching in 29. Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea from 26 to 36. Herod here is Herod Antipas, who ruled from Tiberius over Galilee from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39. His brother Philip ruled to the east of the Jordan from 4 B.C. to A.D. 34. Little is known about Lysanias. As for Annas and Caiaphas, Annas was the high priest from A.D. 6 to 15 but was deposed by Rome and replaced by his son-in-law, Caiaphas (A.D. 18-36). The Jews continued to recognize Annas as the rightful high priest.

Luke wrote three things about the beginning of John's ministry: (1) *The word of God* [the call to prophetic ministry] *came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness* [where he was living (1:80)]. (2) *And he came into all the district around the Jordan* [probably just north of the Dead Sea, where Elijah was taken up into heaven (2 Kings 2:1-13)], *preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins*. (3) His ministry was a fulfillment of the words of Isaiah the prophet. Although Isaiah was writing about the return of the exiles from Babylon, all three Synoptic Gospel writers applied Isaiah's words to John the Baptist. So the biblical authors, in this case Isaiah and Luke, had different meanings in mind for this statement, but the Holy Spirit had both meanings in mind.

Read Luke 3:7-14, John Defined Repentance

John told those, who came out to be baptized, to repent and not depend upon being descendants of Abraham. He said, *Indeed the axe* [the judgment of God] *is already laid at the root of the trees* [the nation of Israel]; *so every tree* [every Israelite] *that does not bear good fruit* [the evidence of repentance] *is cut down* [individually judged] *and thrown into the fire*. Then John gave five examples of repentance: give clothing, give food, don't swindle, don't steal, and be content with your wages.

Read Luke 3:15-20, John Pointed to Jesus

John was such a powerful preacher, the people wondered if he was the Christ ... *John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize* ["dip" or "immerse"] *you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize* ["immerse"] *you with the Holy Spirit* [Who will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8)] *and fire* [judgment]. But when John criticized the wickedness of Herod for having his brother's wife, John was thrown into prison.

Read Luke 3:21-22, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased"

Next, Luke told us that Jesus came to be baptized. All four gospels record this, but only Luke recorded the above comment by God the Father.

Read Luke 3:23-38, The Genealogy of Mary

Luke said that *Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age*. It is not that Luke did not know how old Jesus was but that Jesus was of age to begin public ministry. In the Old Testament, 30 was often the age when one's ministry began (Genesis 41:46; Numbers 4; 2 Samuel 5:4; Ezekiel 1:1). The details go beyond the scope of this overview, but several things should be noticed: (1) Jesus is here called the *supposed* son of Joseph, not his biological son. (2) This is the genealogy of Mary, who was a descendent of David and Bathsheba through their son Nathan. (3) The list starts with Jesus and goes back to Adam, not Abraham, making it a more Gentile-friendly gospel.

Comments and Applications from Luke Chapter 3

God promised David, *Your house and ... your throne shall be established forever* (2 Samuel 7:16). This meant the king must have two things: #1 a blood connection and #2 a throne connection to David. The Solomon line had those two rights to reign after David chose Solomon as his successor. But in Jeremiah 22:30, God said of Coniah, the would-be king of Solomon's line, *Write this man down childless* [even though he had children] ... *For no man of his descendants will prosper sitting on the throne of David*. So Coniah's descendants had #2 the throne connection but lost #1 the blood connection to David. Joseph was a descendent of Coniah, so he had #2 the throne connection to David, but if his seed entered into a child, that child suffered the curse of Coniah, and could not be king over Israel. Mary was also a descendent of David through a different son, Nathan. So she had #1 the blood connection to David, but not #2 the throne connection. The marriage of Joseph and Mary, with the virgin birth of Jesus, made Jesus the only legitimate descendent of David with both the throne connection and blood connection to David.

Questions for Discussion from Luke Chapter 3

1. Luke said Jesus *was about 30 when He began His ministry*. More precisely, Jesus was about
 - A. 28 or 29
 - B. 30 or 31
 - C. 33 or 34
 - D. 36 or 37
2. There is no record of baptism before John. (John would not adopt pagan washings, Old Testament washings were different, and Jewish proselyte baptisms are not recorded until years after John.) So what did baptism mean according to John the Baptist?
 - A. An act which preceded repentance
 - B. An act which was repentance
 - C. An act which followed repentance
3. When John said of Jesus, *He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit...*, John meant
 - A. Jesus will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and water.
 - B. Jesus will baptize you with the Holy Spirit instead of water.
 - C. Jesus will baptize you with water to receive the Holy Spirit.
4. Which of the following happened when Jesus was baptized?
 - A. Jesus prayed.
 - B. John prayed.
 - C. God the Father declared Jesus to be His Son.
 - D. The Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove.

Answers: (1) C [Jesus was about 6 months younger than John, who began his ministry in the year A.D. 29. Jesus was born 4 or 5 B.C. (because Herod reigned until 4 B.C.). $29 + 4$ or $5 = 33$ or 34 .] (2) C [John would not let people be baptized until they proved their repentance by a change of life (Luke 3:7-14).] (3) B [Jesus never baptized anyone with water (John 4:2).] (4) A, C, and D.

Luke 4, Temptations and Healings

Spring of A.D. 29, in Galilee [Dates assume the crucifixion was in the spring of A.D. 33]

Read Luke 4:1-13, The Temptation of Christ

Luke wrote that Jesus was led ἐν τῷ πνεύματι ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, literally, *in the Spirit in the wilderness*. Christ's temptation was somewhere in the Judean Wilderness. Luke reversed Matthew's order for the temptations, showing he did not copy from Matthew. Jesus quoted exclusively from Deuteronomy. For the third temptation, Satan quoted from Psalm 91:11-12. Verse 11 reads, *For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways*. But Satan left out *in all your ways*, which says God will guard the Messiah in all the Messiah's ways, not in any arbitrary way. Temptation #1 promoted dependence upon self rather than God. Temptation #2 promoted false worship as a means to power. Temptation #3 promoted a false use of Scripture to test God. Satan's main reason for tempting Jesus was to get Him to go directly to the Millennial Kingdom without the cross.

III. Jesus' Ministry in Galilee, 4:14–9:50

After the temptation in the Judean Wilderness, there were several events Luke did not record (John 1:19–3:36). Jesus returned to John the Baptist, and two of John's disciples (Andrew and John) followed Jesus. Then they went north and found Peter, then Nathaniel, and Philip. These five disciples went with Jesus to the wedding at Cana, where Jesus turned water into wine. Then they went south to Jerusalem, where Jesus cast the moneychangers out of the Temple and had a "born again" discussion with Nicodemus. From there, Jesus went north through Samaria where He talked to "the woman at the well," and further north for the "Ministry in Galilee." This is where Luke takes up his account.

Read Luke 4:14-30, Jesus in Nazareth

Spring A.D. 30 [one year later than verse 13]

Jesus entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read Isaiah 62:1-2 but stopped reading in the middle of 61:2 because now He would *proclaim the favorable year of the Lord* (v. 19). The *day of vengeance of our God* (Isaiah 61:2b) was reserved for His Second Coming. When He said, *Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing*, He was making a claim to be the Messiah, which would get Him crucified three years later. At first they liked Him, but as what He said sunk in, they began to ask questions. When He gave them two examples where Old Testament prophets healed Gentiles instead of Jews, they *were filled with rage* and tried to *throw Him down the cliff*. But *passing through their midst, He went His way*.

Read Luke 4:31-44, Healings in Capernaum

This section has three instances of healing and a comment at the end. The incidents are: (1) the demon-possessed man healed in the synagogue, (2) Peter's mother-in-law healed of a fever, and (3) various healings and exorcisms at sunset. The interesting thing about the exorcisms is that the demons knew Jesus was the Son of God. One said, *"I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"* Another simply said, *"You are the Son of God!"* It reminds us of what the Lord's half-brother James wrote: *You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder* (James 2:19). These demons confirm the deity of Christ. They also show us that there is a difference between believing that Jesus is the Son of God and believing in Jesus, the Son of God (John 1:12). The healing of Peter's mother-in-law reveals that Peter was married, as apparently were most of the apostles (1 Corinthians 9:5). In the morning, the crowd wanted Jesus to stay in Capernaum, but Jesus said, *"I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose."*

Comments and Applications from Luke 4

Jesus was tempted by the devil. There are three things we can apply about temptation:

1. As in Jesus' case, whether we are tested by God or tempted by Satan, our response should be the same, obedience to the Word of God. The word for "temptation" *πειράζω* (*peiradzo*) is the same word translated "testing." For example, Hebrews 11:17 says: *By faith Abraham, when he was tested* [same word as "tempted"], *offered up Isaac*. James 1:2 says: *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials* [same root word again]. It is a temptation when it comes from the devil or our own sin nature because the goal is to get us to sin. It is a test or trial when it comes from God because the goal is to prove our faith.
2. As in Jesus' case, we may be tempted by Satan while being led by the Holy Spirit. Like with Jesus, the purpose of our temptation is not to strengthen our faith, but to prove our faith, because the testing of your faith *produces endurance... so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing* (James 1:3-4).
3. As in Jesus' case, we should not ask to be tested. Later, He said we should pray, *do not lead us into temptation* (Matthew 6:13). Same word again. But rather pray, *deliver us from evil*. So we should not seek either temptation or testing.

Questions for Discussion from Luke 4

1. Who led Jesus in Luke 4:1-13?
 - A. God the Father
 - B. The Holy Spirit
 - C. The devil
2. When the devil showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, it was
 - A. Mystical
 - B. Miraculous
 - C. Metaphorical
3. Jesus was rejected in Nazareth because
 - A. He said He could forgive sin.
 - B. He said He was the Messiah.
 - C. He said God healed Gentiles.
 - D. All of the above
4. Jesus' teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum was
 - A. Amazing and authoritative
 - B. Gracious and compassionate
 - C. Truthful and convicting
5. The demons in Capernaum
 - A. Believed Jesus was God
 - B. Feared Jesus
 - C. Wanted Jesus to leave them alone
 - D. All of the above
6. True or false? Jesus went from the synagogue to Peter's house in order to heal Peter's mother-in-law.
7. True or false? Jesus' primary teaching ministry at this time in Galilee was in synagogues.

Answers: (1) B. (2) B [The devil showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.] (3) C [He did not say A in Nazareth, and they did not reject Him until He said God healed two different Gentiles.] (4) A [It may have been all of these, but A is stated in Luke 4:32.] (5) D. (6) False [He was asked to heal her after He arrived.] (7) True [Luke 4: 44].

Luke 5, A Call for Peter and Levi

Summer and Fall of A.D. 30, in Capernaum

Read Luke 5:1-11, The Miraculous Catch of Fish

Luke ended chapter 4 telling us that Jesus taught in the synagogues. But he began chapter 5 with Jesus teaching the Word of God ... *standing by the lake of Gennesaret* (the sea of Galilee, near Peter's house) ... *and teaching the people from the [Peter's] boat*. When Jesus finished, He asked Peter to put out his nets, and reluctantly he obeyed and has a huge miraculous catch of fish. Peter's response was, *Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord* (KJV). Jesus said, *Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men*. Jesus' lesson for Peter was, "You can't catch fish or men on your own, but with Me, you will have an abundance."

Read Luke 5:12-16, Healing the Leper in One of the Villages of Galilee

The significance of this event is, Jesus ordered him [the healed leper] to tell no one, "*But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses [that is, the Mosaic Law—Leviticus 13] commanded, as a testimony to them.*" This showed that Jesus was living under the Mosaic Law, which required quarantining lepers until a priest declared them clean. This was also a testimony to the priests that Jesus was the Messiah.

Read Luke 5:17-26, Healing the Paralytic Lowered through the Roof

There are three things to notice here:

1. Only Luke told us there were leaders present from all parts of the land.
2. *Seeing their faith* is the faith of the paralytic and his friends.
3. The first thing Jesus said was, "*Friend, your sins are forgiven you.*" This (a) pointed to the real problem, (b) indicated that sickness was because of sin (personal sin or imputed sin from Adam), and (c) it irritated the religious leaders who rightly thought, *Who can forgive sins, but God alone?*

Read Luke 5:27-28, The Call of Levi

After that He went out [to the road called the Via Maris on the north side of Capernaum] and noticed a tax collector named Levi [called Matthew in Matthew 9:9] sitting in the tax booth [collecting taxes for the Roman government], and He said to him, "Follow Me." And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him.

Read Luke 5:29-39, Levi's Reception Party

Jesus was eating and drinking with Levi and his friends, who were tax gatherers and sinners. But Jesus' whole discussion was with the Pharisees and their scribes. There are three issues:

1. They want to know why Jesus was associating with these sinners. Jesus' answer was, *I have not come to call the righteous [those who think they don't need to repent] but sinners [those who realize they are sinners] to repentance [a change of mind leading to a change of life.]*
2. They wanted to know why Jesus' disciples did not fast like theirs and John the Baptist's. Jesus referred to His upcoming death and said they will fast then.
3. Jesus told the first parable that Luke recorded. It's about new vs. old cloth, and new vs. old wineskins. The point is, *new wine [Christ's message of repentance for the Kingdom of God is at hand] must be put into fresh wineskins [repentant sinners, like Levi and Christ's disciples]. And no one, after drinking old wine [like the rabbinic Judaism of the Pharisees], wishes for new; for he says, 'The old [rabbinic Judaism] is good enough.'*

Comments and Applications from Luke 5

When Peter saw the miraculous catch of fish, he said, *Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord* (verse 8, KJV). Why this response to a miraculous catch of fish? I suggest it's because Peter was now certain Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, his Creator, and his Judge. One, therefore, to be feared. This is the right response to Jesus if we want to be used by Him for ministry. Jesus told Peter, *Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men*. The wrong response is to say: "I don't need to fear Jesus." But the right response is to fear Him, and have Him say, "fear not."

The last phrase of verse 18 reads, *and power of the Lord was for Him to heal* (καὶ δύναμις κυρίου ἦν εἰς τὸ ἰᾶσθαι αὐτόν). The NASB translation, *The power of the Lord was [present] for Him to [perform] healing* is a bit misleading, since it adds the words *present* and *perform*. This makes it sound like Jesus couldn't always do that, and power came only at certain times for Him to perform acts of healing. This has led some to conclude that the power to perform healing, since it is independent from Jesus, could also be present for them. But this view is based on the two [bracketed] words which are not in the text. That power was always present for Jesus (Luke 4:36; 5:12, 24; 6:19; 8:46). Luke is simply pointing out that Jesus was about to use His power to heal.

Questions for Discussion from Luke 5

1. True or false? After the miraculous catch of fish, verse 11 says: *When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him*. This was the first time they followed Jesus.
2. The result of Jesus' healing the leper was
 - A. The news about His healings spread even further.
 - B. Jesus healed many more people.
 - C. Jesus broke away from the crowds to pray.
 - D. A and B
 - E. All of the above
3. The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "*Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?*" (verse 21).
 - A. They were right.
 - B. They were wrong.
 - C. They were half right.
4. When Levi followed Jesus, we can conclude,
 - A. He gave his possessions to the poor.
 - B. He had not known of Jesus before.
 - C. He was still wealthy.
5. Identify the following from verses 37-39:
New wine _____
Old wineskins _____
Fresh wineskins _____
Old wine _____

Answers: (1) False [John and Andrew followed Jesus from John the Baptist. Then they told Peter. So at least Peter and John had been with Jesus for a year at this point.] (2) E. (3) C. (4) C [He was still wealthy because of the big reception he gave Jesus in his own house. A is not in the text, and B is very unlikely given the small size of Capernaum.] (5) New wine is Christ's message of repentance. Old wineskins represent the Pharisees. Fresh wineskins are Levi and Christ's disciples. Old wine represents rabbinic Judaism.

Luke 6, Sermon on the Level Place

Spring of A.D. 31, in Capernaum

Read Luke 6:1-5, Picking Grain on the Sabbath

The Pharisees complained about the disciples picking grain as Sabbath-breaking. Jesus' response was not to deny it but to give an example where David did that which was not lawful. The point is, some values are lord over other values. And *the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath*.

Read Luke 6:6-11, Healing in the Synagogue on the Sabbath

Jesus, knowing the Pharisees were watching, said, "*I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?*" This implied they were destroying lives on the Sabbath. This is probably why the Pharisees were filled with rage.

Read Luke 6:12-16, Choosing the Twelve

After praying all night, Jesus chose twelve men, whom He also named as apostles. As disciples, they followed and learned, but as apostles, they were "sent out" by Jesus personally to represent the kingdom of God. In all three synoptics, Peter is listed first and Judas Iscariot is last. Bartholomew is Nathanael (John 1:45), Levi is Matthew, and Thaddaeus (Mark 3:18) is Judas, son of James. The twelve remained "the twelve" (Judas was replaced by Matthias—Acts 1:23), even though others (like Paul, Barnabas, and James the Lord's half-brother) are also called "apostles" (1 Corinthians 15:5-9).

Read Luke 6:17-49, The Sermon on the Level Place

This sermon has four parts:

1. Four blessings and four woes (verses 20-26): You are blessed if you are poor, hungry, weeping, or hated for the sake of the Son of Man. *Woe to you who: are rich, are well-fed, laugh, or all men speak well of you.* The point is, when you are poor, hungry, etc. *Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. And woe to the rich, ... well-fed, etc. for you are receiving your comfort in full.* Heavenly rewards instead of earthly comfort is the theme of the sermon.
2. Eight examples of love your enemies (verses 27-35): (1) *do good to those who hate you*, (2) *bless those who curse you*, (3) *pray for those who mistreat you*, (4) *whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also*, (5) *whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either*, (6) *give to everyone who asks of you*, (7) *whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back* (8) *treat others as you want them to treat you*. The point is, *love your enemies expecting nothing in return; and your reward [in heaven] will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High.*
3. Three personal commands (verses 36-38): (1) *be merciful, just as your Father is merciful*, (2) *do not judge, and you will not be judged*, and (3) *give, and it will be given to you*. The point is, *by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return [in heaven]*.
4. Five short parables (verses 39-49): (1) A blind man cannot guide a blind man, (2) a pupil is not above his teacher, (3) the speck that is in your brother's eye, vs. the log that is in your own eye, (4) each tree is known by its own fruit, and (5) the house with a foundation and the house without any foundation. The point is, "*Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?*"

Comments and Applications from Luke 6

There are two Sabbath-breaking issues. Jesus raised the bar on most of the Mosaic Law, but not on Sabbath-keeping. He also did not go over well in synagogues. In Nazareth, they tried to kill him, and in Capernaum, they tried to trap Him. But when He offended both the Sabbath and the synagogue, the Pharisees were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.

The sermon of Luke 6 is similar to, but not the same as, “The Sermon on the Mount” of Matthew 5–7. This sermon is on a level place, not a mountain. Also, in the Matthew sermon, Jesus left the crowd to speak to His disciples. In the Luke sermon, He came down from the mountain to the crowd of people. More significantly, the content is different. For example, Luke recorded, *Blessed are you who are poor*, and *woe to you who are rich*. Matthew recorded, *Blessed are the poor in spirit*, who are the humble, not the poor; and Matthew said nothing about *woe to you who are rich* or *well-fed* or *spoken well of*. Matthew has nothing like Luke 6:38, and Luke has nothing like Matthew’s six: *You have heard ... but I say to you* paragraphs.

Questions for Discussion from Luke 6

1. The first 11 verses of chapter 6 are about
 - A. Violating the synagogue
 - B. Violating the Sabbath
 - C. Violating the Mosaic Law
 - D. Violating the authority of the Pharisees
2. The crowd Jesus came to, after appointing the 12, gathered because
 - A. They wanted healing.
 - B. They wanted to hear Him teach.
 - C. They wanted both to hear Him and be healed.
3. The reason you are *Blessed when you are poor, hungry, weeping, or hated* for the sake of the Son of Man, is because
 - A. You will be blessed by God here on earth.
 - B. You will be blessed by God in heaven.
 - C. You will be blessed by God both here and in heaven.
4. In verses 27-35, the reason we should love our enemies is,
 - A. You will be rewarded by God here on earth.
 - B. You will be rewarded by God in heaven.
 - C. You will be rewarded by God both here and in heaven.
5. In verses 36-38, the reason you should be merciful, not judge, and give is,
 - A. You will be treated the same way here on earth.
 - B. You will be treated the same way in heaven.
 - C. You will be treated the same way both here and in heaven.
6. An atheist philanthropist who hates God but gives to the poor ... is
 - A. Bad
 - B. Good
 - C. Bad with good works

Answers: (1) B [Only one incident involves the synagogue. The laws being violated were those of rabbinic Judaism, not the Mosaic Law, and the authority of the Pharisees was not the primary issue here.] (2) C [verse 18]. (3) B [verse 23]. (4) B. (5) B. (6) A [Luke 6:43].

Luke 7, A Trip to the Jezreel Valley

Spring and Summer of A.D. 31, in Galilee

Read Luke 7:1-10, Healing a Centurion's Slave

On the way back to Capernaum, after the sermon on the level place (a short distance up in the hills northwest of Capernaum), Jesus was met by some Jewish elders. They were city leaders, representing a centurion (a Roman officer in charge of 100 soldiers), asking Jesus to heal the centurion's very sick slave. They reported, *he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue*. As Jesus approached his house, he sent friends to say he was not worthy for Jesus to come in his house and that he understood his own, and therefore Jesus', authority. Then Jesus told the crowd, "*not even in Israel have I found such great faith.*" When the friends got back, they found the slave healed.

Read Luke 7:11-17, Raising the Widow's Son at Nain, in the Jezreel Valley

Three things should be noted here: (1) Jesus did this because of His compassion for the widow, (2) Jesus initiated this, usually others asked Him for healing, and (3) the result was *fear gripped them all, and they began glorifying God*. So glorifying God is connected to fearing God.

Read Luke 7:18-35, John's Disciples Ask: "Are You the Expected One?"

They were probably still on their trip in the Jezreel Valley when men came from John the Baptist to ask if Jesus was indeed the Messiah. John was basically an Old Testament prophet who expected Jesus to execute judgment and begin to reign as the messianic king. So when John saw Jesus exercising compassion and forgiveness, instead of judgment and ruling authority, he was confused. Jesus told John's disciples to report that He was fulfilling Isaiah 61:1-2, the passage which He had read in Nazareth. Then Jesus talked to the people about John, saying he fulfilled Malachi 3:1, and *among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he* [that is, greater than he would be if John were outside of the kingdom of God]. Then Jesus described this generation as children who wanted others to respond to their music. But John and Jesus were not like them. Some thought John was too conservative, others thought Jesus was too liberal. *Yet wisdom is vindicated* [literally, justified or declared right] *by all her children* [the disciples of Jesus and John].

Read Luke 7:36-50, The Pharisee and the Woman who Wiped Jesus' Feet with Her Hair

Jesus was probably still in one of the cities of the Jezreel Valley (or possibly back at Capernaum) when one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him. But a woman in the city *who was a sinner* [probably a prostitute] washed Jesus' feet [while standing behind Him] *with her tears* and some perfume and *kept wiping them with the hair of her head*, and *kissing His feet*. The Pharisee thought that, if Jesus were really from God, He would disapprove. Instead, Jesus (1) told him a parable, (2) taught him a basic spiritual principle, and (3) forgave the woman of her sins.

1. The parable was: *A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?* The Pharisee gave the right answer, *the one whom he forgave more*.
2. Then Jesus pointed out that this love and forgiveness described the sinful woman, not the Pharisee. The basic spiritual principle was, *he who is forgiven of much, loves much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little*.
3. *Then He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven."* And while the others at the table thought, "*Who is this man who even forgives sins?*" Jesus said to the woman, "*Your faith has saved you; go in peace.*"

Comments and Applications from Luke 7

The centurion with a sick slave was an unusual Roman. He went to great lengths to help his slave. He was good to the Jews, having built their synagogue. He believed Jesus could heal. He also believed Jesus had great authority, more than his own Roman authority. Jesus said this was evidence of great faith. It appears that faith is connected to recognizing the authority of God.

Several times in His ministry, Jesus acted based on compassion. For example, Mark 6:34 says, *When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.* Here in Luke 7, He interrupted a funeral because He had compassion on a widow. Compassion is close to the heart of God. If we are not compassionate toward people, we may be in trouble with God.

In one of Jesus' examples, He said, *"We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep"* (v. 32). The interesting assumption here is that there is dancing music and weeping music, and neither have anything to do with the words. So music is not neutral. Christian music may change over the years, but one cannot simply put Christian words to any music without confusing the message. The melody, harmony, and rhythm creates a context for understanding.

Questions for Discussion from Luke 7

1. Jesus knew the centurion had faith because
 - A. The elders of Capernaum told Him.
 - B. The centurion's comments about authority told Him.
 - C. He knew it because He was omniscient.
 - D. A and B
 - E. All of the above
2. The reason Jesus raised the widow's son at Nain is because
 - A. He felt compassion for the widow.
 - B. He felt compassion for the widow's son.
 - C. He wanted to teach His followers the significance of compassion.
3. True or false? The only other ministry Jesus ever embraced was that of John the Baptist.
4. The *children who sit in the market place and call to one another* (in verse 32) represent
 - A. The Pharisees
 - B. All the people
 - C. The tax collectors
 - D. All of the above
5. The reason Jesus forgave the sin of the woman (in verses 40-50) is because
 - A. She had more faith than the Pharisee.
 - B. She had more sin than the Pharisee.
 - C. She was a repentant prostitute.
 - D. All of the above
6. True or false? Socially, John the Baptist was a conservative and Jesus was a liberal.
7. True or false? Verse 28 means John the Baptist was not in the Kingdom of God.

Answers: (1) E. (2) A [C may be true, but the text does not state that.] (3) True. (4) A [The Pharisees are the men of this generation (verses 30-31).] (5) A [B and C cannot be known from the text.] (6) True [verses 33-34]. (7) False [It means anyone in the Kingdom of God would be greater than John would be if he were outside of the kingdom of God, which he was not.]

Luke 8, Travels, Parables, and the Exorcism of a Gerasenian Demoniac

Summer and Fall of A.D. 31, in Galilee

Read Luke 8:1-3, Contributing to their Support Out of their Private Means

This short paragraph shows that a large group traveled with Jesus. There were the twelve plus many others, including some women (three are named, some of the many others may have been the wives of the twelve—1 Corinthians 9:5). Mary Magdalene [from Magdala] is one of six Marys mentioned in the New Testament: (1) the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:27), (2) the mother of James and wife of Alphaeus, or Clopas (Luke 6:15; John 19:25), (3) the sister of Martha and Lazarus (Luke 10:39), (4) the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12), (5) a woman in Rome (Romans 16:6), and (6) Mary Magdalene (mentioned here, and at the cross—Matthew 27:56).

Read Luke 8:4-15, The Parable of the Sower

This parable is in all three synoptics. The four soils represent four different heart conditions of people when they hear the Word of God. The first soil is by the road, where *the devil comes and takes away the Word from their heart*, so that they will not believe and be saved. Second, the rocky soil are those who *... receive the word with joy; and ... believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away*. Third, the thorny soil are the ones who *... are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity*. The point of the parable is the fourth soil, *the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance*.

Read Luke 8:16-18, The Parable of the Lamp on the Lampstand

After telling the parable, Jesus pointed out that there are no secrets. [It always amazes me that people think they will be the first ones in all of history to keep a secret of something like an adulterous affair.] But the point of the parable is, *So [you disciples] take care how you listen [to what I, Jesus, tell you]; for whoever has [understanding from an honest and good heart], to him more [understanding] shall be given; and whoever does not have [such a heart], even what [understanding] he thinks he has shall be taken away from him*.

Read Luke 8:19-21, Disciples Are Family

When Jesus was told His mother and brother were trying to get to Him, He said, *My mother and My brothers are these who hear the Word of God and do it*.

Read Luke 8:22-39, Crossing the Sea to Exorcise the Man in the Gerasenes

This incident has at least three parts. First is calming the sea as they crossed from Capernaum to the Gerasenes. The lesson is to place faith in Jesus. The result was, the disciples changed their fear of the wind to fear of Jesus. Second is the exorcism, which focused on the discussion with the demons. They recognized Jesus, feared Him, and *were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss*. Third is the discussion with the people of the Gerasenes.

Read Luke 8:40-56, Jairus' Daughter and the Woman with the Issue of Blood

While traveling to heal the daughter of a synagogue official named Jairus, Jesus was interrupted by a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years. In both cases, healing was the result of faith in Jesus. Jesus said Jairus' daughter would be literally saved, because *she has not died, but is asleep*. Apparently, her body had died but her spirit had not gone on into eternity.

Comments and Applications from Luke 8

The first three verses of this chapter are significant in that they show us that individuals financially supported Jesus and the twelve *out of their private means*. This sounds like some of them were wealthy. Apparently, not everyone was instructed *to sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor* (Luke 18:22). Joanna was the wife of Chuza, *Herod's steward*, "A position of some rank involving the management of Herod's finances" ("Ryrie Study Bible"). We also know they carried a money box (John 12:6). They were not supported by any organization, and even though Jesus could miraculously heal and feed thousands of people, they were supported by individual contributors.

The purpose of the parable of the sower/soils is not to point out who is saved and who isn't. Even though it is clear that the first soil group are not saved and the fourth are, there is no such knowledge about the second and third. The point is to be the kind of soil who will bear fruit with perseverance.

When Jesus was told His mother and brothers were asking for Him and couldn't reach Him because of the crowd, Jesus said, *My mother and My brothers are these who hear the Word of God and do it*. This was not meant to diminish the significance of His mother Mary, but neither does it seem to elevate her to some special status.

Questions for Discussion from Luke 8

1. The reason Jesus spoke in parables was
 - A. To keep unbelievers from understanding
 - B. To help unbelievers understand
 - C. To make people think
2. In the parable of the sower/soils,
 - A. The seed is Jesus.
 - B. The seed is the Word of God.
 - C. The seed is salvation.
3. When Jesus calmed the storm, He asked His disciples, "*Where is your faith?*" They should have believed that
 - A. Jesus could calm the storm.
 - B. They would survive the storm.
 - C. They would go to the other side.
4. True or false? There is no such thing as a secret.
5. True or false? Jesus taught that those who obey the Word of God are more important than our physical family.
6. True or false? Jesus healed the woman with the hemorrhage because she touched His cloak.
7. True or false? When Jesus healed Jairus' daughter, her spirit returned to her body.

Answers: (1) A [verse 10]. (2) B [verse 11]. (3) C [verse 22—The others could also be true, but they are not in the text.] (4) True [verse 17]. (5) True [verse 21]. (6) False [verse 48—It was because of her faith.] (7) True [verse 55].

Luke 9, Sending 12 and Feeding 5,000

Winter and Spring of A.D. 32, in Bethsaida and Caesarea Philippi

Read Luke 9:1-10, The 12 Were Sent Out to Heal and Proclaim the Kingdom of God

Jesus gave them power and authority over demons and diseases and gave them two basic instructions: (1) *take nothing for your journey* and (2) *whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that city*. It seems that the need created by #1 inspired the hospitality of #2 among those who accepted Jesus as the Christ. Luke added that Herod wanted to speak with Jesus, but Jesus went to Bethsaida and the disciples came to Him there.

Read Luke 9:11-17, The Feeding of the 5,000

Counting the women and children, the total might have been over 15,000 (Matthew 14:21). This is most likely not a sermon audience but groups of people. They were fed from five loaves and two fish. The twelve baskets left over indicates that everyone had enough.

Luke Omits Most of the Summer of A.D. 32. During that summer:

Jesus sent the disciples across the sea and came to them, walking on the water. Then He traveled northwest to the district of Tyre and Sidon and healed a Phoenician woman's daughter. Then He returned to Galilee, where He fed a group of 4,000. Next, Jesus traveled north to the base of Mount Hermon in Caesarea Philippi, where Luke takes up the account.

Read Luke 9:18-27, The Cost of Following Jesus

In Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked, "... *Who do you say that I am?*" And Peter said, "*The Christ of God.*" Then Jesus told them He would suffer, die, and rise from the dead. If they wished to follow Him, they needed to deny themselves, seek heavenly salvation, and have a heavenly profit motive.

Read Luke 9:28-36, The Transfiguration before Peter, James, and John

The Transfiguration probably occurred on Mount Hermon near Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:27). Three significant things happened: (1) Jesus was transfigured, (2) Moses and Elijah appeared, and (3) God said: "*This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!*"

Read Luke 9:37-45, A Difficult Possession and a Difficult Prediction

Jesus exorcised a possessed boy, which the disciples couldn't do, and predicted His arrest, which the disciples couldn't understand.

Read Luke 9:46-50, A Discussion about Who Will Be Greatest

Jesus used a child to say, "*the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great.*"

IV. Jesus' Ministry between Galilee and Jerusalem, 9:51—19:27

These next approximately 10 chapters of IV are only found in the Gospel of Luke, although some of the lessons of Jesus are found in other gospels.

Read Luke 9:51-56, Rejection by Samaritans and a Lesson for James and John

Jesus rebuked James and John for wanting to bring down fire from heaven on the Samaritans.

Read Luke 9:57-62, What It Takes to Follow Jesus

No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Comments and Applications from Luke 9

The reason for sending out the twelve with no staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money, and no extra clothes is not given. But He gave them power to cast out demons, heal, and proclaim the Kingdom of God. So it seems, when we minister, we should have something of God to contribute, then allow others to contribute to our needs, as a way of proclaiming their support for the Kingdom of God.

Verses 23-36 have three difficult requirements for being a disciple of Jesus:

1. Verse 23—*he must deny himself* [temporal earthly desires], *and take up his cross* [his life situation] *daily and follow Me* [keep Christ's commandments].
2. Verse 24—*whoever wishes to save his* [physical, earthly] *life* [of temporal prosperity] *will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake he is the one who will save it.* [So the ultimate goal is to save it.]
3. Verse 25—*For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?* [So the ultimate goal is eternal self-profit.]

Verses 58-62 have three metaphorical requirements for being a disciple of Jesus:

1. Verse 58—*Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.* [Following Christ is never connected to even basic earthly comforts.]
2. Verse 60—*Allow the dead* [those involved in the affairs of this world] *to bury their own dead* [tend to the matters of this world].
3. Verse 62—*No one, after putting his hand to the plow* [deciding to follow Christ] *and looking back* [turning back to the things of this world], *is fit for the kingdom of God.*

Questions for Discussion from Luke 9

1. True or false? The disciples were not to take money on their short missionary journey.
2. True or false? The ministry of the twelve was centered around synagogues.
3. True or false? In Luke 9, Jesus predicted His crucifixion.
4. True or false? Jesus said that whoever wishes to come after Him should deny himself daily.
5. True or false? Jesus said that whoever wishes to come after Him should lose their life.
6. True or false? Jesus said that whoever wishes to come after Him should save their life.
7. True or false? Jesus said that whoever wishes to come after Him should have a profit motive.
8. True or false? On the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah were talking with Jesus about His ministry.
9. True or false? Jesus implied that all children go to heaven.
10. True or false? Soon after Jesus fed the 5,000, He asked the disciples, *Who do the people say that I am?*

Answers: (1) True. (2) False. [It centered around homes.] (3) False. [He predicted His death, but not by crucifixion.] (4) True [verse 23]. (5) True [verse 24]. (6) True [verse 24]. (7) True [verse 25]. (8) False. [They were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.] (9) False [Verses 46-48 imply that greatness is to be as humble as a child.] (10) False [Next, He walked on the water, healed the Phoenician woman's daughter, fed the 4,000, then traveled north to Caesarea Philippi, where He asked this question. Luke does not include these events.]

Luke 10, The 70 Sent Out and the Parable of the Good Samaritan

Fall of A.D. 32, Between Galilee and Judea

Read Luke 10:1-20, Sending Out the 70

Some manuscripts say 72, but there seems to be no way to know which is the original number. The fact that 70 more are sent out indicates there were many disciples whose names are recorded in heaven. Only Luke stated this, and he gave it a lot of coverage. The instruction is similar to that given to the twelve—don't take extra things, stay in one house, reject [shake the dust off your feet against] those who reject you, heal, and proclaim that the Kingdom of God is near. We should also notice that Jesus focused on cities in His evaluation. He did the same in Revelation 2–3, where the churches were the believers in a city, and they were responsible for their city. There are four specific teaching statements to be noted here:

1. *The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest* (verse 2).
2. *I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves* (verse 3).
3. *The laborer is worthy of his wages* (verse 7).
4. *Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven* (verse 20).

Read Luke 10:21-24, A Prayer and a Blessing

This seems to be the closest Jesus ever came to being happy. Generally, He was *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief* (Isaiah 53:3), but here He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, resulting in an amazing prayer with seven statements: (1) *You, O Father [are] Lord of heaven and earth.* (2) *You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants.* (3) *All things have been handed over to Me.* (4) *No one knows who the Son is except the Father.* (5) [No one knows] *who the Father is except the Son.* (6) *Anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him [can know the Father.]* (7) *This is new revelation given to His disciples.*

Read Luke 10:25-37, The Good Samaritan

This is in response to a lawyer's question: *What shall I do to inherit eternal life?* When Jesus asked the lawyer about the answer from the Law, he quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. Jesus told him, *Do this and you will live.* But, of course, none of us perfectly loves God and our neighbor, so the lawyer asked for a definition of his neighbor. In the story, a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is a narrow path descending approximately 3,000 feet in about 17 miles. A Jewish priest and Levite didn't help him, but a Samaritan did. The Samaritans were descendants of colonists the Assyrians placed in Palestine after the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. The Jews hated them because of their mixed blood and their worship, centered at Mount Gerizim.

Read Luke 10:38-42, Mary Listens while Her Sister Martha Works

The village was Bethany (John 11:1–12:8), on the east side of the Mount of Olives, a few miles east of Jerusalem. Preparations are a good thing, but the good thing is often the enemy of the best thing. Jesus' point was, *only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part.*

Comments and Applications from Luke 10

The story of “The Good Samaritan” is probably the best lesson about giving in the Bible (or anywhere). The principle is—give to anyone with a need, who you come across on your path. This is not socialism or corporate giving. There is no encouragement to establish a “Jericho Road Protection Society.” This is individual giving. And it is for a need, not necessarily to the poor. The beaten man could have been wealthy, but he had a need (he required something essential which he could not provide for himself). His need was also obvious. He did not have to hold up a sign or explain that he had a need. Also, notice that the Good Samaritan who helped him did not give him money. He used money to buy help for the beaten man, but he did not simply hand him some cash.

The incident, where Martha is busy with the meal preparations and her sister Mary is listening to Jesus, is difficult because we are aware of all the work that is necessary in preparing for dinner guests. But Jesus didn’t think that way. His focus was on the Kingdom of God, not the needs of this earth. He had no home. He stayed with Peter in Capernaum and probably with these sisters and Lazarus when He was near Jerusalem. He was supported by gifts, and He believed God would meet His needs like the lilies of the field. So Mary’s priorities were more in line with those of Jesus.

Questions for Discussion from Luke 10

1. When Jesus sent out the 70, He did not tell them to be involved with
 - A. Synagogues
 - B. Homes
 - C. Cities
2. Jesus announced judgment upon
 - A. Synagogues
 - B. Homes
 - C. Cities
3. True or false? Although one of the 12 was not a believer, the 70 were believers.
4. Jesus said, *You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants*. True or false? The infants were the 70.
5. When Jesus told His disciples many prophets and kings wished to ... *hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them*, He was referring to
 - A. His own teaching
 - B. The announcement that the Kingdom of God has come near to you
 - C. The coming of the Holy Spirit
6. Jesus’ answer to the lawyer’s question, *Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* was
 - A. Believe in Jesus
 - B. Follow Jesus
 - C. Act like the Samaritan
7. Jesus told Martha,
 - A. The preparation of food was not necessary.
 - B. She was preparing too much food.
 - C. She was focused on physical food instead of spiritual food.

Answers: (1) A. (2) C. (3) True [verse 20]. (4) True [in the immediate context]. (5) A [B is true, but it is included in A.] (6) C [verse 37]. (7) A [verse 42—B and C may be true, but they are not stated.]

Luke Chapter 11, Woe to the Pharisees

Fall of A.D. 32, Near Jerusalem

Read Luke 11:1-4, The "Lord's Prayer"

This is not just an abbreviated form of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6. The Matthew prayer was part of the "Sermon on the Mount" up north in Galilee, but this instruction was in Jerusalem. The Matthew instruction was at Jesus' initiative, Luke's was a request from the disciples.

Read Luke 11:5-13, Seek and You Shall Find

Next are instructions about prayer from two stories. Both tell us to be persistent in prayer, but each has a unique emphasis. The first is about a friend who is reluctant to lend some food, but persistence pays off. The point is, *For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.* The second story is about a father who gives his son what he asks for, not something less. The point is, *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?*

Read Luke 11:14-23, The Accusation: "He Casts Out Demons by Beelzebul ..."

This accusation gets a lengthy answer: (1) Jesus pointed out the absurdity of the suggestion of Satan casting out his own demons. (2) He pointed out that their leaders cast out demons without that accusation. (3) He said, *if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.* (4) He pointed out that the stronger man will prevail in a struggle, indicating that His casting out demons proved that He represented a stronger kingdom than Satan's. Then Jesus gave His conclusion: *He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.*

Read Luke 11:24-26, The Unclean Spirit ... Passes through Waterless Places, and Returns

The phony exorcists, like those mentioned in verse 19, can cast out some demons. But the exorcised demon wants to possess a body. Finding none, it returns and finds the one it possessed, still unsaved but having cleaned up his life, so the demon invites seven others to join it. Therefore, the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.

Read Luke 11:27-28, A Woman Said, "Blessed is the Womb that Bore You"

Jesus responded with, *On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.* Notice, Jesus did not say something like, "Yes, my mother is blessed but also observe the Word of God." This should eliminate any attempt to equate His mother Mary with the Word of God.

Read Luke 11:29-32, Jesus Is Greater than Jonah and Solomon

God's revelation came through Jonah and Solomon, but now with Jesus, greater revelation was here.

Read Luke 11:33-54, Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers

Jesus began this long section with two short parables. The light on the lampstand is Christ's message, but the eyes of the Pharisees are dark so they can't take in the light. Next, without washing His hands, Jesus had lunch with a Pharisee. Then He pointed out the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. (1) They clean themselves on the outside but not on the inside. (2) They tithe, *yet disregard justice and the love of God.* (3) They love honor and respect. Then He offended the lawyers. (1) They *weigh men down with burdens* that they are unwilling to bear. (2) They are just as bad as their forefathers who killed the prophets, while pretending to honor the prophets. (3) They *have taken away the key of knowledge.* Now the Pharisees began plotting against Jesus to catch Him in something He might say.

Comments and Applications from Luke 11

Just a few comments on the five “Lord’s Prayer” statements in Luke 11:

1. *Father, hallowed be Your name.* Begin prayer with worship.
2. *Your kingdom come.* The prayer is for God to bring about His kingdom. There is nothing in the Bible which says we should bring about God’s kingdom.
3. *Give us each day our daily bread.* But most of us want meat, lettuce, pickles, and mayo, too.
4. *And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.* This condition is in both this and the Matthew 6 “Lord’s Prayer.”
5. *And lead us not into temptation.* The word is the same for “temptation” and “testing.” Never ask God for either.

In the parable of Luke 11:5-9, God is represented by a reluctant friend who finally, because of persistence, gave some food for the visitor. The principle: *ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you* destroys the view that we do not have real free will. Our persistence is in the plan of God, but it is still the free will decision to persist in prayer that moves God to action.

Questions for Discussion from Luke 11

1. Commenting on Luke 11:1, the “Ryrie Study Bible” says: “Teach us to pray. It was customary for famous rabbis to compose special prayers.” According to the text, is that true or false?
2. True or false? The point of the parable of the father not giving the son a snake instead of a fish, or a scorpion instead of an egg, is that God will not give you something worse than you ask for.
3. Luke 9:50 says, *for he who is not against you is for you.* Luke 11:23 says, *He who is not with Me is against Me.* The main difference is
 - A. Luke 9 is talking about us, and Luke 11 is talking about Jesus.
 - B. Luke 9 is referring to other believers, Luke 11 is talking about unbelievers.
 - C. Luke 9 is talking about a group of people, Luke 11 is talking about individuals.
4. In Luke 11:29-30, Jesus said, *This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah.* The sign of Jonah is
 - A. The coming judgment of God
 - B. The fact that Jesus will be three days in the grave as Jonah was in the fish
 - C. The revelation from God
5. In the above quote (Luke 11:29-30), the word “generation” means
 - A. Those people alive at the time of Jesus
 - B. The Jewish people
 - C. The church age people to whom Luke was writing
6. True or false? Jesus warned the Pharisees against loving the chief seats in the synagogue.
7. True or false? Jesus warned the Pharisees about laying heavy burdens on men.

Answers: (1) False [The disciples asked Jesus, *teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.* There is nothing about rabbis.] (2) False, or not exactly true. [The point is, *how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?*] (3) B. (4) C [A will be true at Christ’s Second Coming. B is a point made in Matthew 12:38-42 but not in Luke.] (5) B [But this is a judgment call, A is also possible (see verses 50-51).] (6) True. (7) False [It was the lawyers who did that.]

Luke 12, Twelve Lessons for the Twelve

Fall of A.D. 32, Near Jerusalem

Luke 12 contains twelve teachings Jesus gave His disciples in the midst of a crowd of people, somewhere in Jerusalem, probably between the Temple and Bethany, possibly in the woman's court of the Temple or on the Mount of Olives. Many of these principles were given by Jesus on other occasions. But the repetition is not verbatim. It is often from a slightly different perspective, applying the same principles in different areas.

- 1. Read Luke 12:1-3, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy"**
Hypocrisy is to "pretend" (Louw & Nida) or "playacting" (Strong's), which is a form of secret keeping. The point is, there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed.
- 2. Read Luke 12:4-7, "Fear the one who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell."** God knows about each sparrow and the hairs of your head, so fear Him and nothing else.
- 3. Read Luke 12:8-10, "He who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him."** The Holy Spirit empowered and filled Jesus (Luke 3:22; 4:1). The Pharisees were rejecting Jesus, therefore, blaspheming the Holy Spirit.
- 4. Read Luke 12:11-12, "The Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."** The principle is not about being uninformed or being unprepared, but to not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense.
- 5. Read Luke 12:13-21, "Be on your guard against every form of greed."** With a parable of a man who decided to build a bigger barn, Jesus warned against the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. The point is to seek wealth—toward God.
- 6. Read Luke 12:22-32, "Life is more than food, and the body more than clothing."** Jesus said to not worry about food, clothing, and length of life. Then He illustrated it with *ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn* and the *lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin*. The point is not that they don't work but that they don't worry.
- 7. Read Luke 12:33-34, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."** You should, *Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven*. The point is to put all wealth in heavenly values.
- 8. Read Luke 12:35-40, "Be ready, the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."** Jesus illustrated this with being dressed in readiness, keeping your lamps lit, being like a slave waiting for his master's return, and being ready to stop a thief. Live as if Christ would return today.
- 9. Read Luke 12:41-48, "The faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge."** Peter asked if the previous parable applied to them or to everyone. Jesus seemed to apply it especially for them and contrasted the good slave with one who began to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. Notice the bad slave, who mistreats people, is a glutton and a drunk.
- 10. Read Luke 12:49-53, "Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division."** Jesus illustrated this division with family members being against one another.
- 11. Read Luke 12:54-56, "Why do you not analyze this present time?"** Jesus said they could predict the weather, but could not analyze the times in which they lived.
- 12. Read Luke 12:57-59, "Why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right?"** Jesus illustrated this by warning against going to court. The point is, we should be able to judge what is right, not expect a judge, being part of this corrupt world, to make that judgment. If at all possible, stay out of court.

Comments and Applications from Luke 12

Jesus' heavenly perspective comes through loud and clear in these 12 principles. The only value Jesus saw in anything earthly was to use it to invest in that which is heavenly. Jesus here eliminated, once and for all, any idea of: heaven on earth, prosperity gospel, health/wealth gospel, God helps those who help themselves, world peace, or any other worldly goal.

One of the most confusing phrases is in verse 12, *And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.* All sin is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and unforgivable (without the cross), since it is the Holy Spirit who convicts of sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8). If the Son of Man were not of the Holy Spirit, then speaking against Him would be forgiven, but since He is of the Holy Spirit, then speaking against Him is rejecting the work of God, and that is unforgivable.

There is an important statement in verses 47-48, *And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few.* There will not only be judgment but varying degrees of condemnation and different rewards based upon works (see also Mark 12:40; John 19:11). Salvation is always based upon faith (Genesis 15:6; John 1:12; 3:16; 5:24; Ephesians 2:8-9). Judgment is always based upon works (Matthew 25:31-46; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15).

Questions for Discussion from Luke 12

1. What is the leaven of the Pharisees?
 - A. Hypocrisy
 - B. Keeping secrets
 - C. Legalism
 - D. A and B
2. According to Jesus in Luke 12, we should fear God because
 - A. He can bring us to heaven.
 - B. He can throw us into hell.
 - C. He can kill us.
 - D. B and C
3. *Do not fear* in verse 7 means
 - A. Do not fear God.
 - B. Do not fear circumstances.
 - C. Do not fear the devil.
4. The problem with storing up treasure on earth is
 - A. You will not have treasure in heaven.
 - B. Someone else will end up with your treasure.
 - C. You will not have treasure with God.
5. True or false? The reason you should sell your possessions and give to charity is to have greater possessions in heaven.
6. True or false? Jesus' baptism in verse 50 has nothing to do with water baptism.
7. True or false? Jesus did not come to bring peace on earth.

Answers: (1) D [Legalism is not mentioned in Luke 12.] (2) D [Heaven is not mentioned here.] (3) B. (4) B [verse 20]. (5) True [verse 33]. (6) True. (7) True [verse 51].

Luke 13, Enter by the Narrow Door

Winter of A.D. 33, A Trip to the Villages of Judea and Back to Jerusalem

In chapter 13, Luke continued coverage of Jesus' teaching in and around Jerusalem. This seems to be after a trip around Judea because He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem (verse 22).

Read Luke 13:1-5, Bad Things Should Not Be Considered a Judgment on Bad People

Jesus commented on two news items (notice, He related His teaching to the events going on around Him). One is where Pilate's soldiers had (for some unknown reason) killed some Galileans while they were sacrificing animals. Another is where a tower had fallen on some Judeans, killing 18. Some thought that these people were being punished. Jesus said (twice) *I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.*

Read Luke 13:6-9, The Parable of the Unproductive Fig Tree

The fig tree the man wanted to cut down represented Israel, and the plea to wait one more year represented their opportunity to receive Jesus as the Christ.

Read Luke 13:10-17, Healing the Bent-Over Woman in the Synagogue on the Sabbath

On the Sabbath, Jesus entered a synagogue in a village of Judea and healed a woman who had been bent double for 18 years. The woman began glorifying God. But the synagogue official [said], *There are six days in which work should be done; so come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day.* The official thought Jesus should wait until Sunday to heal. But Jesus pointed out that he was a hypocrite. An extreme paraphrase of Jesus might be: "So, let me see if I have this right. You believe it is all right to water an ox on the Sabbath, but not heal a woman on the Sabbath." Then Luke added, *all His opponents were being humiliated; and the entire crowd was rejoicing.*

Read Luke 13:18-21, The Kingdom of God Is Like Mustard Seed and Leaven

Both parables were apparently taught in that synagogue right after the woman was healed. The point is that the kingdom of God starts small, almost unnoticed. But it grows and spreads to something available to the Gentiles. Notice *leaven*, which is usually something bad, here is the kingdom of God. The meaning of words must be understood from the context.

Read Luke 13:22-30, Enter through the Narrow Door

Someone asked Jesus, *Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?* Jesus answered in the affirmative. The point is, Jesus is the narrow door into the heavenly kingdom of God and only a few will find it. But even that door will not be open forever. At their death or at the Second Coming of Christ, even that narrow door will no longer be open. At that time, they will realize that many Gentiles will be with the Jewish fathers, while they themselves will be thrown out into that place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Verse 30 says, *who is last is first [and] who is first is last.* This is not about importance on earth but that the Jews, the people God called first, will be the last to be resurrected (at the Second Coming of Christ) and the church, who comes last, will be first to be resurrected (at the Rapture).

Read Luke 13:31-35, A Response to Herod Antipas and a Cry for Jerusalem

Jesus' response to Herod is that He will accomplish His goal, and there is nothing Herod can do about it. His cry to Jerusalem is, *your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord!'*

Comments and Applications from Luke 13

After a natural disaster, someone, usually a TV preacher, says something about it being God's judgment. For example, the New Orleans Katrina hurricane and the Haiti earthquake were said to be because of all their demon worship. Jesus said you should not say that. We do not know what God is doing in those situations (Ecclesiastes 11:5). What we know is, *unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.*

Jesus' statement, *Enter through the narrow door*, was also something He taught up in Galilee during the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:13). Here it is in response to the question, *Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?* It is crucial to understand that Jesus never offered the Kingdom of God to the masses. He never assumed the majority would believe Him, or even understand Him. If you apply Jesus' statement to the masses, you will come up with some form of socialism or communism. But Jesus spoke to those few who were called by God to be in His Kingdom, and Jesus was the only narrow door into that kingdom (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

Questions for Discussion from Luke 13

1. Jesus said *that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them* was because
 - A. They were sinners.
 - B. They were in need of repentance, like everyone.
 - C. Jesus did not say why they were killed.
2. The parable of the unproductive fig tree (verses 6-9) tells us that the grace of God
 - A. Is everlasting
 - B. Is always available
 - C. Is not always available
3. As Jesus answered His opponents in Luke 13, they were being
 - A. Instructed
 - B. Convicted
 - C. Humiliated
4. The mustard seed *grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches* (verse 19). That means
 - A. The Kingdom of God will be available to Gentiles.
 - B. The Kingdom of God will be available to everyone.
 - C. The Kingdom of God will even benefit unbelievers.
5. *And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?"* (verse 23). Did Jesus say that was true or false?
6. In answering the above question, Jesus told a parable. Those who *do not enter through the narrow door* are
 - A. Unbelievers
 - B. Evildoers
 - C. Unrepentant
7. True or false? Jesus prophesied that Jerusalem would be desolate until His Second Coming.

Answers: (1) C. (2) C [as with the flood of Noah, the destruction of Sodom, and the future Tribulation.] (3) C [verse 17—The NASB says "humiliated" and the KJV says "ashamed."] (4) A [The question is not answered in the context, but the apostles carried out A. B is not true, and C is never mentioned in the New Testament.] (5) True [There are just a few who are being saved.] (6) B [verse 27—Although all are true, B is the point of the text.] (7) True [verse 35].

Luke 14, The Cost of Discipleship

Winter of A.D. 33, Near Jerusalem

Most of chapter 14 took place in the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath. This was apparently a rather formal Sabbath Day dinner (verse 7), which probably followed the assembly at a synagogue. There is no mention of Jesus' disciples being invited. Apparently, Jesus accepted the invitation to cover some crucial issues with those following the rabbinical Jewish leadership. After the meal (possibly on a different day), He was followed by *large crowds [who] were going along with Him; and He turned and taught them about what it takes to be My disciple.*

Read Luke 14:1-6, Healing on the Sabbath, Again

Once again, the issue of healing on the Sabbath came up, but this time they were not in the synagogue. But the point is the same—*Which one of you will have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?*

Read Luke 14:7-11, "He who Humbles Himself Will Be Exalted"

After the healing, Jesus addressed the other guests at the feast. He told them to take the back seats, not the seats of honor, *For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.* The point is not to avoid being exalted but to avoid being exalted by people on earth—work toward your own exaltation, by God in heaven.

Read Luke 14:12-14, What It Takes to be Repaid at the Resurrection of the Righteous

Next, Jesus addressed His host and told him *do not invite [those who will] invite you in return and that will be your repayment ... But ... invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.* The point is to offset the balance of justice in your favor so that God will reward you. Never put yourself in a position where God might say to you, "You were paid-in-full on earth."

Read Luke 14:15-24, Too Busy for the Kingdom of God

Someone at the table said, "*Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!*" Ryrie has a priceless remark here: "A seemingly pious remark made for the purpose of dulling the point of Christ's teaching" ("Ryrie Study Bible," 1652). Watch out for those people if you are teaching. They will make some bland acceptable statement that neuters your point. Jesus counters with a story about a man who gave a big dinner but the invited guests gave excuses, which all amount to "I have better things to do." The master essentially told his servant, "Go and invite anyone who does not have something better to do." The point is, Israel was too busy with its religion to have time for God.

Read Luke 14:25-33, "None of You Can Be My Disciple who Does Not Give Up All His Own Possessions"

Jesus illustrated this with five exhortation examples. A disciple of Jesus must:

1. *Hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters*
2. *[Hate] even his own life*
3. *Carry his own cross and come after Me*
4. *Calculate the cost*
5. *Consider whether he is strong enough*

Read Luke 14:34-35, Tasteless Salt Is Thrown Out

Tasteless salt is like the Pharisees and the guy with the bland comment at the feast. Don't let your zeal for God be consumed by religious organizations.

Comments and Applications from Luke 14

Once again, Jesus healed on the Sabbath day. The question was, *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?* Jesus lived under the Mosaic Law, so He kept the Sabbath. But there also seems to be a mentality that led the apostles to eliminate the whole concept of a Sabbath day. It can be debated as to whether the apostles had a designated day for the church to gather, but they never repeated the concept of a day of rest. There is simply no mention of it as an example or command anywhere in the apostles' teaching or Christ's instruction to the apostles (such as Revelation 2–3).

The conditions for discipleship given here are always a bit disturbing. First, notice that the hating of family members and ourselves is to choose against them as a priority. God said, *Jacob I loved, but Easu I hated* (Romans 9:13) in a context of choosing Jacob over Easu. This battle is fought regularly today in our families. The Bible condemns adultery, homosexuality, cohabitation, fornication, marrying an unbeliever, remarriage without the death of the spouse, lying, laziness, etc. So when that happens, are you willing to alienate, or be alienated by, your family members to follow Jesus? If not, do not think you are His disciple.

Questions for Discussion from Luke 14

1. True or false? Jesus kept the Sabbath.
2. True or false? The apostles kept the Sabbath.
3. True or false? The apostles taught the church to keep the Sabbath.
4. True or false? The purpose of humility is to be exalted.
5. The point of the dinner instructions in verses 12-14 is
 - A. Don't invite rich neighbors or rich relatives.
 - B. Don't give to rich people.
 - C. Don't give to people who will pay you back.
6. The comment, *Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God* (verse 15), if left alone, would have the effect of
 - A. Disagreeing with Jesus' teaching
 - B. Ignoring Jesus' teaching
 - C. Dumbing down Jesus' teaching
7. The parable of the invited guests (verses 16-24) makes the point that salvation is because of
 - A. The free will choice of people
 - B. The faith of people
 - C. The sovereign election of God
 - D. The mercy of God
8. In the examples of counting the cost as a basis for discipleship (verses 26-33), what is the cost of discipleship?
 - A. Giving up all your possessions
 - B. Making people and possessions second to God
 - C. Being sure you can finish what you start

Answers: (1) True. (2) Probably true [Acts 16:13; 18:4]. (3) False [Romans 14:5-6; Colossians 2:13]. (4) True [by God, verse 11]. (5) C. (6) C. (7) A. (8) A [verse 33].

Luke 15, The Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son

Winter of A.D. 33, Near Jerusalem

This is truly one of the greatest chapters in the Bible. The three parables all have the same basic application: God is seeking the lost, and the lost are the ones who realize they are lost, so they repent and return to God. This was in contrast to the Pharisees who did not see themselves as lost and did not prioritize the lost. This being said, there is not agreement about who the lost specifically represent in the parables. There are three views:

1. The lost were unbelievers who get saved. This is supported by two observations:
 - A. The audience was unbelievers, tax collectors, sinners, Pharisees, and scribes.
 - B. Verses 22-23 indicate that the younger son had an unmerited position which he received by grace, not works (so it's like other salvation passages, such as Ephesians 2:8-9 or Titus 3:5).
2. The lost are believers restored to fellowship. This is supported by two observations:
 - A. The sheep and the coin already belong to the shepherd and the woman.
 - B. The father in the third parable is looking for a son to return, not trying to get a new son.
3. The lost are Gentiles, those who repent to become the church. This is supported by two observations:
 - A. The sheep, coin, and both sons originally belong to the shepherd, woman, and father, like all mankind (both Jews and Gentiles) belong to God via creation.
 - B. The 99 sheep of the first parable and the older son who stayed home represent those *who need no repentance and have always been with me*. This fits the position of the Jews via the Abrahamic Covenant, but there are no believers or unbelievers who fit that description.

The solution may be that these parables are not all exactly the same. They all prioritize the lost, but there are differences in the details, the conclusions, and ones who are not lost.

Read Luke 15:1-2, The Context

The tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble. And what they grumbled about was, This man receives sinners and eats with them. Undoubtedly, the disciples were also there, but Luke wants us to know about these.

Read Luke 15:3-7, The Lost Sheep

The first parable emphasized two things: (1) The shepherd leaves 99 of his 100 sheep to go after the one that is lost, and (2) there is more joy *over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance*.

Read Luke 15:8-10, The Lost Coin

The second parable is the least complicated. A woman loses a coin and searches until she finds it. But it also has an interpretive comment similar to the lost sheep parable. *In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*

Read Luke 15:11-32, The Lost (Prodigal) Son

The third parable is complicated by several issues: (1) The young son has the (Satanic) idea that the father owes him something, and he wants to use it without submission to the father. (2) The young son is not just found but comes in humiliation and desperation (feeding pigs would be an ultimate disgrace for a Jew) and repents. (3) The older son complains but is told *all that is mine is yours*.

Comments and Applications from Luke 15

Whatever conclusion we come to about the exact meaning of the lost in these parables, it should be based in what we do know with certainty. We know:

1. God is interested in the lost. The lost condition of man is mentioned eight times in Luke 15 (verses 4 [twice], 6, 8, 9, 17, 24, 32).
2. God is interested in the repentance of the lost. Repentance is emphasized in all three parables (verses 7, 10 and 18-21).
3. There is joy in heaven, even among the angels, when a lost sinner (believer or unbeliever) repents.

There are several additional things we can learn from the third parable:

1. The lost are defined as those who see themselves as lost. The contrast is with the Pharisees who did not see themselves as lost, therefore, they did not see a need for a Savior (verse 16).
2. God will not allow His people, those who will eventually repent and return, to solve their own problems. Repentance came as a result of incurable problems (verse 16).
3. The repentant are those who come to their senses, not necessarily those who have a mystical or religious experience (verse 17).
4. God is just (judging each person from the same standard). God is not unfair (in the sense that He does not compare one to another and treat us all the same).

Questions for Discussion from Luke 15

1. True or false? The Pharisees complained because the tax gatherers and sinners were coming to Jesus.
2. Rejoicing in heaven over the repentance of the lost is mentioned in
 - A. The first parable
 - B. The second parable
 - C. The third parable
 - D. Only the first two parables
 - E. All three parables
3. When the lost son returned, he asked his father if he could be his
 - A. Son
 - B. Hired man
 - C. Slave
4. True or false? All the problems of the young son, while in the far country, were caused by his own actions.
5. True or false? One of the applications of the third parable is that God meets the needs of His own people abundantly.
6. The older son in the third parable thought the younger son should
 - A. Not be rewarded
 - B. Not be able to rejoice
 - C. Not get away with his sin
7. True or false? Faith is never mentioned in any of these three parables.

Answers: (1) False [Their complaint was that Jesus received sinners and ate with them.] (2) D. (3) B. (4) False [There was also a famine in the land.] (5) True. (6) C [verse 30]. (7) True.

Luke 16, The Unjust Steward, the Rich Man, and Lazarus

Winter of A.D. 33, Near Jerusalem

Luke 16 has two major stories (neither of them are called a parable) with 10 (overlapping) principles in-between. The first story is addressed to Jesus' disciples, the second to the Pharisees, although both groups are undoubtedly present for the whole chapter.

Read Luke 16:1-18, The Unjust Steward

The man in question here is a οἰκονόμον (*oikonomon*), a household manager or steward, one who manages the business of the owner. The owner fired him for squandering his possessions. But the unjust steward made friends for himself for his future reference by offering his master's debtors a reduced financial settlement. It is not clear if this benefited the master or not, but it definitely benefited the steward, who now had friends who would welcome him (possibly employ him) after he was dismissed. He is praised, by his master, and by Jesus, for his φρονίμως (*phronimos*) shrewdness or wisdom. The point being, he was shrewd or wise in that he prepared for his future.

Ten principles from the two stories:

1. Verse 9—Be shrewd, *Make [eternal] friends for yourselves by means of the wealth [money] of unrighteousness, so that when [not if] it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.*
2. Verse 10—*He who is faithful in a very little thing [money] is faithful also in much [eternal values]; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.*
3. Verse 11—*If you have not been faithful in [investing eternally with] the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches [the eternal rewards of the kingdom of God] to you?*
4. Verse 12—*If you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's [the wealth God has allotted you on earth] who will give you that which is your own [eternal rewards]?*
5. Verse 13—*No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.*
6. Verse 15—*that which is highly esteemed among men [pursuing wealth, serving money, and living in luxury] is detestable in the sight of God.*
7. Verse 16—*The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing [creating] his [own] way into it.*
8. Verse 17—*It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.* This is true for the whole Word of God. For example:
9. Verse 18—*Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery.*
10. Verse 18—*He who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.*

Read Luke 16:19-31, The Rich Man and Lazarus

This story illustrates the financial principles listed in #s 1-6 above. Some believe it is a parable because it occurs among a group of other parables Jesus told in Luke 13–16. Others believe this is not a parable because Lazarus is named, and no names are given in other parables. Either way, the point is the same. But this story tells us a lot more details. For example:

1. Our position after death reflects a judgment on the way we lived.
2. The problem is not wealth (Abraham was also wealthy). The problem is living in luxury and ignoring the needs of the needy.
3. Sinners go to a place (elsewhere called Sheol or Hades) of suffering, awaiting judgment.
4. The dead cannot contact the living, and it wouldn't help if they did.

Comments and Applications from Luke 16

Principles #1 – #6 (Luke 16:9-18) are all about money or material wealth. Money is called (in this order, in these 6 principles): *the wealth of unrighteousness, a very little thing, unrighteous wealth, that which is another's, and one of two inevitable masters, detestable in the sight of God*. Yet, we are told to make eternal friends with it, be faithful with it, understanding it belongs to God. We are just stewards of whatever wealth God has given us, and we will be held accountable for what we do with it. Wealth is dangerous. It is called unrighteous because it tends to anchor us to this world and tempt us to live in luxury, and therefore, end up like the rich man in the story of verses 19-31.

Principle #7 (Luke 16:16) tells us John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets. After John, God changed things so that Jesus introduced the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. This is the Good News that Jesus is the Way, the narrow gate, into the Kingdom of God available for anyone who would repent and follow Him. But instead of entering through Jesus, *everyone is forcing [creating] his [own] way into it*.

Principles # 8 – #10 are about the verbal inerrancy of the Word of God. It is illustrated with two unchangeable principles about divorce/remarriage: Don't divorce and remarry and don't marry a divorced woman.

Questions for Discussion from Luke 16

1. When Jesus said *the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light* (verse 8), He meant *the sons of this age* are
 - A. Better informed
 - B. Better at using money
 - C. Better at preparing for the future
2. According to Luke 16, Jesus' statement: *make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness* (verse 9) means money should be used to
 - A. Help the needy
 - B. Support missionaries
 - C. Build hospitals
3. Concerning divorce and remarriage, Jesus said,
 - A. No divorce, no remarriage
 - B. No woman should marry a divorced man
 - C. No man should marry a divorced woman
 - D. All of the above
4. Which one of these was not a reason the rich man was suffering after death?
 - A. He was wealthy on earth.
 - B. He ignored the suffering of Lazarus.
 - C. He lived in luxury.
 - D. He did not know about this place of suffering.

Answers: (1) C. (2) A [That's the point of the rich man and Lazarus story, the others are not mentioned.] (3) C [He said nothing about "No divorce," and B is not mentioned.] (4) A [Abraham was also wealthy on earth. The others are referred to in the story.]

Luke 17, Forgiveness, Prayer, and the Second Coming

Early Spring of A.D. 33, in Samaria

We get a clue about their location from verse 11. It reads: *While He was on the way to Jerusalem, He was passing between Samaria and Galilee.* It seems Jesus and His disciples traveled around these hills during the winter and spring before His crucifixion. Chapter 17 has three main teachings:

- (1) Two principles for the disciples
- (2) Three lessons about prayer
- (3) Teaching about the Second Coming

We might call it “The Samaritan Discourse,” which was taught over a month before the similar “Olivet Discourse” in Jerusalem, the week Jesus was crucified.

Read Luke 17:1-4, Don't Be A Stumbling Block But Keep Forgiving the Repentant

There are two powerful discipleship principles here:

- (1) Even though *it is inevitable* that new believers (*one of these little ones*) will sin (*stumble*), be sure you are not the cause of it.
- (2) *If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him*, no matter how many times he does it, and even if it's against you.

Read Luke 17:5-19, Prayer: a Principle, a Parable, and an Example

The apostles asked, *Increase our faith.* This paragraph seems to answer this with “a principle, a parable, and an example.” The principle is that they had the wrong focus. It is not the amount but the object of the faith that matters. Mustard seed faith can uproot and replant a mulberry tree. But it's not just having faith in God to do what you ask, it's placing your faith in what God is doing. The parable says that godly faith is not just about my obligations but what I can do to serve God. The example is about the thankful former leper who not only believed enough to obey and go to the priest, but he believed enough to realize he needed to also be thankful and give glory to God.

Read Luke 17:20-37, The Samaritan Discourse

Here we have a discourse similar to “The Olivet Discourse” in Matthew 24–25, but given a couple of months earlier as they were entering the Samaritan hill country moving toward Jerusalem. The Matthew discourse gives us the Tribulation, Second Coming, and judgments in sequence. Luke gives several principles without outlining a sequence: (1) Jesus told the Pharisees the Kingdom of God is in your midst, referring to Himself. (2) He told the disciples *He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.* (3) He said not to believe anyone with extra-biblical claims because, *just like the lightning when it flashes out of one part of the sky and shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day.* (4) He said that on earth it will be like the days of Noah and Lot when people increased their immorality, unaware of what was coming. (5) He gave two [and a third which has limited textual support] examples where *one will be taken and the other will be left.* This describes the separation at the Second Coming where one goes into the Kingdom and the other to judgment. This is not the Rapture of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, where believers meet the Lord in the air. (6) The statement *Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it*, here seems to refer to those who seek to keep their life by joining into the antichrist's tribulation economy. The one *who loses his life* is martyred during the Tribulation, and *he will preserve it* [his life] because he will be in the Millennial Kingdom with Christ.

Comments and Applications from Luke 17

Jesus is quite insistent that we not cause new believers to sin. Verse 2 reads: *It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he would cause one of these little ones to stumble.* So what would those stumbling blocks be today? I suggest stumbling blocks are condoning things like divorce and remarriage, keeping silent on things like cohabitation, lying, “casual blasphemy,” and cheating, overlooking disastrous theology like universalism and the emergent church. If we are going to be Christ’s disciples, then we cannot cause new believers to stumble.

In verse 20, Jesus told the Pharisees, *The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed.* This seems to be an odd statement, since the Bible gives lots of signs of the times, many by Jesus Himself. He also reprimanded them, saying, *You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze this present time* (Luke 12:56)? The answer is in the following verses. *They will say to you, ‘Look there! Look here!’ Do not go away, and do not run after them. For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day.* The signs we are not to follow are those made up by man, which are not in the Word of God, that predict a coming of Christ. The Second Coming of Christ will be sudden, unexpected, and public, not gradual, predictable, or private.

Questions for Discussion from Luke 17

1. True or false? According to verse 4, if my brother comes to me eight times during a day and asks for forgiveness, I don’t have to forgive him.
2. In verse 5, when the apostles said to the Lord, “*Increase our faith!*” ... *the Lord said* [essentially]
 - A. If you have the right faith, it does not need to be increased.
 - B. You increase your faith by exercising it.
 - C. When you ask, believing in the plan of God, it always happens.
 - D. When you ask, believe God, it will always happen.
3. According to the text, the leper who returned (in Luke 17:11-19) was better than the others because of which of the following:
 - A. He was thankful.
 - B. He had faith.
 - C. He gave glory to God.
 - D. All of the above
4. Which of the following things does Jesus imply about His Second Coming in Luke 17?
 - A. It will be surprising.
 - B. It will be predictable.
 - C. It will be sudden.
 - D. It will fulfill Scripture.
5. Lot’s wife (in verse 32) is an example of
 - A. Losing your life if you try to save it
 - B. Clinging to this world’s values
 - C. Being disobedient to God’s command

Answers: (1) False [Christ’s intended meaning is to keep forgiving a repentant sinner. Asking forgiveness seven times a day is beyond what would ever really happen.] (2) C [See the discussion on Luke 17:5-19.] (3) D. (4) A and C. (5) A [The others may be true, but they are not in this passage.]

Luke 18, The Rich Ruler

Early Spring of A.D. 33, in Samaria Nearing Jericho

Chapter 18 records two parables and three instances that Jesus used for teaching the twelve. They are apparently in the Jordan River Valley, approaching Jericho (verse 35) from the east, or northeast, on their way to Jerusalem.

Read Luke 18:1-8, The Parable of the Unjust Judge

The interesting thing about this parable is, God is represented by the judge who did not fear God nor respect man but helped the woman because of her continual persistence. Jesus' point was not that we get what we want if we persist in prayer but that *God [will] bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night*. But a more intriguing question is: *when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?*

Read Luke 18:9-14, The Parable of the Two Men Praying at the Temple

The Pharisee is thankful that he is not a sinner and that he fasts and pays tithes. But his thankfulness is contrasted with the tax collector who said, *God, be merciful to me, the sinner!* The lesson is, never find yourself in the position of the Pharisee, confident in your righteousness and your religion.

Read Luke 18:15-17, The Kingdom of God Must Be Received Like a Child

When people were bringing their children to Jesus, His disciples objected. Jesus not only received them but also used them as an object lesson, saying, *whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all*. This is not about all children going to heaven. It's about child-like dependent humility, rather than adult independent pride, as a basis for entering God's kingdom.

Read Luke 18:18-30, A Rich Ruler Is Told to Sell His Possessions

The man addressed Jesus as a *Good Teacher*, which Jesus used to point out His deity. But his basic question was, *what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* Jesus asked him about the Ten Commandments but left out the God-directed commands. When he claimed he kept them, Jesus told him, *sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me*. Jesus followed this with a general principle: *For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God*. The apostles wondered, *then who can be saved?* Jesus said, *things that are impossible with people are possible with God*. And those who leave their own relatives for the kingdom of God will receive eternal rewards.

Read Luke 18:31-34, Jesus Predicted His Death and Resurrection

Before reaching Jericho, Jesus took the disciples aside and told them they were *going up to Jerusalem*. There, four things would happen: (1) *All things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished*. (2) *He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon*, and (3) *after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him*; and (4) *the third day He will rise again*. But the disciples understood none of these things.

Read Luke 18:35-42, Jesus Healed a Blind Man at Jericho

Here and in Mark 10:46-52, we read of one blind man healed as they enter Jericho. Matthew 20:29-34 speaks of two blind men healed as they leave Jericho. Possible solutions include: (1) the one named Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46) is more outspoken, (2) they originally appealed to Jesus on His way in but were healed as He left, or (3) they were healed as Jesus left Old Testament Jericho and entered New Testament Jericho.

Comments and Applications from Luke 18

Jesus' discussion with the "rich young ruler" is one of the most fascinating and difficult in the Bible. The rich ruler was asking about eternal life. Jesus gave him five commandments most of us would also say we have kept (as long as you don't define adultery as looking to lust, and murder as being angry). So, say we are in the position of this man. Jesus said, "*sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.*" We like to suggest that this was because this man's money was his god. Possibly, but the apostles actually did this. Apparently, they left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God. Could you do this? I couldn't. But the apostles did, and Jesus made a side comment to them that they will be rewarded for it.

Then Jesus gave the general principle: *For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.* This is sobering because most of us are richer than this rich ruler. Those of us who live in westernized countries and in the 21st century have more medical, technological, and material wealth available to us than Nebuchadnezzar, the Pharaohs, or the Caesars of Rome. And this is not about a camel going through a small door in a large gate in Jerusalem. That story comes from the Middle Ages, but it has no biblical basis. Also, that story changes Jesus' point from impossibility to possibility. Jesus' point is, if you are trying to get to God by your righteousness, it's not going to happen, just like the Pharisee in the parable of verses 9-14. Our hope is not in achieving some standard but in the prayer, "*God, be merciful to me, the sinner!*" Referring to His upcoming death and resurrection which paid for our sins, Jesus told the disciples, "*The things that are impossible with people are possible with God.*"

Questions for Discussion from Luke 18

1. In the parable of verses 1-8, God is represented by a judge who is
 - A. Self-oriented
 - B. Others-oriented
 - C. Task-oriented
2. True or false? In the parable of verses 9-14, the Pharisee is not justified because of what he is thankful for.
3. True or false? Jesus' statement, "*Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these*" (verse 16) means small children go to heaven if they die.
4. True or false? Jesus proved the rich ruler never kept the commandment of verse 20.
5. True or false? When Jesus said, *How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!*, He actually meant it is impossible for the wealthy to enter the kingdom of God.
6. True or false? Verse 29 indicates that some of the apostles were married with children.
7. True or false? The blind man in verses 35-43 received his sight for the same reason the woman in the parable of the unjust judge got her request—faith was expressed by persistence.

Answers: (1) A. (2) True. (3) False [See discussion under Luke 18:15-17.] (4) False [Jesus said that keeping the commandments was not sufficient to get eternal life.] (5) True [Just as it is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.] (6) True. (7) True.

Luke 19, Zaccheus in Jericho to “Palm Sunday” in Jerusalem

Spring of A.D. 33, in Jericho and Jerusalem

This chapter begins in Jericho with the conversion of Zaccheus and a parable for the crowd. Then it follows Jesus to Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, and ends with a discussion after Jesus’ “Triumphal Entry” into Jerusalem. But Luke omits the events which occur in Bethany and Bethphage—the raising of Lazarus, which was earlier, before the Zaccheus conversion (John 11:1-44), the plans of the Sanhedrin to do away with Jesus (John 11:45-57), and the anointing by Mary in Bethany (John 12:1-11).

Read Luke 19:1-10, The Conversion of Zaccheus

When Jesus came to Zaccheus’ house, he said, *“Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.”* And Jesus said to him, *“Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.”* Jesus did not mean Zaccheus was saved because of his commitment to do good, or his being Jewish, but because he had faith like Abraham (Genesis 15:6). Then (as in Matthew 18:11), Jesus gave the purpose of His ministry: *“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”*

Read Luke 19:11-27, The Parable of the Different Stewards

This parable was told because the disciples thought that when they reached Jerusalem the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately, without Christ’s suffering and death on the cross (see Luke 18:31-34). The point is that Jesus **was going** to receive a kingdom for Himself, and then return at the Second Coming. In the meantime, during the coming church age, His followers were to fulfill the responsibilities He gave them. On His return, He would reward the faithful according to their service to Him, and His enemies would be judged.

V. Jesus’ Ministry in Jerusalem, 19:28—24:53

Read Luke 19:28-40, The “Triumphal Entry” into Jerusalem — Sunday

As Jesus proceeded toward the Temple, the believers (in verses 38) quoted from Psalm 118:26, a messianic psalm of praise. This may be the only reason the second Temple was rebuilt, so that the Messiah might triumphantly enter it. This is a fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9-10, *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

Read Luke 19:41-44, Jesus Wept Over Jerusalem — Sunday

Seeing Jerusalem, Jesus said, *“Your enemies... will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.”* This refers to the Roman destruction in A.D. 70 because they rejected Jesus as the Messiah.

Read Luke 19:45-46, Throwing the Moneychangers Out of the Temple — Monday

Twice, Jesus threw the moneychangers out to the Temple, once at the beginning of His ministry and now again near the close of it. Notice, Jesus never did this in a synagogue. The Temple was ordained by God. Synagogues were invented by the rabbinic Jews during the Babylonian Captivity.

Read Luke 19:47-48, Teaching in the Temple — Tuesday

These verses are an introduction to the discussions of Luke 20.

Comments and Applications from Luke 19

It should be noted that the parable of the servants (in verses 11-27) given in Jericho is not the same as the parable of the talents in Matthew 25, which was given on the Mount of Olives (usually called “The Olivet Discourse”) in Jerusalem just before His arrest. Ryrie writes:

Notice that [in Luke 19] each servant received the same amount (in contrast to the parable of the talents in which each received according to his ability, Matthew 25:15). The minas [about 3 months’ wages] represent the equal opportunity of life itself; the talents, the different gifts God gives each individual (“Ryrie Study Bible,” 1660).

What these parables have in common is they both refer to Christ’s judgments after His Second Coming. Clearly, Jesus used similar stories on different occasions to make both similar and different points. Once again, the context must determine the meaning of every text.

It is interesting that Jesus’ followers heard Jesus say many times that He would suffer and die, yet they could not understand it. They could not get it through their Old Testament theological grid, which said the Messiah would go to Jerusalem and start a kingdom. Clearly, Jesus had the power to do that, so the idea of His suffering and dying just did not compute. We must be careful to not ignore the Word of God because of our preconceived notions about things.

Questions for Discussion from Luke 19

1. True or false? The children’s song about Zaccheus and the sycamore tree is accurate.
2. When Jesus said, “*Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham*” (verse 9), He was addressing
 - A. Zaccheus
 - B. The disciples
 - C. The crowd
3. In the parable of the different stewards, the nobleman, described as *an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow*, is
 - A. God the Father
 - B. God the Son
 - C. God the Holy Spirit
4. In the above mentioned parable, *there are citizens [who] hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’* At the end, He said, “*But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence.*” These citizens represent Jesus destroying
 - A. Demons
 - B. False teachers
 - C. The unbelieving people of the world
 - D. The false religions of the world
5. Jesus said of Jerusalem, “*They will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.*” That means
 - A. The Jews rejected God’s visitation in the person of Jesus.
 - B. The Jews rejected their Old Testament revelation, which pointed to Jesus.
 - C. The world did not recognize the coming of Christ.

Answers: (1) True. (2) C [verse 7—He was talking to the crowd about Zaccheus.] (3) B [See the discussion in Luke 19:11-27.] (4) C. (5) A.

Luke 20, The Busy Day — A

Tuesday Before the Crucifixion, A.D. 33, in Jerusalem

This whole chapter takes place in the Temple, probably in the woman's court. The Jews held many discussions in this open court, just outside the Temple building, on the east side toward the Mount of Olives, because the Gentiles could not enter there. The chief priests and the scribes with the elders asked three questions, not to learn anything but to find grounds for putting Jesus to death.

Question #1—Read Luke 20:1-8, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things"

The answer is, Jesus had authority from God (Matthew 28:18), but that was what they expected Him to say, so He asked them, "*Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?*" This revealed that the Jewish leaders got their authority from men rather than God. They were afraid to answer because the people were convinced that John was a prophet. Typical of institutional religious leaders, they were only willing to say what the people were willing to hear (see verse 19).

Read Luke 20:9-18, The Parable of the Vineyard Owner and Vine Growers

As a follow up to the "authority" question. Jesus told this parable of a vineyard owner (representing God) who rented out his vineyard (the work of God on earth) to vine-growers (Israel and its leaders). But when the owner sent slaves (prophets) to collect what was his, they mistreated them. Then he sent his son (Jesus), and they killed him. So, Jesus said, *He will come (with judgment) and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others* (the apostles who would start the church). The Jewish leaders said, "No Way" (paraphrasing), but Jesus countered by telling them He was the rejected stone who became the cornerstone, a stone they were stumbling over, which will crush them.

Question #2—Read Luke 20:19-26, "Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

This was a "gotcha" question because the Pharisees thought paying taxes to Caesar broke the Mosaic Law, but Roman Law required it. Jesus asked for a coin then said, "*Whose likeness and inscription does it have?*" They said, "*Caesar's.*" And He said to them, "*Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.*" Implication: Whose likeness and inscription is on you? Give the tax to Caesar, give yourselves to God.

Question #3—Read Luke 20:27-38, "If a woman marries seven husbands, which one's wife will she be ... in the resurrection?"

This question came from *Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection)*. The Pharisees and the Sadducees were at odds over this issue. Jesus gave several insights here. (1) Marriage is for this life only, it ends at death—verse 34. (2) The believers are resurrected and *neither marry nor are given in marriage*—verse 35. (3) Believers in heaven *cannot even die anymore because they are like angels*—verse 36. Notice, believers do not become angels, and unbelievers are also resurrected, but not until later and only to be judged and cast into the lake of fire—Revelation 20:11-15. (4) Moses ... *calls the Lord "The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob"* (Exodus 3:6). *Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living*—verses 7-8. Therefore, dead believers are still alive. [I have called *those who are considered worthy to attain to that age* "believers" because worthiness is obtained only through faith in the death of Christ to pay for sin on the cross.]

Then Jesus Asked a Question—Read Luke 20:39-46, "How is David's Lord also His Son?" (Psalm 110:1)

Answer [not given]: Jesus is a son of David and David's Messianic Lord. Jesus followed this with a warning: "*Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes,*" etc. "*These will receive greater condemnation.*"

Comments and Applications from Luke 20

When the Jewish leaders asked Jesus, “*Tell us by what authority You are doing these things?*” It indicated that Jesus was not part of any Jewish group. He was not a rabbi, a scribe, a Pharisee, a Sadducee or anything official. That will probably prove to be the most impacting way to do ministry. The more your ministry is tied to a label, the more people will label you rather than learn from you.

Notice, in verses 37-38, how Jesus used Exodus 3:6 (“... *I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*”). Jesus made the point that these patriarchs were alive after death because God is not the God of the dead but of the living. In other words, He was assuming the Scripture is exactly, literally, verbally, inerrently true, and theological conclusions can be drawn from the literal details of the text.

In verses 46-47, after listing the sins of the scribes: “*who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, who devour widows’ houses, and for appearance’s sake offer long prayers,*” Jesus said, “*These will receive greater condemnation.*” So we can conclude that there are various degrees of sin and different punishments in the lake of fire, and the greater condemnation are for sins of pride and cruelty (see Mark 12:40; Luke 12:47-48; John 19:11; and Revelation 20:11-15).

Questions for Discussion from Luke 20

1. Which of the following was Jesus doing before the questioning of this chapter?
 - A. Preaching the Gospel
 - B. Teaching the people
 - C. Warning the Pharisees
 - D. Answering the Sadducees
2. Jesus asked the Jewish leaders about John’s baptism to show that
 - A. John’s authority was from heaven
 - B. Jesus’ authority was from heaven
 - C. The leaders’ authority was not from heaven
 - D. All of the above
3. In the parable of the vineyard, the slaves are
 - A. The Old Testament prophets
 - B. Jesus’ disciples
 - C. The believers of Israel
4. True or false? The spies watched Jesus so they could bring Him before the Sanhedrin.
5. Jesus’ answer to the question of marriage in heaven tells us all but which one of the following?
 - A. Angels do not get married.
 - B. Resurrected believers do not get married.
 - C. Resurrected believers do not die.
 - D. Those who are worthy go to heaven.
 - E. There are different degrees of rewards in heaven.
6. True or false? The reason for quoting Psalm 110:1 in verses 42-43 was to show that Jesus was a descendent of David.
7. True or false? From verse 47, we can conclude there are different degrees of suffering in hell.

Answers: (1) A and B [verse 1]. (2) D. (3) A. (4) False [It was so they could bring Him before the governor (verse 20) because the Sanhedrin could not deliver the death penalty.] (5) E [This is true but not taught in that passage.] (6) False [It was to show He was the Messiah.] (7) True.

Luke 21, The Busy Day — B

Tuesday Before the Crucifixion, A.D. 33, in Jerusalem

The occasion for this chapter is given in the last two verses (37-38). *Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet. And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him.* So it seems that the first four verses of this chapter are in the woman's court of the Temple (like chapter 20). Starting with verse 5, it is toward evening when He began to leave the Temple. Apparently, some pointed out the decorations of the Temple, and the disciples especially pointed out the Temple buildings (Matthew 24:1). Then as they moved toward the Mount of Olives, we have what is usually called the "Olivet Discourse" (Matthew 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 21:5ff).

Read Luke 21:1-4, A Poor Widow Putting in Two Small Copper Coins

Jesus said this *widow put in more than all of them; for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on.* Apparently, giving is measured by what you have left to live on.

Read Luke 21:5-6, The Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple

In response to admiration for the Temple, Jesus said, "*There will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.*" This was fulfilled by Titus and the Roman army in A.D. 70.

Read Luke 21:7-24, The Time before the Second Coming of Christ

The disciples then asked Jesus about the timing of these things and *the sign when these things are about to take place.* Jesus just answered the question about the signs, because only God the Father knows the timing (Matthew 24:36). Christ then commented on the seven-year Tribulation (Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:15) until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. The times of the Gentiles are the years described by the statue of Daniel 2 and the beasts of Daniel 7, beginning with the Babylonian Captivity under Nebuchadnezzar (586 B.C.) and ending with the Second Coming of Christ. Notice: (1) The word *you* is not just these disciples but future disciples during the entire age and into the Tribulation. (2) Things like false teachers, war, earthquakes, famine, family betrayal, and believer persecutions, have gone on all through the centuries, but they are all on the increase today, and they will all be amplified to global proportions and disastrous consequences during the tribulation period. (3) Jesus said, "*There will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.*" These things did not take place before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Therefore, Jesus was also talking about a future Great Tribulation. (4) Luke does not seem to be discussing when the seven-year Tribulation begins or to be distinguishing between the two halves of it (as Matthew does).

Read Luke 21:25-28, The Second Coming of Christ

Jesus' description parallels that of Daniel 7:13-14. But Jesus included cosmic events that make the Second Coming a public, global, catastrophic occurrence, which no one can ignore.

Read Luke 21:29-36, The Example of the Fig Tree

These signs are like the leaves on the fig tree. They tell you summer (and the Second Coming) is near. *This generation* [which observes the Tribulation] *will not pass away until all things take place.*

Luke 21:37-38 was discussed in the first paragraph of this chapter.

Comments and Applications from Luke 21

There is much discussion concerning verses 7-24 as to whether Christ was talking about (1) only the time of the destruction in A.D. 70, (2) the entire age before the Second Coming, or (3) just the seven-year Tribulation period preceding the Second Coming. This author favors #3. Verses 5-7 discuss the destruction of A.D. 70, but then Jesus skipped all the way to the signs which precede His Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation. Several things force that conclusion. (1) The catastrophic events described in verse 11 did not happen before A.D. 70. (2) These cosmic events have not happened throughout history. (3) The command to make up your minds to not prepare beforehand to defend yourselves (verse 14) does not sound like the advice the apostles gave to the church for confronting the enemies of this age (1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 2:15). (4) The wrath of verse 23 and the vengeance of verse 22 are not characteristic of this church age but belong to the day of the Lord beginning with the Tribulation period (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4).

In verse 33, Jesus said, *Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away* (see Matthew 5:18; Luke 16:17). Here Jesus gave two important principles: (1) This creation will pass away, not be re-made into some kingdom or utopia on this earth. And (2) His words are the inerrant Word of God which will never pass away.

Questions for Discussion from Luke 21

1. The reason the widow of verses 1-4 put in more than the others was because
 - A. She had the right attitude.
 - B. She had only two coins to give.
 - C. She had nothing left after she gave.
2. Jesus' description of the events leading up to His second Coming was given from
 - A. The woman's court in the Temple
 - B. The Mount of Olives
 - C. The Kidron Valley
3. Jesus' comment *there will not be left one stone upon another* refers to
 - A. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70
 - B. The destruction during the time between then and now
 - C. The destruction of the Tribulation period before the Second Coming of Christ
4. The phrase *nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom* refers to
 - A. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70
 - B. The destruction during the time between then and now
 - C. The destruction of the Tribulation period before the Second Coming of Christ
5. The statement *But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near* refers to
 - A. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70
 - B. The destruction during the time between then and now
 - C. The destruction of the Tribulation period before the Second Coming of Christ
6. True or false? The time after the beginning of the Tribulation is known in the Bible as the times of the Gentiles.
7. True or false? The point of the example of the fig tree is to be aware of the signs preceding the Second Coming of Christ.

Answers: (1) C. (2) B. (3) A. (4) C. (5) C. (6) False [The day of the Lord is the time after the beginning of the Tribulation.] (7) True.

Luke 22, The Last Night

Thursday Before the Crucifixion, A.D. 33, in Jerusalem

Read Luke 22:1-13, The Passover Meal

The gospels speak of the meal of this chapter as the Passover meal (Matthew 26:17-35; Mark 14:12-31; John 13:1-38). But the Gospel of John indicates Jesus died on the cross at the exact time that lambs were slain in preparation for the Passover (John 19:14). Josephus wrote that the Galileans celebrated Passover on Thursday and the Judeans on Friday. This would answer the question about the different Passover days. It seems this chapter happened Thursday afternoon and into the night. The place for their Passover was indicated by following *a man ... carrying a pitcher of water*. Most commentators feel that the only man who would carry water was a monk, thus locating the Upper Room in the southwest part of today's Jerusalem Old City, where there was a monastery.

Read Luke 22:14-23, "This is My body"

The statement, *This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me*, has four historic interpretations: (1) Roman Catholic transubstantiation, where the elements become the physical body and blood of Christ. (2) Lutheran consubstantiation, where Christ's body is present and alongside of the elements. (3) Calvin's spiritual presence, where Christ is spiritually present in the elements. (4) Zwingli's memorial view, where the elements are taken to remember Christ's death. View #4 seems preferable, since Christ is represented with many such metaphors (such as, *this is the light*, John 3:19; "*I am the door*," John 10:7; "*I am the true vine*," John 15:1; and "*I am the true shepherd*," John 10:9). Also, consider the next thing Christ said: "*This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood*." Clearly, the cup is a metaphorical symbol for the covenant. This statement declared that the cross ended the Mosaic Law (see Romans 10:4; Galatians 3 and 4) and made Christ's death the only access to God. In this paragraph, Christ also announced His betrayal.

Read Luke 22:24-30, "The Leader [is] Like the Servant"

The disciples had a dispute going as to who was the greatest. Jesus used the occasion to give His basic principle of leadership. Jesus said, *the Gentiles* [the ἔθνος (*ethnos*), a word used in the church for unbelievers or outsiders (Matthew 28:18-20)], *lord it over one another with positions of authority, But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant*. The example He gave was His serving them, like a household servant.

Read Luke 22:31-34, The Announcement of Peter's Denial

Peter's temptation came from Satan. Christ prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail.

Read Luke 22:35-38, Now, Take Your Money and Your Bag and Your Sword

This was to announce His betrayal, but it also seems Christ was giving a new directive.

Read Luke 22:39-70, Jesus' Arrest and Peter's Denial

This section includes the greatest denied prayer request in the Bible. Jesus prayed this near the Garden of Gethsemane. *Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done*. This paragraph also has the betrayal, the arrest, and the trial before both Annas (the former high priest) and his son-in-law Caiaphas, which Luke puts together. Peter's first denial was before Annas and the next two before Caiaphas (all during the night). At daybreak, the council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes. Here Jesus affirmed that He was the Son of God, which assured His execution (which was their goal—verse 2).

Comments and Applications from Luke 22

Leviticus 23:1-7 explains the Passover as the 14th of the first month (Nisan). The lamb was killed at twilight, roasted, and eaten throughout the night. This was followed by seven days of unleavened bread. The Sunday of that week was the First Fruits. It seems (although there are several views on the timeline) this particular week Jesus was arrested after the Last Supper on Thursday during the night, tried, and crucified on Friday, and raised from the dead Sunday morning. But the whole week might be referred to as the Passover or the Unleavened Bread (Luke 22:1, 7).

There is another thing to notice in the four views of the Eucharist/Communion. The first three listed above are about two things: worship and getting a blessing from God through the church and its clergy. That's traditionally called a sacrament. In these views, the worshipper gets something from God for taking the elements. In the fourth Zwingli view, there is only worship. There is no claim of a blessing coming from God through the church. That's traditionally called an ordinance.

Jesus' leadership principle deserves a bit more emphasis. True servant leadership is giving without authority. This is true leadership, not positions of leadership. In every situation, no matter the rank or position, the real leader will always be the one who does the most giving. In a dating relationship, a marriage, a family, a corporation, a church, even among a group of friends going fishing, the leaders will always be the ones doing the most giving. [By the way, leadership is not the same thing as headship.] That's why Christ is the true leader of the church.

When Jesus said, *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; He followed it with a surprising statement. He said, but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.* If I were Peter, I might have asked, "Why not pray that I won't have the satanic sifting?" But Jesus prayed that Peter's faith would not fail, and that afterwards he will be able to strengthen other believers. Notice, testing does not increase faith, but faith that endures testing allows us to strengthen others.

Questions for Discussion from Luke 22

1. True or false? The Passover and the Unleavened Bread were the same thing.
2. True or false? Peter and John prepared the Upper Room for the Passover.
3. True or false? Jesus said the cup represented a new covenant.
4. True or false? During the Upper Room meal, Jesus told the disciples they would be judging the 12 tribes of Israel in the kingdom.
5. True or false? Jesus prayed that, after Peter's denial, his faith would be strengthened so he could help his brothers in Christ.
6. True or false? After the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus told the disciples to take along a money belt, a bag, and a sword.
7. True or false? When Jesus prayed in agony before His arrest and crucifixion on the Mount of Olives, it was in the same place He often prayed.
8. True or false? Peter denied Christ while He was in Herod's court.
9. True or false? Peter's three denials were spread out over at least an hour of time.
10. True or false? Jesus was crucified for blasphemy.

Answers: (1) False [The same words were often used to refer to the week-long event, but Passover was before Unleavened Bread.] (2) True [verses 10-12]. (3) True. (4) True [verse 30]. (5) False [He prayed that his faith would not fail.] (6) True [verse 36]. (7) True [verses 39-40]. (8) False [It was in the court of the high priest—verse 54.] (9) True [verse 59]. (10) True [verses 70-71].

Luke 23, The Crucifixion

Friday of A.D. 33, in Jerusalem

I want to acknowledge that there are good arguments made for a Wednesday crucifixion and good arguments for a Thursday crucifixion. Most are driven by the assumption that there were three full (24-hour) days between Jesus' death and resurrection. But Luke 9:22 and 24:7 say Jesus would be raised on or in (dative case) the third day, not necessarily after the passing of three 24-hour periods of time. The other chronological statements better fit a Friday crucifixion.

Read Luke 23:1-7, The First Trial before Pilate

After His arrest, Jesus was taken before Annas (Luke 22:54), the former chief priest, then before an official council of the elders (Luke 22:66) at the home of Caiaphas, his son-in-law (Matthew 26:57). When Jesus said He was the Son of God, the council sent Him to Pilate, governor of Judea (3:1; 13:1), because the Jewish authorities couldn't carry out the death penalty. They said He opposed paying taxes to Caesar, but Jesus had said the opposite (20:25). And the blasphemy charge was worded to sound as if Jesus was an insurrectionist (23:2). Pilate stated clearly that Jesus was innocent (v. 4). But the Jewish leaders kept insisting that Jesus was guilty, so when Pilate learned He was a Galilean, he sent Him to Herod, *tetrarch of Galilee* (3:1), who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

Read Luke 23:8-12, The Trial before Herod

Pilate was hoping Herod would pass judgment so he wouldn't have to. The result of this was a friendship between Pilate and Herod, who had come to Jerusalem for Passover. Only Luke recorded this meeting with Herod.

Read Luke 23:13-25, The Second Trial before Pilate

Pilate again told the Jewish chief priests and rulers, "*I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him.*" Then why not just release Him? Because Pilate was afraid of the Jewish leadership. So he attempted a compromise. "*I will punish Him and release Him.*" But the Jewish leadership wanted Jesus dead, not just scourged. Pilate even asked that He be released according to a custom for the Passover season, but they insisted he release Barabbas instead.

Read Luke 23:26-31, On the Way to Be Crucified

Luke reported two events between Jesus' scourging and His crucifixion. First is the recruitment of Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross, presumably because Jesus was too weak after the scourging, but the text does not say that. Second is the statement to the women weeping, to weep for themselves and their descendants because of the upcoming judgment, not only in A.D. 70 but in the Tribulation. Then Jesus gave an illustration, in which the green tree is Jesus, and the dry tree represents the believers at the end of the age.

Read Luke 23:32-55, The Crucifixion

Notice: (1) They came to the place called *The Skull*, which favors the "Garden Tomb" location. (2) In Jesus' statement, "*Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing,*" *them* probably refers to the soldiers, and it shows that intentions are a significant part of morality. (3) The dividing of His garments is predicted in Psalm 22:18. (4) The statement to the criminal, "*Today you shall be with Me in Paradise,*" probably refers to heaven (2 Corinthians 12:4). (5) Joseph from Arimathea (a town northeast of Joppa/Tel Aviv) put Jesus' body in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain. This also favors the "Garden Tomb" site.

Comments and Applications from Luke 23

Here is a summary of the events of the last night before the crucifixion:

1. The Last Supper, somewhere in southwest Jerusalem
2. Christ's agony and arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane
3. The Jewish trials: before the old high priest Annas at night, then before his son-in-law (the designated high priest) Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrin in the morning
4. The first trial before Pilate, where he found no guilt in Jesus but sent Him to Herod
5. The trial before Herod, where Jesus would not talk to Herod but was mocked by Herod and his men
6. The second trial before Pilate where he set Barabbas free and gave Jesus over to the Jewish leaders
7. The crucifixion in the place of The Skull and burial in a new tomb

Questions for Discussion from Luke 23

1. When Jesus was first brought before Pilate, the Jews accused Him of
 - A. Claiming to be God
 - B. Claiming to be a king
 - C. Claiming to be greater than Caesar
2. Pilate sent Jesus to Herod because
 - A. Jesus was from Galilee
 - B. Pilate wanted to make friends with Herod
 - C. Herod was Pilate's superior
3. The reason the Jewish leaders wanted Barabbas released and Jesus crucified is
 - A. Barabbas was not leading the people
 - B. Barabbas was a popular figure among the Jews
 - C. Barabbas was not challenging their religious authority
4. In verse 31, Jesus and His message are the green tree. What does the dry tree represent?
 - A. Christianity which has departed from the gospel message
 - B. Christianity at the end of the age
 - C. Christianity during the church age
5. Jesus died
 - A. At noon
 - B. After 3 P.M.
 - C. After 6 P.M.
6. At the time of the crucifixion, the three previously unknown men who seem to believe in Jesus were:
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
7. True or false? The women planned to anoint Jesus' body with spices on Sunday.

Answers: (1) B [verse 1]. (2) A [verses 6-7]. (3) C. (4) B. (5) B [verses 43-46—the ninth hour is 3 P.M.]. (6) A. [The criminal on the cross, B. the centurion, C. Joseph of Arimathea.] (7) True.

Luke 24, The Resurrection

Sunday of A.D. 33, in Jerusalem

The New Testament gives ten appearances of Christ, after His resurrection and before His ascension: (1) to Mary Magdalene at the tomb, (2) to some other women near Jerusalem, (3) to Peter somewhere in Jerusalem, (4) on the road to Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, (5) to a group including ten disciples in Jerusalem (without Thomas), (6) to eleven disciples in Jerusalem a week later (including Thomas), (7) to seven disciples in Galilee, (8) to 500 at one time, (9) to His half-brother James, and (10) to the 11 in Galilee.

Read Luke 24:1-12, The Women Discover the Empty Tomb

Here is the most likely sequence of events on resurrection Sunday (only the bold are in Luke). (1) There was an earthquake, an angel rolled away the stone and the guards were terrified (Matthew 28:2). **(2) The women came with their prepared spices and found the tomb empty (Mark 16:1-4; Luke 24:1-3).** (3) Mary Magdalene returned to tell Peter and John (John 20:1-2). **(4) Meanwhile, the other women remained and saw two angels (Luke 24:4-8).** **(5) Peter and John ran to the tomb,** John arriving first but Peter went inside first (**Luke 24:12**, but Luke does not mention the Apostle John; John 20:3-9). (6) Mary Magdalene returned and saw Jesus (the first appearance, Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18). (7) The other women saw Jesus on their way back to the city (Matthew 28:9). **(8) The women who went to the tomb gave a report to the 11 (Luke 24:9-11).**

Read Luke 24:13-32, The Appearance On the Road to Emmaus (Only Covered in Luke)

The location of Emmaus, *7 miles from Jerusalem*, is uncertain. Jesus here appeared to two of His disciples. One is named Cleopas (verse 18), the other may have been his wife (since *Mary the wife of Clopas* [possibly an alternative spelling] is among the women at the cross—John 19:25). Jesus approached them, but *their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him*. Cleopas revealed: (1) Everyone in Jerusalem knew about Jesus and His crucifixion. (2) Jesus' followers *were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel*. That is, they saw Him as starting the kingdom, they had no expectation of the church age. (3) They had researched and confirmed that the tomb was empty. There are three miracles here: (1) when *their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him*, (2) when *their eyes were opened and they recognized Him*, and (3) when *He vanished from their sight*.

Read Luke 24:33-49, The Appearance to a Gathering in Jerusalem

This appearance is probably number 5 in the first paragraph above, *To ten disciples in Jerusalem (without Thomas)*. They are called “the eleven” for identification of the group, not as a head count (as Paul uses “the twelve” in 1 Corinthians 15:5). This time they recognized Jesus but thought He was a ghost. Jesus then demonstrated four things about His glorified body: (1) He could appear and disappear instantly, (2) He was like our flesh and bones (He could be touched, your hand would not just pass through Him like a holograph), (3) He could eat regular food, (4) He had the scars of the crucifixion, but apparently none of the other scars (say, from the crown of thorns or the scourging). Then Jesus taught about three subjects: First, all the prophecy about Him must be fulfilled, including His death and resurrection. Second, *repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem*, and third, they would be *clothed with power from on high* while still in Jerusalem.

Read Luke 24:50-53, The Ascension

The NASB/KJV translation, *He led them out as far as Bethany*, is not correct. It says, *He led them away* (ἕως πρὸς [*heos pros*]) *until toward* Bethany, that is *until* [they were going] *toward* Bethany.

Comments and Applications From Luke 24

During the walk toward Emmaus, Jesus pretended to be someone who did not know what had happened concerning His trial and death. He also pretended to go further down the road so they would invite Him in. Short-term pretense is not lying when the objective is to reveal the truth (as when Nathan used a story to convict David of the scope of his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah). This is the opposite of a lie, which is a deception that is intended to hide the truth.

Luke told us that on the road to Emmaus Jesus explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures, but Luke did not tell us what those things were. So apparently we don't need to know. Therefore, we should not guess. Types of Christ are only certain when identified as such. For example, we know Jonah was a type of Christ because Jesus said so (Matthew 12:39-41), but there is nothing anywhere that says the Song of Solomon is a type of Christ and the church.

Luke gave us the conversation on the road to Emmaus to confirm the resurrection, not to send us hunting for types of Christ. The same is true of Luke's account of the ascension. It is not to give us all the details but to affirm the ascension. Notice, when we compare it to Luke's own account in Acts 1, we get a more complete picture. For example, Luke 24 sounds like the same group went to the Mount of Olives, and in Acts 1 Luke told us there were forty days and many appearances in-between. If we were trying to find errors in the Bible, we might say there is a contradiction between Luke 24 and Acts 1. Yet that can't be, since both are written by the same author. Biblical authors use facts accurately to make their point. They do not necessarily tell us everything we want to know. We can, therefore, put together different texts to get a fuller account, but we must not ask the author something he is not answering. We often want to know more than the Bible tells us.

To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ... Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away (Acts 1:3-5, 12).

Questions for Discussion from Luke 24

1. Luke names what three women at the tomb?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
2. True or false? On the road to Emmaus, Cleopas said their hope was in the resurrection of the Messiah.
3. True or false? The initial report of the women was that the tomb was empty but not that they had seen Jesus.
4. True or false? Jesus called Cleopas and the other foolish because they did not believe what the prophets taught about the death and resurrection of Christ.
5. True or false? When Jesus appeared to the group described in Luke 24, they had trouble believing because they had not yet seen His scars.

Answers: (1) A. Mary Magdalene, B. Joanna, C. Mary the mother of James. (2) False [He hoped Jesus would redeem the nation of Israel (verse 21).] (3) True [verses 22-24]. (4) True [verses 25-26]. (5) False [It was because of their joy and amazement (verse 41).]