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Introduction

We are about to embark on a journey through the most important week in human history, in all of history. If you're unfamiliar with the story, it will be a transformative journey if you engage it with your full attention. If you are familiar with the story, you have a decision to make. It's possible to go through the motions, thinking you've heard it all before.

But we need to be challenged to go "beyond the surface." Yes, the stories are familiar: the Triumphal Entry, the crucifixion, and the resurrection, but their significance was earth-shaking when they happened and they're still life-changing today. Whether it's going under the surface and digging more deeply for more understanding, or like a rocket, going beyond the surface and into the atmosphere to new heights, God wants more for us than just staying at the surface.

This journey is going to take us from the Triumphal Entry, also known as Palm Sunday, and through the events of Easter Week – Jesus' teaching, the Last Supper, and much more – leading up to the crucifixion and Jesus' resurrection three days later. All four gospels cover these events, but we will be following Luke's account. The Gospel of Luke is his first book and then he wrote a follow-up account of the life of the early church – the Acts of the Apostles. The gospels are biographies of Jesus that show us the wonder of who He is and how He has changed everything for us through His death and resurrection, but also through His teaching, mentoring, healing, and miracles.

To aid you in your journey "beyond the surface," we've created this resource to take you through Jesus' final week passage by passage. Sometimes it's helpful on a journey to have a companion. That's why we've created this resource. For each passage we have assembled a few bullet points. Some will have background information, others will have some point on discipleship, and still others might explain some grammar or literary themes. All in all, we wanted to give you a resource to help you see Jesus' steps a little more clearly so you can walk in them. You'll need to be the one taking the steps, but this resource is your guidebook. To help on your journey, here's what you'll find for each section:

1. The actual text of the Bible. The translations will vary to expose you to the different translations available to us in English. You're welcome to read the translations we have provided or open your own Bible and read the day's section from Luke's Gospel.
2. "Explorer's Notes" are those notes previously mentioned. They are written by Neighborhood Church family who have formally studied the Scriptures in Bible college, seminary, or have decades of experience in Bible Study Fellowship. They're meant to be food for thought to help you get a little more out of your Bible reading than you might on your own.
3. Finally, we have some open space for you to journal using the SOAP method. Directions are included on page 3.

Where's the rest of Luke's Gospel?

You may notice that this resource does not cover Jesus' birth stories or His life and ministry. We have created other resources that cover these sections. If you would like the rest of Luke's Gospel, check with our pastoral staff and ask for our Advent resource, *The Gift*, or the life and ministry of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke, *STEPS*.

Bible Translation Abbreviations

The best Bible translation is the one you'll read, but we have selected a variety of them to help you get a taste for some of the options available. You will see abbreviations for these translations throughout the pages to follow. Here's their meaning:

ESV	English Standard Version (2016)
NASB	New American Standard Bible (2020)
NIV	New International Version (2011)
NKJV	New King James Version (1982)
NLT	New Living Translation (2015)

Guest Missionary Author Bios

Bruce Dower. Along with his wife Wendy, the Dowers provide an open-home, open-life ministry to military families at Fort Liberty (formerly Ft. Bragg), North Carolina through Shiloh Military Ministries. Their ministry revolves around discipleship, one-on-one mentoring, Bible teaching, evangelism, counseling, and fellowship over meals in their home, as well as retreats and outings. If you would like to contact him, Bruce can be reached at: Bruce.Dower@shilohmm.org

Dave Everitt. Along with his wife Lisa, the Everitts are based in the Pacific Northwest. Dave is working with NOVO, breaking spiritual ground for a disciple making movement in the Near East. Lisa is focusing her cross-cultural training with the working class American, trying to understand how to be, and bring, Good News to the people of Portland, Oregon.

How to use this resource

Life is hard, but the promises of God make the journey worth it. And these promises are secured at the cross and with the resurrection of Jesus. Throughout this resource, our desire is to go “beyond the surface” and get deeper into God’s Word. As you work through these passages, we anticipate the Holy Spirit speaking to you, but the Explorer’s Notes provide a little help from some friends. The Explorer’s Notes are here to help, but they are not intended to be a substitute for your engagement with God on this journey. Rather, they are an aid to understanding and an encouragement for some deeper study. The greater goal is to help you draw nearer to Jesus as we journey to the cross and resurrection with Him and His disciples.

We have found the SOAP method to be a helpful tool for meeting God in the Scriptures. Here’s how you can get the most out of your SOAP experience. And if you’re wondering what “SOAP” even means, it’s an acronym that we’ll explain shortly. But first, you need to prepare your heart and mind to hear from God. So, before delving into *Beyond the Surface* for the day ...

- **Find a quiet place**, somewhere you are least likely to be distracted. Ideally, you want to have an unhurried time with the Lord, so, if possible, you should plan to spend at least 15-30 minutes with Him.
- **Pray**. Even before you open your devotional, spend some time praying. Praise God in prayer – read some Psalms if you need help (for example, Psalms 104 or 116). Confess any sin you may be holding on to (see 1 John 1:9), and ask God what He wants to show you.

Now to that acronym!

S is for Scripture

After you’ve found your quiet place and prayed, reflectively read the day’s passage. Read it carefully, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what He would like you to learn from the reading. Write down any parts of the text that you think the Holy Spirit wants you to focus on. It could be a sentence or two; it could be a word or two. Write it down. The discipline of writing out God’s Word is a good habit that helps us remember and consider the meaning of God’s Word. Second ...

O is for Observation

What do you see happening in this passage? What do you think the basic meaning of the passage is? How does it fit with the previous passages? Context is critical. The better our understanding of the context, the better we’ll grasp what God is trying to say to us. Look for repeated words or themes. What does the passage teach you about God? Humanity? Write down your thoughts. Next ...

A is for Application

Now that we have a grasp of what God is trying to say, we need to wrestle with what He wants us to do with it in our lives. Consider what God is saying to you personally. Since you’ve been praying as you’ve been reading, what might God be saying to you? If He has shown another facet of His character to you, what’s your proper response? If He challenges you with an attitude or action, what will you do in response? If God challenged you with building a godly character trait, how can you cooperate with the

Holy Spirit to see that trait developed in your life? If God gave you a directive, what is your plan to fulfill what He has asked you to do? And finally ...

P is for Prayer

Talk to God about what He has just led you to discover. The goal is not some exhausting works-driven relationship. If God has given you a task, He's going to empower you to follow through, but He didn't create you to do it in your own strength. Ask Him for strength to follow up on what He's leading you to do.

If you are unsure what He's asking you to do, ask Him for insight. But don't worry. Not every day will end in a life-changing crossroad. Sometimes the process slowly changes us and shapes us. Our task is to engage with Him and keep listening. It's possible you will have a decisive spiritual turning point during one of these devotional times. We hope you do! But for most of us, it's going to be a slow process that builds momentum over time. The point is to set yourself before God and watch Him work. Let Him choose how He does it!

And that's it for the time in the Word, but the beautiful thing about Jesus' life and ministry is that, while it took place more than 2000 years ago, it still speaks powerfully today. So whenever possible, put what you learn into practice. Tell a friend what you are learning. Find out what God is teaching them, too. You'll be amazed how much more you learn and grow when it becomes a group project!

Now, let's go "beyond the surface!"

Why the cross?

This devotional was designed to walk us through the most important week in human history. It will be an amazing journey, filled with pain and culminating in joy. But it isn't just a story; it's for a purpose. Jesus said it this way in John's Gospel:

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. – John 10:10b

This abundant life that God is calling us to isn't how the rest of the world would define abundant because sometimes life is incredibly difficult. At the most fundamental level, it's about being connected to God and experiencing the abundance that comes with being connected to the true vine (see John 15), God Himself.

Jesus, God's Son, came to bring us abundant life, but we won't experience it – at least not God's way – until we choose to respond to God's invitation calling us to Himself. This is called the Gospel, which means "good news." Specifically, it is what God has done for us through Jesus. Accepting His invitation, His free gift, brings us from a state of separation from Him to becoming His daughters and sons. It's choosing to be on His team, in His fellowship, and following wherever He leads. So, what is this "good news," and how do we respond to it?

Good news is often best contrasted with bad news. So, let's hit the bad news first. We are born separated from God as Psalm 51:5 states. Our sin, all the wrong things we think, do, and say, separates us from Him. Romans 3:23 makes this painfully clear: "*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" The cost of this sin is separation from God as Romans 6:23 says: "*For the wages of sin is death.*" Bad news, indeed. We are all part of a vast crowd separated from God, likely buried in our shame and living in fear of death. But this isn't the end of the story.

God sent His Son Jesus on a rescue mission to a rebellious humanity as a light into the darkness:

He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:11-12).

Jesus took this step so that we might follow Him. His death plays a critical factor in this journey to a different kind of life. Jesus says it beautifully in the Gospel of Mark:

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

We find life with God through Jesus' death. He paid the ransom, taking the punishment for our sin in our place. It is a gift prepared for us; we have to decide if we'll receive it.

As you work through *Beyond the Surface*, you're going to meet with Jesus daily. You'll see who He really is and what that means for your life. We think you'll really like Him. If you don't have a relationship with Jesus, we want to show you how to start a friendship with Him, how to become one of His followers.

It's possible that you already know who He is; you've just been putting off starting that relationship, that friendship with Him. It's a big decision. It will change your life, because He isn't just looking to save you for heaven someday, He wants to change your life today. He wants to take you from a state of curiosity to actually becoming convinced that He is the Son of God who died for you and rose again. Beyond that, He wants you committed to Him and His purposes, which means being commissioned to serve others. He wants to set you free from guilt, fear, and shame, and then commission you to set others free in Him as well by sharing this very same good news. What an amazing gift and an amazing honor!

This decision is an act of surrender. You're choosing to give up leading your own life and instead giving leadership to Jesus and following Him. As scary as that might seem, He is completely trustworthy, and He loves you profoundly. Listen to one of the most famous passages in all of the Bible:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Salvation isn't a matter of earning something; it's a matter of trusting Jesus alone for your salvation and then letting Him change your life for your good and His glory. When you do, He will infuse your life with hope, power, purpose, and honor. If you'd like to take that step of following Jesus, pray this prayer – if you really mean it:

Lord Jesus, I know I have this mountain of moral debt. I am a sinner, and I know that this sin stops me from living the way you intended for me to live my life. I recognize this sin holds me back from relating to You. It burdens me with shame and keeps me shackled in fear. I know I need a Savior, and I believe You, Jesus, paid the penalty for my sin to set me free from my fear, shame, and guilt. So, I ask You to forgive my sin, and I accept You as my Lord and Savior. Thank you! Amen!

If that prayer reflects the depths of your heart, welcome to God's family! Be sure to tell someone. You'll likely jump into this study with a passion and a power unlike you've experienced other times you've read the Bible.

For those of you who aren't yet ready to make this commitment, we respect that. This is a big decision. We challenge you to keep reading. The gospels, of which Luke is one, were written so people would come to know Jesus and trust Him for salvation from sin. John's Gospel says it this way: *"these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name"* (John 20:31).

Whether you're a longtime follower of Jesus, you just prayed this prayer for the first time, or you're still investigating, God has something wonderful for you in this study as you go "beyond the surface."

Luke 19:28-40 (NIV)

28 After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 30 “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

32 Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them.

33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

34 They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

35 They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on

it. 36 As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

37 When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

38 “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

40 “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”



Explorer's Notes

- Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, beginning His last week on earth before His crucifixion, is an event described in all four gospels (see also Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; and John 12:12-19).
- Why is Jesus' entry into Jerusalem called The Triumphal Entry? How triumphal was it? In Roman culture, a "Triumph" was a parade given to a senior Roman officer who

had won a great victory and brought back the spoils of war. Conquered peoples were paraded both before and after him. Paul uses this imagery in 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 to describe the victorious Christian life.

- “The Lord has need of it.” That’s what the disciples were told they were to say to anyone who questioned them as they untied the donkey’s colt and brought it to Jesus for His use. How much does this attitude reflect your own heart regarding the things you possess? How tight is your grasp on what you own?
- While this passage is referred to as The Triumphal Entry, a case could be made that the ultimate triumphal entry is recorded in Acts 1:6-11. Jesus completed the work His Father had given Him. Death had been conquered, sin had been ultimately atoned for, and Jesus’ closest followers were given a front-row seat for His return to His home with a promise that He would one day return just as He left. When He returns, the world will finally submit to His ultimate authority, and we will finally see what it is like to have a holy, righteous, and just King reign! That’s victory! That’s triumph!

As you read this section, what verse or verses seem to pop out or resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord on the verse or verses He drew you to.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 19:41-48 (NIV)

41 As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it 42 and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace — but now it is hidden from your eyes. 43 The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. 44 They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”

45 When Jesus entered the temple courts, he began to drive out those who were selling. 46 “It is written,” he said to them, “My house will be a house of prayer”; but you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

47 Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. 48 Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.



Explorer's Notes

- One of America's national obsessions these days is the pursuit of and worship of personal security. Keeping safe has turned into a "phobia" without much objective reason regarding where our true dangers lie. The residents of Jerusalem trusted the city's outer walls and gates to protect them from invaders. Jesus said they will be of no use.
- Why do you think Jesus wept when approaching the city? From what emotions – sadness, frustration, or others – did Jesus' tears come?
- Based on Isaiah 9:6, Jesus is the "Prince of Peace," and yet here the destruction of Jerusalem is prophesied. What do you think is happening here?
- The Temple was the center of Israel's religious life, and Jesus disrupted its functioning in our passage today. Why would this earn Jesus a death sentence? What does it tell us about Jesus' adversaries?

As you read this section, what verse or verses seem to pop out to you? It could be the Holy Spirit giving you an inkling to take a moment and explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P method on page 3 and interact with the Lord on the verse or verses He drew you to.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 20:1-8 (NIV)

One day as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courts and proclaiming the good news, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to him. ²“Tell us by what authority you are doing these things,” they said. “Who gave you this authority?”

³He replied, “I will also ask you a question. Tell me: ⁴John’s baptism—was it from heaven, or of human origin?”

⁵They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Why didn’t you believe him?’ ⁶But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet.”

⁷So they answered, “We don’t know where it was from.”

⁸Jesus said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”



Explorer’s Notes

- Despite the miracles and teachings and even the fulfillment of prophecy, the chief priests, elders, and most of the major cultural leaders in Jerusalem did not affirm (or even deny) Jesus’ true nature. They chose to say, “We don’t know where [Jesus’ authority comes] from.”

- The cultural leaders were trapped in their own game of accusations. They refused to answer Jesus' question directly and instead resorted to a "who knows?" type of response, much like a modern-day agnostic (someone who believes it is impossible to prove God exists) might respond today.
- Some of these leaders are similar to what Jesus said about the Church of Laodicea in Revelation 3:16: "... because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth." If one is hot, or "on fire," there is obviously zeal there, but even if they are cold, perhaps they can at least recognize their own separation from God and sense that they need Him. When one is simply "lukewarm" about Jesus or noncommittal, this hinders moving forward in one's faith journey.
- When is it hard to stand firm in your convictions? Where in your life can you take a firm stand – whether it be with your beliefs, commitments, or even faithfulness to your local church or a ministry? What would it look like for you to be committed to Jesus and act on that commitment?

As you read this section, what verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to take a moment and explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord on the verse or verses He drew you to.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 20:9-18 (ESV)

⁹ And he began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. ¹⁰ When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹ And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹² And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. ¹³ Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ ¹⁴ But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, ‘This

is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.’ ¹⁵ And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶ He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When they heard this, they said, “Surely not!” ¹⁷ But he looked directly at them and said, “What then is this that is written:

“‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’?”

¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”



Explorer's Notes

- This parable isn't new to Jesus' audience. Isaiah 5:1-7 presents a similar story about Israel, which concludes, “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!”

- The fate of the Son is death at the hands of the tenants, but Jesus alludes to His resurrection. The Son becomes the Cornerstone on which the Kingdom of God is built. The vineyard is transferred to Him who will carefully tend to it like no other has or ever will; watering it, pruning it, and creating the best environment for growth.
- Those who receive the Son, “who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God” (see John 1:12). They will receive the inheritance that the religious leaders so coveted. For those who reject the Son, there will be judgment (see verse 18).
- What will you do with the Son of God? Will you respect Him and hear His words allowing Him to water your soul and prune away the bad habits, attitudes, and sin in your heart? Will you allow Him to grow His Kingdom in you?

As you read this section, what verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 20:19-26 (ESV)

¹⁹ The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people. ²⁰ So they watched him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor. ²¹ So they asked him, “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but

truly teach the way of God. ²² Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?” ²³ But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them, ²⁴ “Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?” They said, “Caesar’s.” ²⁵ He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” ²⁶ And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him in what he said, but marveling at his answer they became silent.



Explorer's Notes

- The religious leaders wanted to arrest Jesus “at that very hour” because of the parable He had just spoken against them in verses 9-18. They were angry, to say the least.
- The religious leaders had lost face with the people and were afraid of an uprising. Jesus’ popularity was growing as the people recognized God’s authority in Jesus.

- The questioners were sure that whatever side Jesus took would place Him in a bad position. If Jesus would say that it was unlawful to pay tribute to Caesar, then He would be accused of rebelling against Roman rule. If Jesus would say it was lawful, then many people would be angry because some considered paying tribute to Caesar a compromise of their faithfulness to God.
- Jesus cannot be trapped or tricked by anyone. He is God, all-knowing and wise. He discerns our thoughts from afar (see Psalm 139:2b).
- Jesus' response tells us that everything is under God's domain. It isn't Caesar versus God. It is Caesar under God carrying out God's mysterious purposes. Thus, it is oftentimes possible to obey Caesar and obey God (see Romans 13:1; see Acts 5:29 for when it is not possible).
- What do you do when you find yourself between a rock and a hard place? What or who drives your decision-making? Who do you find yourself trying to please? When you feel trapped, turn to Jesus, and ask what He would do.

As you read this section, what verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 20:27-40 (ESV)

²⁷ There came to him some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection, ²⁸ and they asked him a question, saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies, having a wife but no children, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁹ Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and died without children. ³⁰ And the second ³¹ and the third took her, and likewise all seven left no children and died. ³² Afterward the woman also died. ³³ In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had her as wife.”

³⁴ And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in

marriage, ³⁵ but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, ³⁶ for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

³⁷ But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. ³⁸ Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him.” ³⁹ Then some of the scribes answered, “Teacher, you have spoken well.” ⁴⁰ For they no longer dared to ask him any question.



Explorer's Notes

- Not all of the groups of Jewish leaders believed the same. The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection, final judgment, heaven, or hell. They were priests, wealthy, generally pro-Roman, and only held the first five books of the Bible, the Torah, as authoritative. Their question stems from the Law of Moses. Read Deuteronomy 25:5-6 for the details.
- The hypothetical case that the Sadducees presented to Jesus was intended to answer a deeper question: Does Jesus uphold the law of Moses? The Sadducees thought Jesus would be unable to answer the question without compromising the authority of the Law, but Jesus corrects their faulty thinking.
- Jesus wisely and strategically used the Law of Moses to re-align their thinking. Since Moses shared about his encounter at the burning bush with the living God, surely Moses believed Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would be resurrected because they, too, believed and looked forward to the fulfillment of God's promises (see Hebrews 11:8-22).

What verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 20:41-44 (NASB)

⁴¹ But He said to them, “How *is it that* they say the Christ is David’s son? ⁴² For David himself says in the book of Psalms,

‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD,
“SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,
⁴³ UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL
FOR YOUR FEET.’”

⁴⁴ Therefore David calls Him ‘Lord,’ and so how is He his son?”



Explorer's Notes

- The Sonship of Jesus was incredibly difficult for His fellow Jews to comprehend. There would be no trouble in seeing Him as the descendant of David, but to see Him as a divine person would be a perspective over which many would stumble.
- Most Jews of Jesus' time believed that the Messiah would come from the descendants of David to accomplish redemption, but very few had the eyes to see that Jesus' greatness surpassed David's.
- The mystery of Jesus' nature and role as the promised Messianic King and ruler over all nations broke down the wall between Jew and Gentile (see Ephesians 2:11-18). This division had been in place so long that the idea of bringing Jews and Gentiles together was difficult for some in Jesus' time to grasp.
- Jesus was a master questioner. He used questions to challenge the Jewish leaders. These questions established His authority and challenged their understanding of who Messiah was supposed to be.

As you read this section, what verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 20:45-47 (NASB)

⁴⁵ And while all the people were listening, He said to the disciples,
⁴⁶ "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love personal greetings in the marketplaces,

and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, ⁴⁷ who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers. These will receive all the more condemnation."



Explorer's Notes

- Religious practices were always challenged by Jesus when the heart and intentions of the practitioners were in the wrong place. Their religious practice did not bring out the inner, good side of their heart but rather the worst of it.
- In Jesus' time, religious practices revealed man's sinful heart, but they were also used to cover up the sin with good practices that ended up exalting man and not God.
- Jesus exposed the corrupt effects of religious posturing that allowed them to look good and yet still be selfish or evil. Jesus sought to love them by making them aware of their sin and their need for God.
- A genuine disciple of Jesus doesn't try to manipulate God with religious practices. Instead, they are given the righteousness of Christ and then seek to honor God and do good to others out of a devotion to God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

What verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 21:1-4 (NASB)

¹ Now He looked up and saw the wealthy putting their gifts into the *temple* treasury. ² And He saw a poor widow putting in two lepta coins. ³ And He said,

“Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all *of them*; ⁴ for they all contributed to the offering from their surplus; but she, from her poverty, put in all that she had to live on.”



Explorer's Notes

- Throughout the temple treasury were thirteen trumpet-shaped receptacles where those attending the temple would drop their financial gifts, tithes, and offerings. An officer would be stationed there to count the collection.¹

¹ Darrell L. Bock. *NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, p. 526.

- What does it mean to contribute from our poverty, as opposed to our surplus? Do we give to God's temple/church, plan/mission when we have excess only, or not at all?
- Why would Jesus notice this woman's gift over the more high-profile gifts that day? What is Jesus looking for when we give?
- Widows were often taken advantage of by the religious rulers financially. This one is recognized by Jesus to be nearer to the heart of God than those tasked with representing the heart of Yahweh (one of God's names in Hebrew) to His children.
- Why would Jesus bring how we give into our discipleship relationship with Him? How do we become the kind of people who give only to God and not to catch the eyes of those around us?

As you read this section, what verse or verses seem to pop out or resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you or giving you an inkling to take a moment and explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P method on page 3 and interact with the Lord on the verse or verses He drew you to.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 21:5-9 (NLT)

⁵ Some of his disciples began talking about the majestic stonework of the Temple and the memorial decorations on the walls. But Jesus said, ⁶ “The time is coming when all these things will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!”

⁷ “Teacher,” they asked, “when will all this happen? What sign will show us

that these things are about to take place?”

⁸ He replied, “Don’t let anyone mislead you, for many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and saying, ‘The time has come!’ But don’t believe them. ⁹ And when you hear of wars and insurrections, don’t panic. Yes, these things must take place first, but the end won’t follow immediately.”



Explorer’s Notes

- Jesus was teaching in the temple courts since Luke 19:45-48.
- The destruction of the temple in verses 5 and 6 was a trigger and hot button for the Jews of Jesus’ time. The Tabernacle (the pre-temple mobile worship center laid out in Exodus 25-31 and 35-40) and the more permanent Temple in Jerusalem (see 1 Kings 6) had been a sacred place of connection and interaction with God.
- Over the years, under the influence of legalistic religious leaders, there was a shift in worship at the Temple from pointing people to God and enjoying His presence to ritual, rules, and empty religious actions. Not all saw it that way, but the experience

of the awesomeness of God and prayer seemed to be lost (see Matthew 21:12-13 and Mark 11:15-18).

- Jesus' mission was to connect us to God through Himself. When Jesus died the veil of separation in the Temple was torn (see Luke 23:44-47), symbolizing that the barrier between God and man had been removed and now humanity could connect and interact with God directly because of Jesus. Those who have believed in Jesus as their Lord and Savior can boldly approach God (see Hebrews 4:16).
- In verses 7-9 Jesus does not give a specific date, but He encourages them to be vigilant by keeping focused on the Kingdom of God and Jesus' way of life (see Matthew 6:33). They are also to be careful who they follow. We are to follow Jesus and keep Him as our greatest influence. When we hear of wars, we are not to freak out in fear, but get on with our mission to love our neighbors (see Matthew 22:39), to be witnesses (see Acts 1:8), and to share and show Jesus (see Mark 16:15).

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Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 21:10-19 (NLT)

¹⁰ Then he added, “Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹ There will be great earthquakes, and there will be famines and plagues in many lands, and there will be terrifying things and great miraculous signs from heaven.

¹² “But before all this occurs, there will be a time of great persecution. You will be dragged into synagogues and prisons, and you will stand trial before kings and governors because you are my followers. ¹³ But this will be your

opportunity to tell them about me. ¹⁴ So don’t worry in advance about how to answer the charges against you, ¹⁵ for I will give you the right words and such wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to reply or refute you! ¹⁶ Even those closest to you—your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends—will betray you. They will even kill some of you. ¹⁷ And everyone will hate you because you are my followers. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish! ¹⁹ By standing firm, you will win your souls.



Explorer's Notes

- In verses 10-11 Jesus returned to giving more details about the signs of the Temple's destruction in response to the question posed in verse 7.
- Our passage makes it clear that before these catastrophic events take place, believers in Jesus will be persecuted. Followers of Jesus should be prepared to face opposition in this life.
- As verses 13-15 make clear, there is oftentimes an opportunity to witness about Jesus in the midst of persecution. In these situations God will give us the words to share who Jesus is and His power to save.
- While it is not pleasant to think about, verse 17 makes clear that the world will hate us. Much like how Jesus was hated, the world and the spiritual forces of darkness will not like His followers. The Apostle Paul instructs us on the nature of spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6:10-20.

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Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 21:20-24 (NLT)

²⁰ “And when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will know that the time of its destruction has arrived. ²¹ Then those in Judea must flee to the hills. Those in Jerusalem must get out, and those out in the country should not return to the city. ²² For those will be days of God’s vengeance, and the prophetic words of the Scriptures will be

fulfilled. ²³ How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for nursing mothers in those days. For there will be disaster in the land and great anger against this people. ²⁴ They will be killed by the sword or sent away as captives to all the nations of the world. And Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles until the period of the Gentiles comes to an end.



Explorer’s Notes

- There are multiple warnings from Old Testament prophets to Israel to amend their ways or face God’s judgment (see Jeremiah 6:1-8; 26:1-6; Micah 3:12).
- The parallels for this passage are found in Mark 13:21-23 and Matthew 24:23-24, but Luke leaves out some interesting words that indicate he is emphasizing the Roman siege and destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 rather than the return of Christ. Luke shifts his focus to the return of Christ in our next section.

- The destruction of Jerusalem at Roman hands was the last time the temple stood as the crown jewel of Jerusalem. The devastation was unfathomable. Ancient historian Josephus (sometimes accused of exaggeration) estimates 1.1 million deaths and 97,000 individuals taken captive during the Roman siege (*Jewish Wars* 6.9.3).
- Motherhood is considered an unequivocal blessing in the Scriptures – except during a time like this of intense distress and suffering (see verse 23).
- “Until the time of the Gentiles” hints that there will be a restoration of Jerusalem (see Romans 11:25-32). In the meantime, God was going to do a new work among the Gentiles who would receive Jesus as Messiah (see Acts 13:46-48; 18:5-6; 28:25-28).
- Passages like this one have been wrongly used throughout history to justify anti-Semitism, but to do so is a gross mis-use of the Scripture. God has made promises to Israel and to those who respond kindly to them (see Genesis 12:1-3) as well as promised them a future (see Romans 11 yet again).

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Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 21:25-28 (NKJV)

²⁵“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are

coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”



Explorer’s Notes

- When dealing with matters of end times, it can be difficult to know what is to be taken literally and what is symbolic. We can be certain that the return of Jesus is

literal and physical. Acts 1:11 makes it clear that Jesus will return in the same way He departed.

- God calls us to do good wherever He has placed us, even exile (see Jeremiah 29:4-9). Prior to Jesus' return, conditions will be desperate for humanity. Isaiah 34:1-15 gives a good picture of suffering.
- The return of Messiah in triumph is a longtime hope of Israel based on Daniel 7:13: "... and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him."
- While there is an expectation for Israel's Messiah to return, note how "the earth" and "the nations" are now in view. This is a global event.
- The redemption that is drawing near is not just salvation from our sins, but the completion of the process of salvation. Once Jesus returns, all will be set right.

As you read this section, what verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 21:29-33 (NKJV)

²⁹ Then He spoke to them a parable:
“Look at the fig tree, and all the trees.
³⁰ When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. ³¹ So you also, when you see these things happening,

know that the kingdom of God is near.
³² Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.



Explorer's Notes

- This is not the first time Luke records Jesus using a parable about a fig tree in training His disciples (see Luke 13:6-9).
- Jesus was a master teacher who loved to use the environment around Him to drive home a point. Ancient Israelites experienced fig trees in bloom. Just as buds signaled that summertime was approaching, so too will the people of God notice the significance of these signs (verses 5-28) when the temple will be destroyed, its *“rocks having been thrown down”* (verse 6).
- *“This generation”* (verse 32) could point to the actual people hearing Jesus' words that day, who would have been alive when the temple was destroyed in AD 70, or it

could be the “*generation*” of people who start to witness the cosmic signs in verse 25.

- Jesus is not to be taken lightly here. He is the *absolute authority*, not only on the Temple of God, but the Kingdom of God and how it’s to shape our lives. How powerful to think that only God’s words have eternal staying power. Jesus is equating Himself to Yahweh’s eternal staying power as well (see Psalm 119:89).
- As with the heart of the generous widow at the beginning of this chapter, here we see Jesus challenging the hearts of those more fixated on the pride, presence, and prestige of the temple, as opposed to paying attention to the bigger picture of God’s plans outside the temple. How might we cling more readily to the eternal words of Jesus that can never be destroyed or broken? How could that form our outlook and hope for tomorrow, come what may?

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Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 21:34-38 (NKJV)

³⁴ “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.

³⁵ For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy

to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

³⁷ And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. ³⁸ Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.



Explorer's Notes

- Jesus concluded His teaching by helping people ponder the most important questions: What am I to give myself to in the days coming up to all of this? How am I to deal with all of this in my soul?
- He knows how people respond: escapism, denial, and ignorance. Ask yourself, “What are those things I turn to other than Jesus that I think will alleviate the heavy things in my heart that come with following Jesus and living this life here on earth?”

- Jesus instructed His followers to not disengage with God in their discipleship, but rather to watch for what God might be doing in their midst and pray. When the reality of Jesus' words sink down into our hearts, we can experience heaviness, sadness, and pain for those who don't know the depths of God's love for them. When we follow Jesus, we may see others reject Jesus and His words. Jesus never forces anyone to love or follow Him. Our response should be to watch for Jesus' movements in our own life and talk with Him about it in prayer.
- Jesus' words here are as necessary for His followers today as they were in the first century. It is sobering and comforting to walk closely with Jesus and be entrusted with the knowledge of things we don't yet fully understand. Jesus gives us everything we need for life and godliness during our time here on earth (see 2 Peter 1:3). What is Jesus calling you to pay attention to right now? What do you need to hear from this passage today?

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Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 22:1-6 (NIV)

Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching,² and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people.³ Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.⁴ And

Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus.⁵ They were delighted and agreed to give him money.⁶ He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.



Explorer's Notes

- Timing is critical! For Jesus to be the prophesied, long-awaited Passover Lamb, He needed to be crucified at this very time of year. In the month of Nissan (March or April), the Jews celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This week-long feast commemorated the hasty departure from Egypt when Moses instructed the Jews to get their bread ready for there would be no time for the yeast to rise.

- The first day of the celebration was called the Passover, which reminded them of the death angel who “passed over” the houses where the blood of a lamb was painted on their door lintels back in Egypt. Jesus was about to fulfill this prophecy.
- Though the Pharisees and scribes had already decided to kill Jesus, they did not know how to do it without causing a riot. So, in God’s grand plan, Satan entered Judas (see John 13:27) who, though he was one of the twelve disciples, was not a true believer, for no believer can be possessed by Satan as light drives out darkness (see John 1:5). This is the believer’s great assurance.
- Luke identified the betrayer as Judas called Iscariot, so as not to be confused with the disciple Thaddeus also called Judas (see Matthew 10:3 and Mark 3:18). Judas was the treasurer and was called a thief by some (see John 12:6). It is not surprising that Judas initiated a plan to betray Jesus (see Mark 14:10) and the Pharisees agreed to pay him thirty pieces of silver for this act (see Matthew 26:15).

As you read this section, what verse or verses seem to pop out or resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you or giving you an inkling to take a moment and explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord on the verse or verses He drew you to.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 22:7-13 (NIV)

⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.”

⁹ “Where do you want us to prepare for it?” they asked.

¹⁰ He replied, “As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet

you. Follow him to the house that he enters, ¹¹ and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ¹² He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there.”

¹³ They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.



Explorer's Notes

- These verses read like a “Mission Impossible” assignment. God had determined the time, the place, and who would carry out His plan. The time was now, the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was going to be sacrificed.

- Peter and John were selected to carry out this mission, to prepare the Passover meal for Jesus and the disciples. But where and how? Their “contact” would be inside Jerusalem, carrying a jar of water. “Follow him into the house where he leads you.” But, surprise! This man is not the homeowner. Inside, they simply and directly tell the homeowner that the Teacher wants to have His Passover meal in the guest room. It seems apparent that Jesus’ reputation has preceded Him. The master of the house didn’t hesitate. This room has become the famous Upper Room where our practice of Communion began.
- Peter and John prepared the meal. There was no grumbling. Preparing a meal after having healed people and cast out demons might seem insignificant and perhaps unimportant. However, no instruction given by Jesus is ever insignificant, no matter how it may appear. Nothing God asks you to do is ever unimportant.

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Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 22:14-23 (NIV)

¹⁴ When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. ¹⁵ And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”

¹⁷ After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. ¹⁸ For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

¹⁹ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them,

saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. ²¹ But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. ²² The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!” ²³ They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.



Explorer's Notes

- This meal, which has become known as the Last Supper, signals that the hour of Jesus' suffering has arrived.

- Reclining at the table means just that. At formal meals and feasts, low tables were arranged in a U-shape with cushions around them. The guests' heads faced toward the tables and their feet toward the walls. Jesus, being the host, reclined at the center. Unfortunately, Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper is lovely, but not correct.
- Jesus expressed His love for the disciples by telling them how important it was to Him to eat this meal with them. He knew it was His last. He alone was aware that it looked forward to the "marriage supper of the Lamb" in heaven (see Revelation 19:7-10).
- The ordinance known as Communion was instituted in this room, at this meal by Jesus Christ Himself. The cup of wine symbolized His blood and the bread symbolized His body, both sacrificed on the cross as payment for our sins. For 2,000 years this celebration has been done "In remembrance of Him."

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Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 22:24-30 (ESV)

²⁴ A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. ²⁵ And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. ²⁶ But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. ²⁷ For who is the

greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

²⁸ “You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, ²⁹ and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, ³⁰ that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.



Explorer's Notes

- A dispute took place between Jesus' disciples at the Last Supper, just after Judas left to betray Jesus. These young men always seem to have the same fight: Who in

the group is the greatest? Who will be their leader? (see Luke 9:46-48; Matthew 18:1-5; and Mark 9:33-37).

- Jesus settled this argument by instructing that those who receive Jesus humbly like a child will be greatest in His kingdom. These are the ones who have table fellowship with Jesus, who receive Him with humility, and seek to serve like Him.
- Jesus told them: (1) you are here eating and drinking at my table, (2) I am the greatest because I am here to serve you (with my life and washing of your feet), and (3) don't be like others who care about titles and social ranking. Rather, care that you know Me and serve like Me.
- Unfortunately, none of the disciples stood by Jesus during His trials. Peter cowered close by. Jesus walked this path alone. Yet, by God's grace, these same disciples were instrumental in carrying forth Jesus' message about God's kingdom.

As you read this section, what verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 22:31-34 (ESV)

³¹ “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, ³² but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen

your brothers.” ³³ Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.” ³⁴ Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.”



Explorer's Notes

- Contrast Peter and Judas here (see Luke 22:4 and Luke 22:31). Jesus prayed for Peter. Jesus knew that Simon was going to fail, but would also turn back and strengthen his friends and brothers (see John 13:31-38 and 21:15-25).
- Jesus used very gracious words even though He knew Peter would betray Him. Moving forward, Jesus told Peter that what Jesus has to do must be done alone, but that Peter would be used to change the world in the future.
- Peter would fail and deny Jesus. All of us have in some way at some time failed, too. Yet Jesus had a future for Peter and He has a future plan for us. How have you seen Jesus overcome or even redeem your failures for your good and God's glory?

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Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 22:35-38 (ESV)

³⁵ And he said to them, “When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?” They said, “Nothing.” ³⁶ He said to them, “But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak

and buy one. ³⁷ For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors.’ For what is written about me has its fulfillment.” ³⁸ And they said, “Look, Lord, here are two swords.” And he said to them, “It is enough.”



Explorer's Notes

- In verses 35-36, Jesus revealed a new reality that would face Jesus' disciples. Earlier, in their ministry (see Luke 9:1-6 and 10:1-24) their necessities of life were supplied; now Jesus showed His disciples that they will minister in a world that may be hostile towards them.

- Isaiah 53:12 prophesied that the Messiah will be “numbered with the transgressor” or, in other words, be considered a criminal. In verse 37, Jesus quoted this Isaiah passage to show His disciples what must happen to Him as well as what is about to happen to Him. By implication, those who follow and identify with Jesus may also experience this opposition.
- The disciples misunderstood Jesus’ meaning of a sword. They thought Jesus wanted them to get swords to prepare for physical battle (Jesus speaks against violent action later in verses 50-51). Jesus was actually teaching His disciples to be spiritually armed and prepared for battle against spiritual forces and foes.
- Jesus’ remarks are important for our daily lives, too. He said, if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak. What does this mean for our lives? Cloaks were an essential garment of life to keep warm at night. Yet, Jesus shared deep wisdom: being spiritually prepared is even more essential for our lives than our physical needs.

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Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 22:39-46 (NASB)

³⁹ And He came out and went, as was His habit, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. ⁴⁰ Now when He arrived at the place, He said to them, "Pray that you do not come into temptation." ⁴¹ And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and *began* to pray, ⁴² saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours

be done." ⁴³ [Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. ⁴⁴ And being in agony, He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground]. ⁴⁵ When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, ⁴⁶ and He said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you do not come into temptation."



Explorer's Notes

- Jesus commanded the disciples to pray against temptation, which most likely means having an ongoing commitment to pray as opposed to a single prayer. Jesus reminded His disciples that temptation now, and through all of life, can only be avoided by continued dependence on God.
- The disciples underestimated the severity of these moments with Jesus right before His arrest, as shown by them falling asleep.

- Just before His arrest, Jesus talked to His Father with full honesty, sharing the depth of His intense emotional distress. Jesus revealed His anguish as well as His desire to follow God's will, even if it cost His life. Jesus asked the Father if the cup of wrath could be passed from Him, but only if it's God's will.
- Jesus is our model. We can come to God in full honesty and share the depth of our emotional distress and desires and know He is listening. What pain, grief, or struggles can you share in full honesty with God today?
- How did God answer Jesus' request? God gave Jesus strength – strength to endure what lay before Him.
- Jesus continued to pray more fervently in deep anguish as He faced death and rejection and laid these emotions with sweat, like blood, before God. Jesus can identify with our weaknesses, suffering, and traumas.
- Jesus then returned to His disciples and again reminded them of their need for connection with God through prayer in order to face what lies ahead.

What verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 22:47-53 (NASB)

⁴⁷ While He was still speaking, behold, a crowd *came*, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading the way for them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. ⁴⁸ But Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” ⁴⁹ When those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?” ⁵⁰ And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and

cut off his right ear. ⁵¹ But Jesus responded and said, “Stop! No more of this.” And He touched his ear and healed him. ⁵² And Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him, “Have you come out with swords and clubs as *you would* against a man inciting a revolt? ⁵³ While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but ⁵⁴ this hour and the power of darkness are yours.”



Explorer's Notes

- Jesus was betrayed by Judas. Jesus' arrest meant He submitted to God's will, and that He will have to experience the cup of wrath through death.
- The kiss – a sign of intimacy, connection, and affection – was distorted and used to try to cover this act of betrayal and rejection. Satan often works hard to mask and disguise the true deceptive quality of sin. Jesus saw the truth and directly acknowledged it.

- Though protective of Jesus, the disciples did not understand Jesus' comments about swords earlier in verse 36 so they asked if they should fight. Peter (according to John 18:10), struck a servant and cut off his ear. Jesus put a stop to this because He has submitted to God's will and the Jewish leadership's desire to arrest him. Jesus' response communicated a sense of ultimate confidence in God's ultimate sovereignty.
- Jesus performed a miracle in that very moment by picking up and healing the servant's ear! This is the Gospel – Jesus ministers to sinners in need. Jesus loved His enemies. Judas and this crowd represented the very people Jesus came to save.
- Jesus questioned why He was being arrested like a robber or a dangerous criminal when they have all been with Him daily. Jesus declared His arrest as a time “when darkness reigns,” or Satan's attempt to stop Jesus. To reject Jesus as God is to side with those who arrested Him.

What verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Pray

Luke 22:54-62 (NASB)

⁵⁴ Now they arrested Him and led *Him* away, and brought *Him* to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance. ⁵⁵ After they kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter was sitting among them. ⁵⁶ And a slave woman, seeing him as he sat in the firelight, and staring at him, said, "This man was with Him as well." ⁵⁷ But he denied *it*, saying, "I do not know Him, woman!" ⁵⁸ And a little later, another person saw him and said, "You are *one* of them too!" But Peter

said, "Man, I am not!" ⁵⁹ And after about an hour had passed, some other man *began* to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he, too, is a Galilean." ⁶⁰ But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about!" And immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. ⁶¹ And *then* the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." ⁶² And he went out and wept bitterly.



Explorer's Notes

- Jesus has always been in control and protected by God, but now there was a sudden turn of events. Jesus warned them previously, but they did not understand.

The situation was scary and very dangerous. Jesus predicted they would all fall away, but Peter insisted that he alone would not. Maybe he was a little too confident in his own strength. Pride goes before a fall (see Proverbs 16:18-19). This reminds us that we cannot depend on our own strength.

- Peter now found himself doing the very thing he was sure he would not do – deny Jesus. At that moment, Jesus looked over to Peter. The Greek word suggests it was a look of loving concern. Satan wanted to bring spiritual ruin to Peter, but Jesus had prayed for him (see verses 31-32). Peter went out and wept bitterly because he denied Jesus. Jesus would later forgive and restore him (see John 21).
- We all fail at times, but our failures do not have to be the end of the story. God forgives and restores us and gives us the power to go forward. Don't give up! Don't let your setbacks be your spiritual ruin. God can, and will, still use you.

As you read this section, what verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to take a moment and explore what God may be saying. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 22:63-65 (NLT)

⁶³ The guards in charge of Jesus began mocking and beating him. ⁶⁴ They

blindfolded him and said, "Prophecy to us! Who hit you that time?" ⁶⁵ And they hurled all sorts of terrible insults at him.



Explorer's Notes

- Isaiah 53 is a great prophetic picture looking forward to Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, but note also those verses that speak to how He was rejected and despised.
- In asking Jesus to prophesy, the soldiers (likely the temple guards rather than Romans at this point) revealed the commonly held idea that Jesus was a prophet. Even if the religious leaders were able to drum up charges of Jesus being a false prophet, it would be insufficient to get Rome's attention for trial.²
- The fact that Jesus would be so ruthlessly and ignorantly mocked is amazing. It is amazing that the soldiers failed so spectacularly in understanding who He is, but it is also amazing that He would allow Himself to be subjected to this mockery. And yet, the Apostle Paul points to Jesus' humility as the pattern that we should follow in how we relate to one another in Philippians 2:1-11.

As you read this section, what verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

² Darrell L. Bock, *NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, p. 576.

Luke 22:66-71 (NLT)

⁶⁶ At daybreak all the elders of the people assembled, including the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. Jesus was led before this high council, ⁶⁷ and they said, “Tell us, are you the Messiah?”

But he replied, “If I tell you, you won’t believe me. ⁶⁸ And if I ask you a

question, you won’t answer. ⁶⁹ But from now on the Son of Man will be seated in the place of power at God’s right hand.”

⁷⁰ They all shouted, “So, are you claiming to be the Son of God?”

And he replied, “You say that I am.”

⁷¹ “Why do we need other witnesses?” they said. “We ourselves heard him say it.”



Explorer’s Notes

- In Jewish tradition, trials could only be held during the day. Nighttime trials were illegal.
- Jesus referred to Himself as “Son of Man” 69 times in the gospels. Why? His mostly Jewish audience knew exactly what that meant – “Son of Man” referred to the

Messiah, the Savior, from Daniel's prophetic vision in the Bible book of Daniel 7:13-14. In other words, every time Jesus referred to Himself as the "Son of Man," He declared that He was indeed the long-awaited Messiah!

- Note that after Jesus referred to Himself as the "Son of Man," they asked Him if He was the "Son of God" because they recognized that He claimed to be the Messiah. Many Bible translations translate Jesus' response (verse 70) literally – "You say that I am" – but the meaning in the original language is potent and unmistakable – "Yes, I am!"
- When Moses asked about God's name in Exodus 3:13-14, God replied, "I AM WHO I AM." Jesus used the term "I am" multiple times in the gospels, and many scholars believe that these were declarations of His Godhood (see also John 8:24; 8:58, and 18:5).

As you read this section, what verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 23:1-7 (NLT)

Then the entire council took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor. ² They began to state their case: “This man has been leading our people astray by telling them not to pay their taxes to the Roman government and by claiming he is the Messiah, a king.”

³ So Pilate asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

Jesus replied, “You have said it.”

⁴ Pilate turned to the leading priests and to the crowd and said, “I find nothing wrong with this man!”

⁵ Then they became insistent. “But he is causing riots by his teaching wherever he goes—all over Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem!”

⁶ “Oh, is he a Galilean?” Pilate asked.

⁷ When they said that he was, Pilate sent him to Herod Antipas, because Galilee was under Herod’s jurisdiction, and Herod happened to be in Jerusalem at the time.



Explorer’s Notes

- At this point the religious leaders had two options. They could accept Jesus as the promised Messiah or they could reject Him and put Him to death for claiming to be Christ, their Messiah. What did they do? They rejected Him. Many of these religious leaders spat at him. Guards then took Jesus and beat him.
- Jesus had been through three religious trials by the Jewish leaders already, but the Romans did not allow Jews to impose the death penalty so they brought Jesus to

Pilate. Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor, or prefect, of Judea from A.D. 26-36 who served under Emperor Tiberius. We know him best for his involvement in condemning Jesus to death on a cross.

- The Roman trials now begin. There were three phases. Think of a sandwich – Pilate, Herod Antipas and Pilate.
- Two false claims were made against Jesus by the Jewish leaders: Jesus opposes paying taxes to Caesar (see Luke 20:25) and He claims to be Christ, a king. These leaders vehemently insisted that Jesus was guilty and deserving of death.
- Pilate questioned Jesus and did not find Jesus guilty. He had not broken the Roman law, and Pilate could not judge the Jewish religious laws. However, Pilate had learned that Jesus was from Galilee, so he sent Jesus to Herod to pacify the Jewish leaders and escape the responsibility of making a decision.

As you read this section, what verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 23:8-17 (NKJV)

⁸ Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long *time* to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. ⁹ Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. ¹⁰ And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. ¹¹ Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked *Him*, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. ¹² That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.

¹³ Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, ¹⁴ said to them, “You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined *Him* in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; ¹⁵ no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. ¹⁶ I will therefore chastise Him and release *Him*” ¹⁷ (for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast).



Explorer's Notes

- Pilate could send Jesus to Herod because He was under Herod's jurisdiction as a resident of Galilee. Herod also happened to be in Jerusalem for the Passover, which made this a reasonable option, since Galilee was at least a three day walk north from Jerusalem.
- Herod Antipater, or Antipas, was the son of Herod the Great who ruled at the time of Jesus' birth. Herod Antipas was a tetrarch, or ruler of one quarter of his father's kingdom. In the gospels, every mention of Herod outside of Matthew 1 and Luke 1

and 2 refers to this Herod. This is also the Herod who was responsible for the death of John the Baptist.

- Herod was excited to meet Jesus and hoped Jesus would do a miracle, more like give him a magic show. When Jesus, who in His omniscience knows all of our thoughts and motives, refused, Herod joined in the mockery of Jesus and dressed Him up as a false king. He, too, rejected Jesus.
- Though Herod asked questions, Jesus did not reply, so Herod returned Him to Pilate without passing any judgment on Jesus.
- Verse 17 is omitted from some versions, but if it is not in the text, it should be footnoted in most translations. Either way, Matthew 27:15 affirms the information “Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the people any one prisoner whom they wanted,” and this explains Pilate’s next step.

As you read this section, what verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 23:18-25 (NKJV)

¹⁸ And they all cried out at once, saying, “Away with this *Man*, and release to us Barabbas” — ¹⁹ who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder.

²⁰ Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. ²¹ But they shouted, saying, “Crucify *Him*, crucify Him!”

²² Then he said to them the third time, “Why, what evil has He done? I have

found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let *Him* go.”

²³ But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. ²⁵ And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will.



Explorer's Notes

- Trial number six has begun, and Jesus was before Pilate once again. Remember that the Sanhedrin, the Jewish equivalent of the Supreme Court, officially met at daybreak, and jumping ahead in the story, Jesus will be on the cross by roughly 9:00 a.m. this same day. Things are moving quickly! Only the night before Jesus was having dinner with His disciples.
- It was customary for Pilate to release a prisoner at Passover (see Luke 23:17 or Matthew 27:15), so he offered Barabbas who was waiting in jail to die for his crimes of trying to overthrow the government and committing murder. Pilate must have thought he was so terrible that the people would surely release Jesus who had done no wrong. However, the chief priests had stirred up the crowd to ask for Barabbas to

be freed. How must Jesus have felt hearing His own people call for His death, the very people He came to save from condemnation of their sin?

- Pilate knew Jesus was innocent. He wanted to release Jesus, but he chose to give in to the political pressure, even ignoring his wife's insights. He literally washed his hands to show that he did not agree with the decision of the people which may have satisfied an earthly judgment, but it did not satisfy eternal God. Pilate will stand before God one day to give account of his choices and actions.
- Jesus went through these six trials very quickly, maybe in as few as five or six hours, early that Friday morning. He was completely rejected by the Jewish people as their Messiah and now He would be crucified. As awful as this sounds, it was all to fulfill God's plan to save all humankind from our sin.

As you read this section, what verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 23:26-43 (NKJV)

²⁶ Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear *it* after Jesus.

²⁷ And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. ²⁸ But Jesus, turning to them, said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!’

³⁰ Then they will begin ‘to say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!”’ ³¹ For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?”

³² There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. ³³ And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. ³⁴ Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

And they divided His garments and cast lots. ³⁵ And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, “He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.”

³⁶ The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, ³⁷ and saying, “If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.”

³⁸ And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

³⁹ Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.”

⁴⁰ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴² Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”

⁴³ And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

Explorer’s Notes

- This is an emotional passage. Sadness, grief, powerlessness and, of course, hope – because Sunday is coming. Luke said that there was a multitude of people accompanying this procession toward the cross. Luke only gave the name of one man in the crowd.

- Is it possible that some of the people in the processional included the shepherd who witnessed Jesus in the manger, or lepers who had been healed, or others whose lives had been restored by Jesus' hands? We do not know, but we do know that real people were part of this grim parade.
- Simon of Cyrene was named, however, and he is the one forced to carry the cross of Jesus. The gospel writer Mark tells us he was the father of Rufus and Alexander, who had become disciples of Christ. Some believe he may be the Elder Simon at the church of Antioch who "laid hands" on Saul and Barnabas and sent them out as the church's first foreign missionaries (see Acts 13:1).
- Carrying the cross changed Simon. How might our reading and meditating on this most distressing passage change us? How might it encourage us to carry the cross of Christ in our hearts throughout our daily lives.

As you read this section, what verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 23:44-49 (NIV)

⁴⁴ It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵ for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.

⁴⁷ The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said,

“Surely this was a righteous man.”

⁴⁸ When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. ⁴⁹ But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.



Explorers Notes

- “The sixth hour” and “the ninth hour” were noon and 3:00 p.m. in the Jewish day.
- The temple curtain being torn signified that separation from God ended, Immanuel had come, and God was now with us without any barriers (see Matthew 1:23).

- The centurion concluded that Jesus was innocent in verse 47. Matthew states that the centurion and those with him, believed that Jesus was the Son of God (see Matthew 27:54).
- After Jesus died, the crowd returned home beating their breast. Beating one's breast in that culture was a sign of remorse (see Luke 18:13). The crowd had reached the same conclusion that the centurion had reached. They had been ridiculing Jesus and calling for His crucifixion and now saw that they were wrong. Jesus truly was who He had said He was.
- Paul stated to the Colossians that the debt that stood against us was canceled (see Colossians 2:15). When we are haunted by, or Satan taunts us with past sins, we can look to the cross and it is there where God stamped "Paid in Full" over our sin debt.

As you read this section, what verse or verses seem to pop out or resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you or giving you an inkling to take a moment and explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord on the verse or verses He drew you to.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 23:50-56 (NIV)

⁵⁰ Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, ⁵¹ who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. ⁵² Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. ⁵³ Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no

one had yet been laid. ⁵⁴ It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

⁵⁵ The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. ⁵⁶ Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.



Explorer's Notes

- The Lord never forgets our deeds. The Bible records Joseph's good deed of caring for the body of Jesus after His death. It was courageous. The cross was a shameful

death, but Joseph was willing to be associated with Jesus by asking for His body. Joseph also used his personal resources to give Jesus a proper burial. He bought or offered a tomb he already owned for Jesus' body and wrapped Him in cloths.

- Jesus was laid in a real, physical tomb. The women saw the tomb, meaning there were witnesses that it was an actual place. This became critical evidence of His resurrection when the tomb was found empty – and it was!
- The body of Jesus was inert. He was truly dead. Death is required for a resurrection. Witnesses saw both Jesus' death and new life. This is evidence of the resurrection and, as a result, we can have confidence that all Jesus said is true. He was the sacrifice for our sin, died, rose again, and now sits at the right hand of the Father until He returns to set all things right. We have good reasons to follow the risen Jesus!

As you read this section, what verse or verses seem to pop out or resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you or giving you an inkling to take a moment and explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord on the verse or verses He drew you to.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 24:1-12 (NIV)

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners,

be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ” ⁸ Then they remembered his words.

⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.



Explorer's Notes

- Jesus is fully God and the second person of the Trinity. He has the same attributes as the Father and the Holy Spirit. We see His truthfulness in His prediction of the

crucifixion and resurrection on the third day come true. It is exactly what happened! Jesus does not lie because He is truthful and there is no lie in Him.

- On the third day after His crucifixion, the women went to anoint the body of Jesus and they were surprised that the stone was moved and the tomb was empty! The angels told them Jesus was risen. Even today, nobody can prove Jesus' body is in a tomb. Do you know why? Because Jesus is risen and the tomb is empty. Right now He is in heaven at the right hand of the Father!
- There are people today who deny Jesus' existence and, by implication, His resurrection. They should give the evidence a fresh look. Two thousand years ago people were also confronted with the evidence. People in Jerusalem were told of Jesus who died and rose again. They could examine the empty tomb or produce a body, but they could not because He had risen!

As you read this section, what verse or verses seem to pop out or resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you or giving you an inkling to take a moment and explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord on the verse or verses He drew you to.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 24:13-35 (ESV)

¹³ That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" ¹⁹ And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. ²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were

with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." ²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸ So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, ²⁹ but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" ³³ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Explorer's Notes

- It is difficult to imagine the grief of these first followers when Jesus was crucified. He is the most compelling person who has ever lived and His loss would be immeasurable in its own right. Add to that the fear that you may have been following a false Messiah (for that's what most would think was the case when Jesus was crucified) and the emotions would be huge – whether grief, fear, despair, embarrassment, or otherwise.
- The second disciple on the road with Cleopas has not been identified with certainty. Some think it could possibly be his wife or another unnamed Jesus follower. It is unlikely to be one of the original twelve since the person remains unnamed.
- Jesus is recognized in the breaking of bread. As we partake of the Lord's Supper, or Communion, it is a fresh opportunity to reflect on how Jesus seeks to dine with us even today. It is only possible because of His great sacrifice for us on the cross.

What in this passage resonates with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 24:36-49 (ESV)

³⁶ As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!”

³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. ³⁸ And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?”

³⁹ See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” ⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹ And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate before them.

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”



Explorer's Notes

- Imagine you saw one of your loved ones murdered, and days later, they just suddenly appeared in front of you and said, "Peace, dude!" Luke wrote that the disciples were "startled and frightened." He clearly had the gift of understatement! There must have been some serious freaking out when they saw the risen Jesus!
- Jesus encouraged them to touch Him to prove that He was not a ghost. When they still did not believe, He ate a piece of fish because they believed that ghosts could not eat food. In other words, Jesus calmed their fears by eating their breakfast!
- Once their fears subsided, Jesus "opened their minds to the Scriptures" (verse 45), showing them what was written about Himself in the Old Testament scriptures. He gave them a mission (verse 47) and assured them that "the promise of my Father" (verse 49) – the Holy Spirit – would empower them in their mission.
- Pray that God will open your mind to the Scriptures and that you will be filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

What verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

Luke 24:50-53 (ESV)

⁵⁰ And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up

into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple blessing God.



Explorer's Notes

- Bethany is in the vicinity of Jerusalem. It is located on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives, which is across the Kidron Valley from Jerusalem.
- The Book of Acts is Luke's follow-up volume to the Gospel of Luke. To see an expansion on Jesus' ascension, turn to Acts 1:9.
- In the Acts account of this event (see Acts 1:6-11), Jesus reminded His disciples and us of our mission: to be witnesses of Jesus. This is to share and show the world who Jesus is, how to be saved, and the changed life available to those who follow Him.
- The Book of Acts also highlights the ministry of the Holy Spirit, which is how we are empowered to live as Jesus' witnesses.

As you read this section, what verse or verses resonate with you? It could be the Holy Spirit prompting you to explore what God may be saying to you. Follow the instructions for the S.O.A.P. method on page 3 and interact with the Lord where He has directed your attention.

Scripture

Observation

Application

Prayer

For further exploration...

If you've enjoyed exploring Luke's gospel, but you want to go deeper, here are a couple of recommended commentaries.

Mark Strauss. *Luke. Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary.* This is a small commentary that does not cover every passage, but has numerous pictures, sidebars, and charts highlighting backgrounds of the time that help bring Luke's gospel alive.

Darrel L. Bock. *Luke. NIV Application Commentary.* This commentary series helps the reader understand the original meaning of the text, but it also helps with bridging the context from the ancient world to applying it in today's world. Bock also has a massive two volume commentary (over 2000 pages!) in the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament series.

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Explorer's Notes Contributors

Missionary authors are italicized. See their bios on page 2.

Luke 19:28-40 * *Bruce Dower*

Luke 19:41-48 * *Dave Everitt*

Luke 20:1-8 * Shawn Thomas

Luke 20:9-18 * Lorena Saucedo

Luke 20:19-26 * Lorena Saucedo

Luke 20:27-40 * Lorena Saucedo

Luke 20:41-44 * Manuel Gonzalez

Luke 20:45-47 * Manuel Gonzalez

Luke 21:1-4 * Jon Wyatt

Luke 21:5-9 * Mike McKay

Luke 21:10-19 * Mike McKay

Luke 21:20-24 * Justin McElderry

Luke 21:25-28 * Justin McElderry

Luke 21:29-33 * Jon Wyatt

Luke 21:34-38 * Jon Wyatt

Luke 22:1-6 * Patsy Lambert

Luke 22:7-13 * Patsy Lambert

Luke 22:14-23 * Patsy Lambert

Luke 22:24-30 * Jericho Almiranez

Luke 22:31-34 * Jericho Almiranez

Luke 22:35-38 * Debbie Wyatt

Luke 22:39-46 * Debbie Wyatt

Luke 22:47-53 * Debbie Wyatt

Luke 22:54-62 * Bob Vroon

Luke 22:63-65 * Justin McElderry

Luke 22:66-71 * Mark Simon

Luke 23:1-7 * Christine Theodore

Luke 23:8-17 * Christine Theodore

Luke 23:18-25 * Christine Theodore

Luke 23:26-43 * Ron Jackson

Luke 23:44-49 * Terry Lambert

Luke 23:50-56 * Jesus Garcia

Luke 24:1-12 * Jesus Garcia

Luke 24:13-35 * Justin McElderry

Luke 24:36-49 * Mark Simon

Luke 24:50-53 * Mike McKay