



# LIFE OF CHRIST

## COURSE TRANSCRIPTIONS

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## Table of Contents

<b>Lecture 1: Life of Christ – Infancy Accounts.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Lecture 2: Life of Christ – John the Baptist and Early Galilean Ministry .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Lecture 3: Life of Christ – The Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Lecture 4: Life of Christ – The Sermon on the Mount-Part 2.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Lecture 5: Life of Christ – Kingdom Parables .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Lecture 6: Life of Christ – Journey to Jerusalem .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Lecture 7: Life of Christ – Journey to Jerusalem Pt 2 .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Lecture 8: Life of Christ – Journey to Jerusalem Pt 3 .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Lecture 9: Life of Christ – Cleansing the Temple .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Lecture 10: Life of Christ – Olivet Discourse .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Lecture 11: Life of Christ – Resurrection.....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Lecture 12: Life of Christ – Titles of Jesus .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Lecture 13: Life of Christ – Disciples Character .....</b>	<b>96</b>

# Lecture 1: Life of Christ - Infancy Accounts

This is the 1<sup>st</sup> lecture in the online series of lectures on the Life of Christ by Dr. Darrell Bock.

Recommended Reading includes: Jesus According to Scripture: restoring the Portrait from the Gospels by Bock, Baker, 2002 and Jesus in Context by Darrel Bock and Greg Herrick, eds., Baker, 2005 and Jesus Under Fire by Mike Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, Zondervan, 1995.

*(Any slides, photos or outlines that the lecturer refers to should be down loaded separately. If they are not available, you may be able to find something similar using the Google© search engine.)*

**Extra Biblical Evidence of Jesus:** in regards to extra Biblical evidence that is related to Jesus, as this question is often raised, especially by non-Christians as they consider the Bible a bias source. There are a handful of passages that allude to this, but the most clear is from Josephus, the Jewish general and later historian writer. He was over the battle at a place call *Gomma* in AD 67 and ended up being captured by the Romans. He was taken to Rome and became a confidant of the imperial family and eventually wrote works in defense of Judaism of which *Antiquities* is one. Book 18 deals with the status of Judea in the time of Jesus. He actually goes through the various procurators and prefects that ruled over the areas at the time. There is one extended passage about Jesus of which some of the material is in italics. This is due to the evidence being copying and preserved in Christians context. And so it looks as if parts of it were added. As you read, you will see that Josephus is a Jewish general, he's not a Christian. The general judgement is that he would not have said all of the things mentioned. In sentence 63 and 64, 'now there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, even if it be lawful to call him a man,' suggesting an incarnation and Josephus is unlikely to have said that. 'For he was a doer of wonderful works and a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure.' The phrase, wonderful works, is actually a Greek word, *paradoxon*, which means unusual works as surprising works. It's an indication that Jesus has a reputation for doing the unusual. 'He drew over to him, many of the Jews and many of the gentiles.'

The next section is questionable, 'he was the Christ and when Pilate had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at first, did not forsake him.' There is a third longer edition, 'for he appeared to them alive again on the third day as the divine prophets had foretold; these and there are ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him.' Again, this is probably not something a Jewish person would write. 'At the tribe of Christians so named for him are not extinct to this day.' Most people working with this text and take out the italicized portions, you end up with something very close to what Josephus actually wrote. If that is the case, then we have several interesting features; one, Jesus had a reputation for doing unusual works; two, collaboration of the fact that Pilate was responsible for Jesus' death but he wasn't alone in this as it was the Jewish leadership that put pressure on him to crucify Jesus and third, we have the idea that the movement lived on despite Jesus' death. And of course, we know that from other evidence today. But the two key features that is important to this citation are reputation of Jesus' being a wonderful worker and as a teacher of wisdom and the second part is that Pilate is the principle man of the Jewish leadership that lead to Jesus' condemnation on the Cross. Other historians, Suetonius and Gaius allude to Jesus. (Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus was a Roman historian belonging to the equestrian order who wrote during the early Imperial era of the Roman Empire and Tacitus or Gaius Cornelius Tacitus was a senator and historian of the Roman Empire) There is also a passage in regards to the followers of Christos, as written by Suetonius; some allude that this passage doesn't allude to Jesus. But how do we know that these passages are from Josephus?

Later on in *Antiquities* 20:200 or 2200, there is a discussion of James, the brother of Christ who was put to death. This assumes that there has been a discussion of the Christ before we get to James. So this is the indication that something about Jesus was said by Josephus earlier in *Antiquities* and as for as Josephus is concerned, we have no evidence that he was a believer. This is apparently from the tone

shown, 'if it is lawful to call him a man,' which implies deity. The next, 'He was the Christ,' which is a confession and finally in regards to 'fulfilling everything as the divine prophets were told,' is very positive as well. All of those are suspect on the assumption that Josephus was not a Christian. These documents were recorded and passed on by Christians who were interested in passing on the kind of history about Judaism that Josephus penned. Interestingly, up to about the 8<sup>th</sup> century school students would read the Bible and the works of Josephus. But some people will throw out these passages in their entirety and say the Josephus didn't write about Jesus at all. The 20:200 passage coming later shows that is not likely.

Some things to remember in regard to outside biblical coverage of Jesus; Jesus was a Jewish person; he was represented as an ethnic minority in a very tiny section of vast empire. We have no documents from the governor of Judea to show you how isolated this is. We don't have anything that Pilate wrote to Rome or anything that any prefect wrote to Rome. There are reports on what they did, but no direct documents. We only have a few Jewish sources for the history of this period and that is Josephus, Philo (a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher who lived in Alexandria who used Greek philosophy and Jewish philosophy to fuse them together.) and in addition, there are the Dead Sea Scrolls. Another quote from Suetonius, 'he, Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome on the account of the riots in which they were constantly indulging at the instigation of Christos. The reason for the confidence that this was about Christ, these riots were due to the tension within the Jewish communities between the Jews and Christian believers. We know from Acts 18:2 that Attila and Priscilla were forced to leave Rome as part of that expulsion which causes them to eventually meet up with Paul. This is an indirect reference to Jesus as it was the Christians, who the Jews were rioting against.

A second passage, from Gaius talking about Christians, 'they got their name from Christ who was executed by the sentence of the procurator Pontus Pilate in the reign of Tiberius.' Religious belief that the Romans didn't like were referred to as superstitions. 'It broke out afresh, not only in Judea where the plague first arose but in Rome itself were all horrible and shameful things in the world to find a home.' This doesn't endorse Christianity, none-the less, this deals with Nero and the fire that he set and then blamed the Christians. The nature of the Christian's behavior toward this persecution was actually endeared some of the Romans. So this is another piece of evidence from the early part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Again in the early part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, a letter written to Trajan in the early part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century gives an account of examining Christians in Bithynia, also call Pontus (middle part of modern Turkey) of northwest Asia. This was written by Pliny who was a governor who encounters Christianity for the first time. This letters reads:

It is my practice, my lord, to refer to you all matters concerning which I am in doubt. For who can better give guidance to my hesitation or inform my ignorance? I have never participated in trials of Christians. I therefore do not know what offenses it is the practice to punish or investigate, and to what extent. And I have been not a little hesitant as to whether there should be any distinction on account of age or no difference between the very young and the more mature; whether pardon is to be granted for repentance, or, if a man has once been a Christian, it does him no good to have ceased to be one; whether the name itself, even without offenses, or only the offenses associated with the name are to be punished.

Meanwhile, in the case of those who were denounced to me as Christians, I have observed the following procedure: I interrogated these as to whether they were Christians; those who confessed I interrogated a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment; those who persisted I ordered executed. For I had no doubt that, whatever the nature of their creed, stubbornness and inflexible obstinacy surely deserve to be punished. There were others possessed of the same folly; but because they were Roman citizens, I signed an order for them to be transferred to Rome.

Soon accusations spread, as usually happens, because of the proceedings going on, and several incidents occurred. An anonymous document was published containing the names of many persons. Those who denied that they were or had been Christians, when they invoked the gods in

words dictated by me, offered prayer with incense and wine to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for this purpose together with statues of the gods, and moreover cursed Christ--none of which those who are really Christians, it is said, can be forced to do--these I thought should be discharged. Others named by the informer declared that they were Christians, but then denied it, asserting that they had been but had ceased to be, some three years before, others many years, some as much as twenty-five years. They all worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and cursed Christ.

They asserted, however, that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was their custom to depart and to assemble again to partake of food--but ordinary and innocent food. Even this, they affirmed, they had ceased to do after my edict by which, in accordance with your instructions, I had forbidden political associations. Accordingly, I judged it all the more necessary to find out what the truth was by torturing two female slaves who were called deaconesses. But I discovered nothing else but depraved, excessive superstition.

I therefore postponed the investigation and hastened to consult you. For the matter seemed to me to warrant consulting you, especially because of the number involved. For many persons of every age, every rank, and also of both sexes are and will be endangered. For the contagion of this superstition has spread not only to the cities but also to the villages and farms. But it seems possible to check and cure it. It is certainly quite clear that the temples, which had been almost deserted, have begun to be frequented, that the established religious rites, long neglected, are being resumed, and that from everywhere sacrificial animals are coming, for which until now very few purchasers could be found. Hence it is easy to imagine what a multitude of people can be reformed if an opportunity for repentance is afforded.

Pliny gave Christians an opportunity to bow down and worship the emperor, if so he released them. If not, he put them to death. Trajan's reply follows:

You observed proper procedure, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those who had been denounced to you as Christians. For it is not possible to lay down any general rule to serve as a kind of fixed standard. They are not to be sought out; if they are denounced and proved guilty, they are to be punished, with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian and really proves it--that is, by worshiping our gods--even though he was under suspicion in the past, shall obtain pardon through repentance. But anonymously posted accusations ought to have no place in any prosecution. For this is both a dangerous kind of precedent and out of keeping with the spirit of our age.

In the mits of the description that Pliny writes about this situation, he talks about Christians in services, meeting together, singing hymns and giving worship to Christ. So this is another text that early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Jesus was being worshipped in Asia Minor or Tuckey.

An allusion to John the Baptist in antiquities, a very short text describing him as a good man who taught the Jews to practice virtues which comes later on in chapter 18 of the Antiquities and then the report of James the Just, the brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ in the 20/200 or 2200 passage. One of piece of evidence that's important comes from Justin Martyr, was wrote in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. In reference to the Jews, 'they said that it was a display of magic art.' They even dared to say that he was a magician and a deceiver of the people. So this tells us that in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, between the years 155 – 160 AD, about how Jesus was being described by the Jews. It gives the idea that Jesus did do unusual works. The source is attributed differently but there's recognition that Jesus did unusual things. So we have it in Josephus, Justin Martyr with a charge that even shows up in the New Testament. A note: in ancient material, we only have two options for Jesus; either he did this by the power of God or by some other power. But a usual option today that people use is that it's either made up or he didn't do anything,

doesn't exist in ancient material.

In pseudo-graphical materials, different works like the Acts of Pilate, etc. which are not considered to be genuine. Also in the Islamic context, there is the Gospel of Barabbas which is very suspect and a way of dismissing Jesus. So in Jewish tradition, Jesus existed and was a magician, a deceiver and a false prophet, but there is no doubt he existed and had an unusual ministry. So, sometimes the testimony of opponents stands as evidence.

**Themes and Issues of Luke and Matthew Compared:** I will now discuss certain themes and issues that are raised as we look at detailed materials as well as overviews. In this particular section, I think it's really important to not lose sight of the story line. One of the things that happens with an apologetic orientation of the Bible we can miss the content or the emphasis in the material itself. An example would be the debate over the virgin birth; is this philosophically possible, etc. and go through a long discussion of Isaiah 7:14 which cause us to miss the point of the passage; as the passage is more than fulfillment. It serves as an explanation for what is taking place. In Matthew, it says, 'as it is written,' and it cites the text, 'to be born of a virgin and shall bear a son, etc.' His name shall be called Emanuel. In all the talk about fulfilling the program and plan of Scripture, we sometimes underestimate and don't discuss the point of the citation, thus missing a key part of the story. So what I am going to try to do as we move through this material is to help keep our eyes on what the text is presenting to be the main point, and to try and show you how it's doing that. It's often, the modernism of the world that keeps us from seeing these main points.

The Infancy Accounts is some of the most disputed parts of Jesus' life. Simply, because it's uncollaborated; for example, Matthew takes a certain angle while Luke takes a certain angle on the same materials and they don't necessarily overlap that much. It's only on the basic ideas you will see any overlapping. Matthew takes the story from the angle of Joseph's involvement while Luke looks at Mary's involvement, thus creating a variety of details. In the recommended readings, 'Jesus According to Scripture', page 52, 'As we study the accounts of Jesus' birth, the tendencies to become caught up into questions about supernatural elements and miss the emphasis of the message in the process. The modern world has no place for virgin births and angelic announcements and prophetic fulfillments and guiding stars. But reading the Gospels is tricky business; some who read these accounts see only what they want to see or what they have already decided what is important and excludes the rest. They only see the natural things that are common to all births and ignore the supernatural. This modernistic reading reduces the Jesus presented, largely to a metaphor whose experience is like our own. Tragically, an act of God doing unusual things to point out the unusual nature of his birth is ruled out before one even engages the text. But this is not the reading the evangelist provides, they emphasize the unusual nature of the birth because of the unusual nature of the one being born. In fact, Matthew and Luke as well as Mark, they take the remainder of their Gospels to show how unusual Jesus really is. For those who do believe that the miraculous events did occur, there still exists the danger that our efforts within the historicity of the accounts would distract us from the real reading of the text. We may miss the accounts of merging messages with the emphasis that the evangelist gave it. Our apologetics to defend the more miraculous aspects of these texts can deflect from reading and hearing the actual story in the account. It is like watching a movie and debating whether the events in movie are possible, rather than focusing on the actual story being told. While it is true that Jesus came with an array of signs to indicate who he was such as his unique birth, the focus of these accounts is never simply on whom Jesus is or how he was born. In the Infancy material, who Jesus is and how he was born was never separated from the declaring what he will do on behalf of humanity. It is the anticipated action on behalf of those in need that is celebrated in the two Infancy Accounts. This is why a mood of awe and worship accompany the description of these unique events.

So in thinking about the use of this material as we are reminded about from sermons, church and holidays, especially as the day known as Christmas. Learning how to relate to this material comfortably is important. So then, the Book of Matthew has Scripture that reveals fulfillment and he tells the story and as a narrator, he points out along the way how certain Scripture is fulfilled. So, Matthew is telling a story but at the same time adding his own commentary to that story that appeals to fulfillment, saying this is a realization of the program of God. Luke doesn't do that, instead he contrasts Jesus and John and uses

hymns of praise as theological explanation in the text. The language of Scripture, the language of joy, the language of engagement comes from the characters themselves within the story, not as a commentary overlay. They function the same way. The hymns function the same way as the remarks about the realization of Scripture do. But there are different ways to accomplish the same thing. In Matthew, we have a tone of conflict and opposition. If you think about the story from Matthew, we get the announcement of Jesus, we get Herod being angry that the Messiah has come, we get him sending out troops to kill all those under two years of age in order to remove Jesus, we get the tragedy of people being killed in Bethlehem; in a little village just to south within four miles of Jerusalem. In Luke, we have a completely different tone, one of joy and of excitement. This is the reason for all the hymns along with notes of praise surrounding the story. In Matthew, as already noted, Joseph is the key figure who has to deal with the problem of having this young girl of whom he is engaged who happens to be pregnant. He knows that he isn't responsible, so he has a problem. How is he going to deal with it? In the first of several dreams that dominate the account in the Book of Matthew, Joseph is directed to marry the girl and this is by the Holy Spirit. Contrasting Luke, we did this story from Mary's perspective. In fact, it says that Mary treasured these things in her heart. I am deeply suspicious that the roots for this tradition in Luke come from Mary. We are getting the passing on of her experiences of Jesus.

Notice that in Matthew, we have a genealogy that is built around the descent of Jesus coming from David. This is a case where knowing the language can be somewhat helpful. David in Hebrew is דָּוִד and letters not only have consonant and vowel values, they have numerical value as well. In Hebrew, letters operate as numbers. The Dalet (ד) represents the number four in Hebrew and the letter 6 is represented by the Vav (ו). You add that together, you will get the number 14 and what interesting about the genealogy within Matthew; it is structured around fourteen generations. Therefore, not only do we have David being named as one of the descendants of Jesus, we have a symmetrical genealogical structure that is saying, 'David' as it is being reproduced for us. This is a way of saying royal and messianic without using those terms. It's a cultural script and so it's one of the features of the passage. Another interesting feature in Matthew introductory materials is the presence of women in the genealogy. This is one of several places where women are related to outside the cultural norm in the Biblical materials. Another example is women become witnesses, the first to the empty tomb account. There are five women mentioned: Tamar, Rehab, Bathsheba, Ruth and Mary, all of which have difficult backgrounds. Tamar with the Judah incident, Rehab was a prostitute, Bathsheba with the incident with David and Ruth, who as a gentile was associated with Boaz in a move that would be described as bold in ancient terms by lying at his feet overnight in order to move toward the claim of marriage. And for Mary in Matthew where it says, from who was the Christ at the end of this genealogy were working with a feminine relative pronoun which demonstrates that the connection goes back to Mary, not to Joseph. Not only is this about the role of women but also about the nature of grace. In Jesus' genealogy, we see that there are people that are made up of questionable backgrounds.

The third important point; what we are getting in Matthew in the Lecturer's judgement of the genealogy is representation of the legal rights to the throne through Joseph. This is the legal way of moving back through Jesus' genealogy. The curse of Jeconiah in Jeremiah recalls a curse being on him because of his unfaithfulness which says, 'you will not have a role in the line.' Thus Jeconiah is cut off from the legal right of being an ancestor of the Messiah. Luke is giving us the biological line whereas Matthew is giving us the legal line in light of this curse. But both lines deal with a genealogy but from a different perspective. When the line of Jeconiah ended, the line jumped over the next relative, the legal line thus changed also, both backwards and forwards. The line that leads to Joseph is only important in as much as the importance of the father within the culture, but realize still that the blood line is only through Mary, but we don't have a bloodline through Mary; yet, most likely she is also a descendant of David. Still, be aware that the typical two genealogies are thought to represent Mary while the other represents Joseph. Luke takes us all the way back to Adam, son of man and thus Son of God. Matthew is simply interested in the royal connection, while Luke's interest spreads farther. Is it good enough for Joseph to have adopted Jesus to satisfy the genealogical line back to David? These are 'exceptional understandings' that are happening within the two Gospels.

The way in which Luke's material is structured is concerned with birth announcements and making the point that Jesus is greater than John. The relationship is the Son of God and the prophet of the Most

High. Jesus' relationship with John and John's ministry itself are put in very ethical terms very early. In Luke 1 where the angels said to Zechariah, 'don't be afraid, your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son; you will name him John. Joy and gladness will come to you and many will rejoice at his birth; for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord, their God. He will go as forerunner before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts the fathers back to their children, the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord, a people prepared for him.' That's the call but here is what I want you to see, there's an idea of turning in the passage. This introduces a core idea of what mission above John and Jesus is all about. If I were to ask you to put a directional arrow on where the turning is directed in verses 16 & 17, what would you tell me and what passage would that remind you of?

Okay, there are actually two references of turning in the passage; the first would be Israel to the Lord and the second would be for fathers and their children and the disobedient to the just. When people turn back to one another, what do we call it? Reconciliation, and thus the ministry of John the Baptist was about reconciling a broken relationship the living God. The Ministry of Jesus was the same, restoring people to God. What does this remind us of, something in Jesus' ministry? It is about loving God and your neighbor, a vertical and horizontal relationship. Thus, it is about society and here we see that the Gospel is taking us towards an ethical direction, designed to reorient us to the Lord and in that process, we as part of society gets reoriented in our basic relationships. The language is closer to the Syriac language (which is also known as Syriac Aramaic) chapter 48 than it is to anything else and in the description of the ministry like Elijah. When you think of Elijah, you know that he is a prophet and in addition it's the most concentrated period of miracles outside of Moses in the history of Israel. Note that John the Baptist did not perform any miracles, so in comparing Elijah with John, we are not recalling Elijah's miraculous ministry in relation to John the Baptist, we are talking about the faithfulness in regards to both of their ministries. John came in the Spirit of Elijah, being faithful to God and standing up for righteousness. Another point, in Judaism Elijah became associated with the idea that he will proceed the Eskaton or coming of the new age. Thus his reappearance through John indicates the coming of the Eskaton. The structure shows a birth announcement and then a sign that indicates it has taken place. That happens in all three cases in these two chapters of Luke. We have the announcement to Mary along with Elizabeth's pregnancy as being a sign. Then we have the announcement to the shepherds along with seeing the baby Jesus, a sign of who Jesus is. There is also obedience to breaking tradition of naming in Luke 1:57 where the baby is being named John. They wanted to name him after his father but that wasn't what the angel had instructed them to do, he was to be named John. In the argument, Zechariah wasn't able to speak so he ask for something to write on, where he wrote the name of John. Zechariah could neither speak nor hear as they signed with him. His lack of a voice and hearing was from the temple and his lack of belief in what the angel had told him. (A side note, when God promises something, it's going to happen.)

Then, after Zechariah received his voice and hearing, he praised God. Notice the praise in 1:68, 'blessed be the Lord God of Israel because he has come to help his people, he has redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.' We need to take a closer look at the language here, 'for he has visited and made redemption for his people,' in verse 60a, then in verse 70a, 'through the mercies of our God through whom he shall visit us', using the same verb; what is basically called the 'shining light out of heaven' 'or the dawn that breaks upon us' as it is translated as the dawn that visits us, so let's listen to the hymn again. This is actually a praise psalm. You praise God for what he is doing, 'blessed be the Lord God of Israel because he has come to help and has visited his people, he has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David his servant. Because of our God's tender mercies, the dawn will visit us from on high. The visitation involves the rising up of the horn out of the house of David that also will be a light. That's the same picture Matthew will use to come into the Galilean ministry. So these announcements, their signs, the obedience and the hymn of praise, all contain the theological content of Infancy materials on Luke.

Even though these stories in Matthew and Luke are going in a different direction in some details, they are also coming together in other ways. You simply can't see this by reading an English translation; however, a good commentary will show you this. Another point on this section, there is no excessive Christianizing



of this material. Israel is very much the focal point; the characters don't fully appreciate what is taken place despite the praising of God in the hymn. The last point in the praise, 'for we shall be saved from our enemies, from the hand of all who hate us.' Zechariah is stating some kind of political deliverance. But as this is part of the introduction of his Gospel, Luke shows that the words are true, but they are far truer than Zechariah realizes. The ultimately enemy is the devil. He is the enemy. For Zechariah, the enemy is Rome.

This is an overture of the entire Gospel, introducing the theme with the story playing itself out. We'll see that the real enemies aren't the Pharisees, the Sadducees, or the Romans. The real enemies are the spiritual forces. The text is not as Christianized as it could be. It is not expressed from a post-Eastern perspective, looking back on these events. It's expressed in terms of what the people were experiencing at the time. Even the phrase, 'Son of God' is an interesting term in this text. In chapter 1:29, 'but she was greatly troubled by his words and began to wonder what the meaning of the greetings might be,' this was when Gabriel appears. 'He said, do not be afraid Mary for you have found favor with God; listen, you will become pregnant and give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the most high, the Lord God will give him the throne of his Father, David. He will reign over the house of Jacob and his kingdom will never end. Mary said to the angel, how will this be since I have not had sexual relations with a man.' These questions are a little different than the questions of Zechariah but she doesn't get the same results. 'The angel replied, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the most high will over-shadow you, therefore the child that will be born will be holy. He will be called the Son of God. She responds, let it happen to me according to your word.' Note that this is a young teenage girl, 'you are pregnant! How did that happen?' Just imagine that conversation, the position she has been put in, in terms of reputation, etc. But she's going to be obedient. The ambiguity is interesting in the way the 'Son of God' is being presented in this text. There is speculation of Mary having Jesus, the divine son. The most that she probably thinks is that the child will be the Messianic Son of God. She doesn't really understand what means to be having the Christ, the Son of the Living God. She's thinking that this is the promised one. In the incidence of Jesus staying in Jerusalem and not returning with the parents; her attitude is as a mother to her child.

So, let's continue; as mentioned, the hymns are the key to the materials in Luke. In the Magnificat, Mary's hymn of Praise. Mary's hymn is one of three major hymnic pieces in the infancy material, the others being the Benedictus (Luke 1:67-79) and Nunc Dimittis (Luke 2:28-32). These hymns were so named to stress their importance. Mary possesses a mood of joy and speaks for herself and for her community, the people of God throughout time. And notice all the first person singulars happening early in the hymn in chapter 1:46-49. Everything is in the first person singular. Then it generalizes from verse 50 until the end. Those who fear them, those whose pride rose up, the mighty are brought down, he lifts up the lowly, he fills the hungry, he sends the rich away empty, and he's helped his servant Israel. So Mary becomes a type of the righteous person. She's one of the humble that God touches and who God lifts up. What he's doing with me is what he has always done. That's the point of the Magnificat, how magnificent that this has happened to me. You'll notice that the hymn by Zechariah is a Davidic presence that is important as was the case with the announcement to Mary, herself, in which he is going to sit on the throne of David. So we get this regal frame right at the start of Luke.

Note that all the characters are highly pious Jewish figures. Zechariah is a priest, Elizabeth is his faithful wife. They are described as walking in the ways of the Lord, earlier in the chapter. Joseph is presented as very pious also, someone who is full of faith. He sensibly thinks of how to put Mary away; he isn't be cruel about it. Thus Jesus' youth was surrounded by people who were very pious. He was not a rebel who grew up in a negative environment. We can see this in both versions of the story. The first of seven key dreams in Matthew which says that God is going to drive this story, tells him to keep her as a wife and announces Isaiah 7:14 with the emphasis that this is God with us, this is the sign child, this is the child that indicates the covenant promise is continuing and that God's presence and protection is still with us. And so Matthew and Luke converge on the idea of the relationship of this child to the promise of God. The infancy material sets a tone for both Matthew and Luke, but each goes their own way on how Jesus fulfilled the promises of old. Matthew does it through five Old Testament citations that point to Jesus as the promised Davidic son and king. Luke uses a style of Old Testament historical narrative and employs hymns to make his points about Jesus with language that recalls the Old Testament. In both accounts,

God is highly active. Each account suggests that suffering is associated with the presence of Jesus. Matthew does this in the slaying of the innocent while Luke notes Simeon's remarks to Mary, the only negative point in entire infancy material of Luke, Simeon says to Mary, 'he will be a cause of pain.' He will be for the rising and falling of many in Israel. This is the only negative note of all of Luke 1 and 2. In contrast to Matthew, which is dominated by the initial rejection of the announcement of the Messiah in the land through the killing of the infants? Each account also notes that Jesus comes of the Jews although what he does will also involve the nations. Matthew's picture of the Magi, responding to the testimony of creation shows that gentiles will be sensitive to Jesus' coming.

In Luke, it is Simeon's note that Jesus is a light of revelation to the gentiles. Thus for all their distinct detail in the beginning of both accounts, share some basic ideas. There is both diversity in the way the story is told and unity; the shepherds in Luke introduce a note of joy. There are a lot of things that are sad about the tradition being negative about shepherds. Most of those traditions are not first century or older traditions. They are later traditions. So I'm not sure whether there is a negative aspect to the shepherds as representing the rejected. None the less, shepherds do represent a kind of average person and there is a note of joy associated with Jesus' coming. There are three titles mentioned in 2:11; he is Savior, he is Christ and he is Lord. Savior is being defined because the emphasis is on deliverance; Christ is being defined because it's associated with the throne of David. The only title not defined out of this is Lord which is the rest of the Gospel with be about. And it says that he is sent for people of his good pleasure. This is not for everyone, the way Christmas tends to celebrate. This phrase is a way of talking about the elect; the beneficiaries of what Christ brings are those who respond to what God is doing. When they come to the temple, Simeon meets the pious parents who are obeying the law. They are bringing the sacrifices for the first born. These are not rebellious parents, they are good Jews. Simeon says when he holds the child, 'now according to your words permit your servant to depart in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation.' He's holding the baby and by looking at the baby, he's looking at God's salvation. So salvation and the child are identified here in the prophetic word of Simeon. 'That you are prepared in the presence of all people a light for revelation to the gentiles' on the one hand and to the glory of your people on the other. He's going to be for everybody. But there is a hint of the division to come. Simeon blessed them and said, 'listen carefully, this child is destined to be the cause of falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign to be rejected in deed and as a results, the thoughts of many hearts will revealed and a sword will pierce through you own sole as well.' This is a hint that everything will not be well.

In Matthew, the wise men do not appear with Jesus and the babe with the shepherds. These are two distinct scenes, this probably happened later. Herod goes and kills children under two years of age, the shepherds appear on the very night of the birth. There is a gentile sensitivity evident in Matthew yet Matthew is the Gospel written to the Jews. And it is the gentiles that are far more sensitive to what's going on by watching the creation than the Jews who have the Word of God. In the Jewish Gospel, he is born in Bethlehem of Judea, not in Bethlehem of Galilee or in Nazareth as many critics want to suggest. The protection of Jesus is like the protection of Israel, out of Egypt I have called my son; there is suffering before glory, there is official rejection, they go to Nazareth. We are not sure how 2:23 works, I have ideas. Matthew says in 2:23, 'and then when it had been spoken by the prophets was fulfilled, that Jesus would be called a Nazarene.' A similar word, Nazeer, has messianic overtones. As I've suggested to you, the critics play Bethlehem off to Nazareth. The home in Matthew against Luke down from the Galilean home; this reads in an over literal way, the narrative line of Matthew. Matthew has Jesus and their family in Bethlehem from the beginning. And then they are sent to Nazareth. The sign of Jesus's break from his family is the first time that Jesus speaks in Luke. It concerns the Infancy stage of Luke even though Jesus is much older and it gives a self-understanding of his call as the Greek reads, 'I must be about the ----- of my Father.' However, that blank is filled in as, 'business.' In the Greek, there appears to be a break in the syntax. It's there on purpose and the idea seems to be, 'I must be about my Father's business.' The picture of the infancy narratives in Luke ends with Jesus' own statement as the final climax of these narratives.

**Teaching Methodology of the Synoptic Gospels:** the synoptic Gospels tell the story of Jesus from the earth up or from ground up. They start with categories and experiences and situations that we are used to and understand, and then build on that, revealing more and more of the perception of who Jesus is.

That's different than the Gospel of John, who tells the story of Jesus from heaven down. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. Right from the beginning, you know what's going on. As mentioned, the synoptic Gospels tell the story gradually from the earth up with the people slowly realizing who he is. How do you tell people about someone like Jesus who is so different from anyone else? The synoptic Gospels build it one step at a time. In teaching this material, should it be taught in line with the story; in a way that that the Gospels present it, and in a way that someone has to experience Jesus? We experience Jesus in a journey of experiencing him in a way as he slowly reveals himself to us. In this introduction, we get the birth of a messianic person and everyone understands that; it's the promised one. And there are signs that tell us of unusual things associated with this child, like the virgin birth. So, a strategy in how to teach the synoptic Gospels which lets the story unfold, a step at a time in relation to how it's given in the Gospels. But yet, the Bible is so deep, there is not any one methodology that fits all in teaching the Scriptures. There is the way in which the Bible presents information and then there's the product of that information. There is a certain framing of the text and at the same time, how much of a frame we surround the text with. We don't necessarily consider things by the same rules as the Biblical prophets, authors and other ancients did. Most people in the western society today and perhaps throughout the world think in terms of straight line, logical categories. They thought in parallels and patterns which presents a theology behind the pattern, a design. We must learn to think in terms of those parallels and patterns otherwise we miss out on certain understandings and information. Of course, the application also involves the audience which a piece of work is written for, as it is today, but in those days the audiences understood the delivery in terms of those parallels and patterns.

We must also realize that there is an inherent unity to the whole of the Gospels as well as the Bible itself. In considering the Bible as the Canon, it is a unit and God is ultimately behind every word and every book; it all fits together and only conservative theology can show this unity as compared to liberal theology. In addition, a person can only work with what's being revealed to them through the Holy Spirit and the Spirit can show us the message within a certain time frame as we are exposed to Biblical revelation. And continued revelation reflects back on previous revelation, revealing to us even greater depth and knowledge. This is the spirit of God working in us. Of course, we are speaking about Christians here, not the unsaved. To a certain extent, they are different yet we know that the Holy Spirit can work in their lives to draw them to God and reveal to them the meaning that is in the text. But back to the delivery method in the way we teach; we often kill the story line by throwing the 'Son of God' out first and using sermon after sermon in dealing with the same thought, thus confusing the person who don't have all of the theological suppositions which bring about a 'disconnect.' Even for the disciples, there were certain things that happened that made them to see who Jesus really was.

# Lecture 2: Life of Christ - John the Baptist and Early Galilean Ministry

This is the 2<sup>st</sup> lecture in the online series of lectures on the Life of Christ by Dr. Darrell Bock.

Recommended Reading includes: Jesus According to Scripture: restoring the Portrait from the Gospels by Bock, Baker, 2002 and Jesus in Context by Darrel Bock and Greg Herrick, eds., Baker, 2005 and Jesus Under Fire by Mike Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, Zondervan, 1995.

*(Any slides, photos or outlines that the lecturer refers to should be down loaded separately. If they are not available, you may be able to find something similar using the Google© search engine.)*

**John the Baptist:** We think about John and his teachings which involved the call of Israel back to covenantal faithfulness. John is the eschatology prophet who announces the arrival of the Messiah and the Eschaton, the new age. And the roots of this are in a series of passages from the Hebrew Scripture. The first being Deuteronomy 30: 1-6, we have a promise to re-gather the nation and to circumcise their hearts. In Ezekiel 11:17-21 there is another promise to regather the people in the land with a new spirit and a new heart. In Jeremiah 31:31-34, a promise of a New Covenant, the idea of the Law being placed within people and the context of forgiveness and then in Ezekiel 36:24-28 is a picture of being sprinkled clean and purified with a new heart and spirit. All of this is operating in the background of what John the Baptist is doing. John the Baptist is engaging in a baptism that is unique in Jewish background. There is a cleansing in Judaism to bring people back to proper status with God. There is proselyte baptism in which a gentile becomes a Jew, but the baptism John is engaged in is special eschatological baptism because it is baptism that prepares for God's coming. Then it says, 'I am ready for God to come.' It is also a baptism that associated with repentance, but notice that this repentance is cooperative as well as individual. It is a call to Israel to become faithful again. This isn't difficult to figure out interpretatively or hermeneutically if you are a Jew. Your country is overrun by foreigners, so what does that mean according to the Torah? You've been unfaithful; the nation is in a condition of sin. So how is that corrected? Repentance and faithfulness that's rooted in the Law; it's being faithful to the Law. There's a rabbinic saying, 'if Israel will keep two Sabbath's faithfully, the Lord will return.' This shows the degree in which they are faithful to the Law.

So, this is a call for Israel to return to the faithfulness of the Law and be ready for the coming of God; the coming of the Eschaton (pronounced Eskaton), the beginning of the New Age. This forms the back drop or back ground of Jesus' ministry. Now, when Jesus gets baptized by John, he is endorsing the ministry of John the Baptist. So John the Baptist is a divine messenger prophet. And in the wilderness, there is a call to escape the exile, the judgement through divine release because the Kingdom of God is at hand. This is Matthew's emphasis. However, Luke does something that Matthew's doesn't; in Matthew 3:3 Isaiah 40 is cited in verse 3 saying, 'the voice of one shouting in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' This is like a red carpet for the entrance of God. In Luke 3:4-6 Luke uses more of the Isaiah passage, 'every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be brought low, and the crooked will be made straight, and the rough ways will be made smooth, and all humanity will see the salvation of God.' So this involves all the nations. The preparation is for a new era and a way to escape the judgement. The baptism of repentance is for the forgiveness of sins. There is also an ethical call associated to this which is only in Luke. There is the announcement to the one who comes. These particular two elements that are only found in Luke; first in Luke 3:10-14, the setting, dating and relationship to rulers is unique to Luke. In addition, there is John's preaching that is also unique to Luke.

The ethical thrust here helps us to define repentance and it also says not to rely merely on your ethnicity. He uses the Greek verb, ποιῶσατε or poieo (to make or do) and the crowd then asks, 'what then shall we do?' The verb in verse 10 answered the verb in verse 8. The question is repeated again in verse 12 and then again in verse 13. These are three different groups. So what constitutes the action worthy of repentance? So here, repentance is seen in very concrete terms. Verse 10 says, 'so the crowds were

asking him, what then should we do;’ John answers, ‘the person who has two tunics must share with the person who has none, and the person who has food must do likewise.’ In verses 12 – 14, the tax collectors ask the same things, along with some soldiers. ‘Collect no more than you are required to. Take money from no one by violence or by false accusation, and be content with your pay,’ he said to the soldiers. When you think of repentance, who do you normally think of as being the one before whom one repents? God is the answer; but if we ask what the product of repentance is, it’s other people. It’s how you relate to other people. John the Baptist came to turn the hearts of people to God and turn the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wise. This is the ethical triangle that we’ve talked about: the person, God and people. So if I repent to God, what should that mean? It impacts on my relationship with other people. This is what John the Baptist is teaching. That’s why Josephus called him a teacher of virtue. So, a relationship with God should impact on my relationship with others.

Another detail unique to Luke is the way in which the saying about baptism with water vs the baptism of the stronger one works, its context. Notice the introduction in this passage, where it says that he was conversing with the people. They were wondering that perhaps John might be the Christ. John answered the question, ‘I baptize in water, there is one stronger than me who comes, and I am not worthy to loosen the strap of his sandals. He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire.’ Note that a Jewish person should not be a slave because of their experience in the Exodus. But should they become a slave, there is one act they should not perform which involves washing the feet of their master. So, what vocation does John have? He is a prophet. How high up on the vocational ladder is a prophet? It’s high, correct? Under prophet, comes a pastor and under a pastor comes an elder. So John is saying that distance between him and Christ is so great that he isn’t even worthy to perform a task that Jewish slaves should not perform for their masters. In this text, how do we know that the Messiah has come? He is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. This is part of the New Covenant, the promise of a new era. John’s the forerunner of the new era. So Luke is saying that this baptism is the sign that identifies the coming of the new era, the new age and the Messiah. Thus the spirit is a very important part of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God. (Note that this phrase is not that common in the Old Testament) This also tells us that the Spirit in the life of the person is an important aspect of the Gospel. The Spirit represents the sealing of the relationship between the person and God. There is not specific passage in the Old Testament that ties the bringing together of the Messiah bringing the Spirit. Being a prophet declaring the will of God, John shows us something new. So you have the eschatological era with the Messiah being the key figure and then you have the Spirit. The Spirit represents the purifying work of cleansing and fire which is the purging judgement. This also shows us that there are a lot of Jewish themes in the New Testament that are not yet connected, yet the portrayed characters will eventually connect these pieces in this new era. Along with this, the signs that Jesus is doing, verify this new era. John sees all of this as a unity of what coming forth. This new era represents the reestablishment of just rule of God on behalf of the righteous. Later, John will send messengers asking if he is the one or not. John wasn’t seeing everything that he thought was coming, there is doubt in him. It’s the timing that confuses John. As already mentioned, John the Baptist is announcing a new period, that of the Eschaton. We normally think of the future when we think of the Eschaton, but when Jesus came, we entered the Eschaton. When we think about eschatology, we think about the return of Jesus, but in the New Testament, eschatology includes Jesus’ first coming but it represents the beginning of the end times. This means that Jesus doesn’t just come as a bearer of wisdom. He is not merely a teacher of ethics; he is the bearer of a new era. This is against those who appeal to the gnostic gospels or who come out of the Jesus Seminar or those who appeal to the Q tradition; they say that he was just a non-eschatological figure and only a teacher of wisdom of the will of God or simply a prophet. That’s why they have a non-eschatological Jesus, that why any passages on the Eschaton is attributed to the early church. In Jesus’ relationship with John, there is an eschatological dimension to what Jesus is doing.

**Jesus’ Baptism:** Mark shows that this is fundamentally a private event between God and Jesus. John the Baptist saw it and Jesus participated in it and I think that’s all of it. Look at what Mark says, 1:9, ‘in those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan River. And just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens splitting apart and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my one dear Son; in you I take great delight. The Spirit immediately drove him into the wilderness.’ We have a second person speaking directly to Jesus. This event is an event which Jesus participates in the baptism of John which might indicate that

Jesus needed to repent. In Matthew, we get an exchange between John the Baptist and Jesus; John's sensitivity this and that fact that Jesus doesn't really need to participate in his baptism. But Jesus says that it's necessary to fulfill all righteousness because what Jesus is not getting baptized for himself, he is getting baptized as a representative of what John the Baptist's ministry is all about. He is getting baptized because he is coming as Israel king and to an Israel that needs to repent. And in getting baptized, he is identifying with that message. Jesus comes in anticipation of the Eschaton that John is announcing, thus Jesus is an eschatological figure. In addition, the spirit descending on Jesus is an indication of that. God says, 'This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.' John's baptism is a baptism that's saying that Israel is in need of returning to covenant faithfulness. This, of course, is setting the stage for Jesus launching into ministry. This draws off of Psalm 2:7 where it reads, 'The king says, I will announce the Lord's decree. He said to me: You are my son! This very day I have become your father!' And then in Isaiah 42:1, 'Here is my servant whom I support, my chosen one in whom I take pleasure, I have placed my spirit on him; he will make decrees for the nations.' Jesus, being endowed by God's spirit, he becomes the anointed one.

**The Temptation:** In Luke's genealogy preceding the temptation, the genealogy goes all the way back to Adam. In being identified with Adam, it goes on to say, 'son of Seth, son of Adam, Son of God.' When Luke attaches 'Son of God' to Adam, he's saying that it has a human dimension, right before the temptation, thus Jesus becomes the second Adam, but we are not using the title here. Jesus is going to negotiate his way through the temptations with Satan three times when Adam failed in only one temptation. Adam represented humanity; Jesus is even more qualified to represent humanity. And the issue from Adam until now is faithfulness. In this, we see Jesus' absolute commitment to represent God. That's how he resists temptation. It misses the point in thinking that he resists temptation in reciting Scripture. Scripture is a means; he resists temptation by his sense of absolute loyalty and faithfulness to God. Scripture helps to express that. This concerns how we think about God, not just what we think about him, and even though Jesus is answering the Scripture, more important is the allegiance that Jesus feels to faithfully follow in the way God calls us to be led. He doesn't do anything that reflects badly on that faithfulness. Unlike Adam, who was called to doubt God and when he doubted whether he would really die if he disobeyed God, he fell.

**The Early Galilean Ministry:** We will first see an interchange between Jesus' action, his teachings and his miracles. We usually think in terms of Jesus' teachings and consider his miracles but we are usually not sure about his actions. We will see that there is an interaction going on between word and deed. What Jesus says illustrates what he does and what he does illustrates what he says and there is constant interaction between these two. Part of what makes Jesus' authority is not just the speaking but the fact that he acts. It is teaching but not just in a verbal sense. On page 8 of Jesus, According to Scripture and in Mark 2:1-12; in this you will see that the Luke column is sequenced exactly as the Mark column is. (If you don't have this, search the internet for parallels of the synoptic Gospels.) But in column from Matthew, things are not sequenced but separated. This happened because the Gospel writers sectioned their writings off topically, not necessarily chronological. In Mark 2:1 to 3:6 are five consecutive controversies, literally put on top of one another. It seems that early in Mark's Gospel, he's saying what the controversy around Jesus is about. And so five different areas of conflict emerge with Luke, but this is different from the things that Matthew is concerned about. So these controversies could cover a much larger time span during the Galilean Ministry than what Luke shows them to cover. In comparing Luke 4:16-30, we have the same in Mark 6:1-6a. We know that Luke has twenty four chapters while Mark has only sixteen. So we are approaching the middle part of Mark, but we see in Matthew 13, having 28 chapters, we see again that we are close to the middle of Jesus' ministry. Now in the passage of Luke, the crowds ask Jesus to perform the signs in Nazareth that he performed in Capernaum. However, we see in Luke that Jesus hadn't travelled to Capernaum yet; that he was going there next. This could possibly suggest that Luke has moved an event that was in the middle of the Galilean ministry and put it at the front or beginning of the Galilean ministry to say that this is the kind of experience Jesus had in his ministry. He starts off with Jesus in the synagogue in his home town being rejected. And the dislocation within the material is the clue that is what happened.

Remember now, that the ancient writers cared less about chronological sequences than we do today. However, we do this, ourselves, all the time but just don't realize it; however, often the assumption is that

history requires chronology, but this is not necessarily so. Highlighting certain events is more important than giving a chronological sequence of events. Another example of this in Luke is in Luke 9, it says that he set his face to go to Jerusalem and at the end of chapter he is at Martha and Mary's place. From John, we know that Martha and Mary live on the edge of Jerusalem at Bethany. Luke has him going to other places but he will end up in Jerusalem. So order comes in a number of ways: chronological, logical, etc. You can say it follows a general chronology but the lack of a specific chronology typifies this story where Jesus grew up. And realize that in any harmony, a justification of what these events are in the order they are, is not given. This helps us understand that in Matthew, we are looking at things through Matthew's eyes and this goes for Luke and Mark and also in John.

The key issue again is Jesus' authority and the announcement of the Kingdom. The synoptic Gospels are concerned with what comes with Jesus than talking about who Jesus is. It talks about what he is bringing, what he is announcing. Back to the John the Baptist questions that gets ask in the middle of his ministry. 'Are you the one to come, or should we expect another?' Jesus' answer, 'tell him what you have seen.' He didn't answer in terms of his person, he answered in terms of his actions and what they represented. So more time is spent in discussing what comes with Jesus and he brings than who he is. Of course, these have implications of who Jesus is, because Jesus is the one bringing it. The stress is on appreciating what God is bringing. In Matthew 4:12 where the Galilean ministry is introduced, it reads: 'Now when Jesus heard that John had been imprisoned, he went into Galilee. While in Galilee, he moved from Nazareth to make his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoke by Isaiah the prophet would be fulfilled: Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way by the sea,, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles – the people who sit in the region and shadow of death a light has dawned,' We are getting an idea of Messiah as light where it ended in Luke 1 & 2 being a light to the gentiles. 'From that time Jesus began to preach this message, repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is near.' And at the same time, he begins to introduce the Kingdom of God. We now come to the synagogue scene in Luke where the Spirit is anointed in 4:16-30. Did Jesus highlight himself as a prophet or a Messiah in these verses? In the citation itself, the word 'proclaim' is mentioned three times, but this word is ambiguous in regards to the question because prophets proclaim. He is going to act, not just proclaim. He's going to set the oppressed free; those who are oppressed by the devil. The Kingdom of God is going to defeat the kingdom of the devil. Note, in retracing our steps, the spirit came upon him at the baptism and then the voice came from heaven saying, this is my son in whom I am well pleased. So this anointed refers back to what happened at the baptism. This is the overall narrative that is taking place. One has to know the story of the sequence of Jesus' life to see this. The time he is invoking is the time from Isaiah 61. So, at this point, Jesus is more interested in talking about the time and what it is, he's bringing and being explicitly clear as to who he is in the mist of this.

There are a lot of prophetic ideas in the text and interestingly in verse 26, Elijah was sent to Sidon, this was gentile territory. In addition, of all the lepers in Israel, none of them were cleansed except Naaman, a Syrian. So the crowd gets upset with him for including the gentiles in his ministry. During the time of Elijah, Israel was not doing well in their faithfulness to God. It was during a time that Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal. Gentiles were getting the benefit from the ministry of Elijah during that time. Thus, the implication here was that the Israel was in the same state as it was in the days of Elijah and the gentiles were going to receive the blessing that were to come. So we see that Jesus' ministry is about reconciliation, as mentioned, your relationship with God is supposed to affect your relationship with your fellow man. So the Jews there in the synagogue could not tolerate the idea of the gentiles might be included in any ministry in regards to the Eschaton.

Back to the order of things: words, miracles and actions. Jesus is saying if you understand the actions I am performing, you will understand the time. If you understand the time, you will understand the figure. The reader here is being put in a position of seeing this. So the controversy is over the judgement and gentile blessing. Luke is more focused on the figure, the Kingdom bringing. He's not trying to trying to be explicit about who Jesus is but on the fact that the Kingdom and the Eschaton is present. This is what is being proclaimed and also fulfilled. They recognize that Jesus has a role in this and they're trying to figure out where he fits because they bring up the fact that he grew up amongst them and his father was Joseph and he grew up not far from them. But in bringing up the history of Elijah and Elisha, Jesus is trying to tell them that they are missing the point and that they are not in the condition to welcome it.

We get the call of Jesus here with Jesus eventually going out and choosing the disciples. We get the day in Capernaum in which Mark and Luke remark that Jesus teaches with authority. Mark is very clear that this happens with the acts and word combination that is called 'new teaching.' In Mark 1:21, 'then they went to Capernaum. When the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people there were amazed by his teaching, because he taught them like one who had authority, not like the experts in the law.' So, if Jewish teaching is any indication of the way the Jewish Rabbi would teach would be by referring to previous Rabbis. You don't hear Jesus doing that. 'Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit and he cried out, leave us alone, Jesus the Nazarene! Have you come to destroy us? I know who you – the Holy One of God! But Jesus rebuked him. Silence! Come out of him! After throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him. They all were amazed and ask each other, what is this? A new teaching with authority! He even commands the unclean spirits and they obey him.' So this new teaching involves actions and teaching together and giving evidence of what he's talking about. Interestingly, the Gospel of John says the same thing, 'don't believe what I say but believe what I do.' And it turns out that Jesus is fighting against things that affect life.

So we get miracles and exorcisms side by side. In Jewish teaching, the testament of Moses says when Satan is defeated; the Kingdom of God is come. We get a confession at the exorcism of Jesus being the Holy One of God. Then later on, there is a unique remark in Luke 4:41, 'he placed his hands on every one of them and healed them. Demons also came out of many, crying out you are the Son of God! But he rebuked them, and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.' This is unique to the Gospel of Luke. Do we equate the Son of God with Messiah? Most congregations would think about the second person of the Trinity. He silenced them because there were all kinds of views who the Christ was, as in 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple Judaism; Jesus wasn't going to be any of those, exactly. He was recasting this title so that people would understand what type of Messiah he would be in terms of their expectations which were wrong. Nevertheless, he had to recast it. This was the same with the disciples; Peter confesses at Caesarea, Philippi that Jesus was the Christ. Interestingly, the title 'Son of the Living God' is only in Matthew. When Jesus mentions that he is going to suffer, Peter stands against it as that's not the Messiah Peter thought; the Messiah doesn't suffer. Jesus rebuts Peter for this. This shows that Jesus was reshaping how they thought about the Christ.

In chapter 5:1-11, Luke gives us his version of the Call of the Disciples. This is the place where Jesus takes them out fishing and he instructs them to cast the net having a huge catch of fish. The boat begins to sink as the catch is so large. Peter falls down at Jesus' knees asking him to go away. Peter's 'theology' here is that if Jesus is holy, Peter can't be in his presence. And Jesus' 'theology' here is, if you understand that you are a sinner, I can work with you. You understand who you are before God and God can work with that. The person God can't work with is the person who doesn't think they have a need from God and who doesn't appreciate the fact works to make us holy, we are holy in and of ourselves. There is terrific humility in Peter, even though his theology is wrong. Jesus takes him and rehabilitates him and changes his theology in the process. Jesus is not going to think in terms of righteousness and sinners in the way Peter does. If someone is a sinner, it becomes a requirement to take the initiative to go out and minister to that person.

In verse 12, we have the cleansing of the Leper which then leads to observance to the law. All of these acts are declarations of how the oppressed are being released in Luke. In the healing of the Paralytic, as he was lowered down before Jesus, he said, 'your sins are forgiven.' Jesus perceived the Pharisees hostile thoughts and said, 'which is easier, to say, your sins are forgiven, or to say, stand up and walk?' One problem here is that you can tell if anything has happened, but if Jesus tells the man to get up and walk, they can see that something has happened. So Jesus then says, 'so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, I tell you, stand up, take your stretcher and go home.' Jesus uses this action of something you can see to validate something you can't see, 'your sins are forgiven.' The action adds to the demonstration that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. And this action portrays the otherwise unseen authority, thus miracles must be audio visuals of other things. In flashing back to Jesus in the boat with Peter, James and John and the miracle of the huge catch of fish, Jesus tells them, 'I will make you fishers of men.' In verse 27, Levi is called to join Jesus.



This is a beautiful picture of ministry, a picture of a physician. In the relationship between any physician and patient, the patient expects the doctor to heal him of his sickness. So when Jesus pictures himself as a physician, the sick go in recognizing they are sick and Jesus is the physician that heals them of their sins.

In verse 33, Jesus demonstrates the superiority of the new by saying that no one pours new wine into old wineskins because if you do, they will burst and the skins will be destroyed; the same as using a new patch and sewing it on an old garment. In addition, those that like the old wine will not like the new wine. You cannot mix the old and the new. In Luke 6:1, Jesus was going through a grain field on the Sabbath where the disciples gathered and ate some of it. In this act, Jesus demonstrates that he is lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is associated as far back in the Bible as the creation and also it is part of the Ten Commandments. This is a lesson on how the laws are designed to work. This deals with compassion. In another Sabbath incident, Jesus reminds those around about the scene going back to David, David has violated the law; they entered the house of God and ate the sacred bread. David didn't get judged by God, nothing happened when they ate the bread in the temple. Nothing happened except for the eating of the bread. The question Jesus is asking here, why didn't something happen to David? But Jesus is demonstrating that the Law was always designed to function in this way, but you have the law do more than it was designed to do. The examples Jesus uses here are David, Scripture, Priest working on the Sabbath and the sacrifices associated with the holy day. But finally, Jesus says, 'and the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.' This is the last of the argument. So the Sabbath controversy points to the Lordship on the one hand and compassion on the other. Thus, we are to minister in such a way to reflect the compassion of God. The church says that God loves you and has a plan for your life, but yet where is the action that shows this? Where is the Word and action coming together? If Jesus' ministry is that of word and action joined to one so that one reinforces the other, where is that ministry in the church? And what do we communicate in the way we relate to the outsiders?

We are seeing an expanding influence; Matthew is clear about the gentile interest as we set up the Sermon on the Mount. We see that the people coming not only from the regions within Israel but coming from Tyre and Sidon as well. The twelve are called in verse 6:12. This is a reformed or reconstituted Israel that is being formed. Jesus is not attempting to lead Judaism, yet. He is simply calling on Israel to respond to her Messiah. These are symbols of a new era with a new community that's being formed. There are zealots and tax collectors in the same group. Think about this on the political spectrum! The zealots want to remove Rome, the tax collectors are collecting taxes for Rome and then average people in between. They are all lay people. What we are seeing is the laying of a ground work of ministry, in which the nature of the time is being highlighted, but there are little hints here and there, the healing of the paralytic, the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath and you have better appreciate whose back the Kingdom is coming on.

# Lecture 3: Life of Christ - The Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> lecture in the online series of lectures on the Life of Christ by Dr. Darrell Bock.

Recommended Reading includes: Jesus According to Scripture: restoring the Portrait from the Gospels by Bock, Baker, 2002 and Jesus in Context by Darrel Bock and Greg Herrick, eds., Baker, 2005 and Jesus Under Fire by Mike Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, Zondervan, 1995.

*(Any slides, photos or outlines that the lecturer refers to should be down loaded separately. If they are not available, you may be able to find something similar using the Google© search engine.)*

There's going to be a lot of detail in this lecture as we deal with the issue of the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain. The last trip I took to Israel, I visited a site where Josephus headed up an army against Rome in AD 67 and was defeated. The Roman army was working their way to Jerusalem, where eventually they destroyed the temple in AD 72. I was on the Golan Heights, somewhat removed from the Sea of Galilee, yet somewhat close. We climbed upwards until we reached a plateau which seemed like a plain. It was a plain on top of a hill. I was thinking about the passage in Luke on the Sermon on the Plain. It seemed a bit of a contradiction which could have been caused from the various topography of the Country. A similar situation consisted in where Jesus gave the beatitudes. A similar topography existed by Tiberius.

**Sermon on the Mount and Parallels in the Synoptic Gospels:** A controversy exists regarding the description of the Sermon on the Mount which comes from the Gospel of Matthew. While the Sermon on the Plain, a similar sermon or the same sermon, comes from the Gospel of Luke. In Matthew we see the first major teaching of Jesus. But first note that overall, Matthew contains five different teaching units: the Sermon on the Mount, the discussion in chapter 10 about missions, chapter 13 has the kingdom, chapters 16-18 has teaching in regards to relationships and the new community and then 24 and 25, the Olivet Discourse. So those are the units in Matthew. The first one is an exposition of the true Torah as Jesus presents it. This compliments what we've seen of Jesus' ministry about the challenge to Jewish practice. We now pick up the account in Matthew 5-7. Later passages in Matthew have already been noted because they came earlier in the other Gospels; 8:1-4, 14-17, 9:1-17, and 12:1-21. Many see Matthew as topical, especially in chapters 8 and 9 focusing on his presentation of the works of Jesus' ministry which follow the presentation of his teaching. Luke's first teaching block is the synagogue appearance in chapter 4. Mark lacks any parallel to the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain. Note that the reason why Mark is viewed as being the first Gospel, not the last is because of absence of material like the Sermon on the Mount. If the Sermon on the Mount had been in Luke and Matthew and Matthew had been our first Gospel and Mark was simply copying from Matthew and Luke, the question becomes, why don't we have any trace of the Sermon in Mark, if Mark is a lighter version of those other Gospels? So for this reason, Mark is seen as being the first Gospel to have been written.

So the question here is whether the Sermon on the Plain and the Sermon on the Mount are one in the same. There are different views in regards to the relationship between Matthew and Luke; some say they are two distinct sermons because of the differences in the location and content. The version in Matthew has 107 verses while Luke's verse has only 30 verses. Other argue that the sermon in Matthew is seen as an Anthology, pulling together Jesus' teachings, typical of his preaching and made it into a topical ethical sermon and given it a setting as the "Sermon on the Mount" but yet, it is the type of thing that Jesus might have preached in a different locations in talking about what discipleship involves. Remember that Jesus does have an itinerary ministry, moving from place to place. In an itinerary ministry, the chances are good that you might repeat the same message in different locations. So this is a possibility. Third, it's one sermon which Luke has edited to remove more legally oriented portions. If you look at what is missing from Luke, you'll see that Luke has omitted, for example, five of the six anti-thesis, of which deals with different aspects of Jewish tradition. Remember that Luke isn't writing to Jews primarily; he's

writing to gentiles. So why would he have these disputes in his material? Thirteen saying in Matthew are elsewhere in Luke ranging from Luke 11 to Luke 16. This is one of the reasons some people think that Matthew pooled it together into an analogy.

Another assumption suggests that Luke is aware that Jesus preached a sermon like this but the material is scattered about because as an itinerant ministry, he dealt with different themes in different locations. No one really knows, but note that forty six of Matthew's one hundred and seven verses are elsewhere in Luke. So forty three percent of the sermon is elsewhere and if you put Luke's thirty verses and Mathew's forty six verses together, it means that about seventy percent of Matthew's sermon is in Luke. Much of the sermon is alluded to in James and 1<sup>st</sup> Peter as epistolary material; at least the themes show up there. It doesn't show up as themes that Jesus taught but it shows up as teachings which are being passed on in the church. It indicates that Jesus' teaching in this section had a wide impact in the church. And Matthew's audiences are both Jews and gentile as is Luke's sermon on the plain. Even though Matthew is sometimes called the Jewish Gospel, this particular sermon was listened to by both Jew and gentile. But some of the verses in the version in Matthew deal with Jews in particular. Look at the introduction of the sermon in Matthew 4:23, 'Jesus went throughout all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of disease and sickness among the people. So a report about him spread throughout Syria.' Of course Syria is not Israel. 'People brought him those who suffered with various illnesses and afflictions, those who had seizures, paralytics, and those possessed by demons, and he healed them. And large crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan River. The Decapolis is a collection of ten cities in an area northeast of the Jordan River or what is known today as Jordan. This is a gentile area as well. Remember the story of the demonic and the herd of pigs; this was gentile territory since Jews don't herd pigs or even have them.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up to the mountain. These crowds are made up of diverse people, not just Jews. Note that the placement of this sermon is at the same spot relative to the two Gospels, Luke and Matthew. Also note that one portion in Luke is not paralleled in Matthew; the woes of Luke 6:24-26. The following are shared between the two accounts: the occasion set by a summary, the beatitudes but Matthew has several more, the call to love your enemies, the issue on not judging, you will know them by the fruits and the parable of hearing which contrasts the house built on the rock with the house built on the sand. For the most part, Luke's order is like Matthew in the sections they do share. Part of the problem with dealing with the time frames of entry and exit is to know where the person starts from. If he starts in Capernaum, close to where this site is, then he goes throughout the regent and then down to the plains to speak, making a circle; it could be said that he is going up to preach or down to preach. We just don't know the framing of the event. There are also traditions mediated in two different linguistic and cultural points, one coming through an Aramaic Hebrew background and other being strictly Hellenistic.

**Beatitudes and Woes:** The beatitudes represent a proclamation of blessings for the needy, the type of person for whom God reaches out. We will see people on the fringe, who don't exercise power, people who are neglected. In Matthew, we have nine beatitudes and in Luke we have four. In Matthew, we have the better known, those who are poor in spirit, the hungry, the meek, hungry and thirsty for righteousness, merciful, clean in heart, peacemakers, persecuted for righteousness sake and the persecuted restated. The list in Luke is different: poor, hungry now, weeping now, when you are hated because of the Son of Man. It's seems to be an eschatological reversal; in this reversal, you will be blessed and the reversal speaks of either being received by him or the Kingdom of Heaven. These categories are not purely social, but neither are they purely spiritualized. Here is who God blesses and looks after and the passage is an invitation in sharing grace by having such a character. So, in a sense, Jesus is announcing that God blesses these kinds of people. Matthew has the poor in spirit while Luke has 'blessed are the poor'. Some expressions of theology will have a lot to do with the poor; today, this is often referred to liberation theology. In dealing with Luke, people will consider Luke and then say, 'blessed are the poor for theirs is the Kingdom of God.' From there, they will go to Matthew and decide that these are the spiritually poor. They are not the economically poor; they are not the social poor. This is not the correct way to look at these texts. The problem, in Luke, the opposite of the beatitudes, you have the woes. Luke 6:24, 'but woe to you who are rich, for you have received your comfort already. Woe to you who are well satisfied with food now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.' It continues to say, 'Woe to you when all people speak well of you, for their ancestors did the same things to the false

prophets.' It doesn't say woe to you who are rich in spirit because it doesn't work.

The observation when Luke is speaking about the poor, he is speaking about a social element of people. Yes, it's clear that it's spiritual because later on it talks about them being persecuted for their faith. This is the Old Testament 'Honorvane'; people who are isolated and on the fringe of society in part because of their faithfulness to God. But there is an economic element to it. There is a suffering and persecution that they have experienced that is part of their position. That's the important observation, but it isn't a category that's simply to be spiritualized. It doesn't make any difference whether you are really rich or poor as long as you are poor in spirit. There seems to be a sensitivity of Jesus toward people on the fringe of society for a variety of reasons; the poor on the one hand, the tax collectors on the other, the lepers, etc. the kind of people Jesus ministers to and the people that society tends to forget and care about. There's a humility that comes from being on the fringe of society, and there is openness to God that many people on the fringe often have. In addition, many of these people are the ones who will embrace the message.

**Beatitudes - Salt and Light of the World:** In Matthew 5:13 you are the salt of the earth. Mark and Luke have a similar image, Mark 9 and Luke 14. He warns them if the salt loses its saltiness, it will only be thrown out to be trampled on. It ceases to be used for that which it was created and is no better than dust. The point of the exhortation is to be useful and live out your calling, you are accountable to God. The image then both informs and warns. This is followed by another image of being the light of the earth. Both Mark and Luke has similar versions of this in Mark 4:21 after the kingdom parables and Luke 8:16. 'You are the light of the world. A city located on a mountain cannot be hidden. People do not light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.' There is some discussion whether it is the 'light of the world' or 'light for the world.' A better translation would be, 'a light is to be a benefit to the world. Let your light shine before humanity.' Why? 'That they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven.' This is a mission statement in the Sermon on the Mount. So how is God glorified? One of the ways God is glorified is by his servants shining appropriately before humanity through the good works they engage in. Thus I remind you that Jesus' ministry is a ministry of Word and deed together. The deed re-enforces the Word and the word re-enforces the deed. The church should have the same kind of ministry, a Word and deed ministry, where deeds re-enforce the Word. The call is to do good works in the world as a testimony to God. These passages are a preamble to the entire sermon.

**Beatitudes - The Law:** This is one of the most abused passages in the Sermon on the Mount. It's easy to pull this unit out and take it on its own terms without paying attention to how this unit sets up the anti-thesis. The conceptual parallels in Luke 16:16-17, Jesus expounds on his mission in the Law and the point is found in verse 20, his people is to have a righteousness which exceeds the Scribes and the Pharisees, something that permits interest into the Kingdom of Heaven. This is not a race or just Jewish oriented. In verses 21-48, the explanation follows with the summary in verse 48 recalling this point, 'unless your righteousness exceeds that of the experts in the Law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.' The topics include anger, adultery, divorce, oaths, retaliation and love of enemies, six topics. The mission that Jesus says he has come to perform is to fulfill, not abolish the Law and the prophets. Nothing of the Law passages away until all is accomplished. Note that the mention of the prophets tells us that more than rules are in view here. We aren't just dealing with the Torah the first five books of the Old Testament interpreted abstractly on their own terms. We are talking about the Law as expounded through the call and the rebuke of the Prophets. Why; because Jesus, like John the Baptist, is calling the nation back to covenant faithfulness. Basically he says; don't relax in doing the least of these commandments. Jesus ministry represents a realization in morality and promise of what the Law was given for; so it is relevant for disciples, not as an abstract Law of externals but something to be penetrated to see what God really desires. And that's how Jesus expounds it and in expounding it, he fulfills it. He fulfills it, not in the sense of reading it as a raw external letter.

Matthew 5:25-26 shows up in Luke 12:57-58. The anti-thesis is structured the same way. You have heard it said, but I say to you. (Anti-thesis means here, a correction, a change from that previously stated.) This is a claim of authority that Jesus is making. He has the authority to interpret the Law. He is not only Lord of the Sabbath; he is Lord of the Torah (The first five books of the Old Testament, commonly known as the Law). He is dealing with the sixth command here. You shouldn't murder, but beyond murder, he points out, there is accountability for anger, for insulting someone and for disrespect. The anger is seen

as inappropriate; there are times when a person can be challenged which the passages alluding to Matthew 23 are about. If your brother has something against you, you are supposed to go and reconcile it with him. Why, because reconciliation is a high value to Jesus. We saw that in the triangle we covered in the last lecture. Your relationship with God should impact with you relationship with others. He says that you should reconcile before worship; vertical relationship is tied to horizontal relationship. The issue is not staying in anger and alienation, but making friends with the accuser before judgement renders you permanently clubbable. Moral righteousness that Jesus teaches demands an initiative to reconciliation to be made rather than abiding in anger. This is cutting murder off at the root by dealing with the anger.

In Matthew 5:27-32, Matthew deals with adultery. Verse 5:30 appears in a distinct context in Mark 9:43 and 45, but that's like Matthew 18:8-9. The summary appears in Luke 16:18. Here, we are dealing with the seventh commandment, the commandment on adultery. Lust is adultery of the heart; before we get to adultery, note that lust is what leads to it. The figure is, if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Jesus is being rhetorical here because if this was literal, it would be two strikes and you would be blind. The point is to separate that which causes sin. For deprivation of opportunity to sin is better than judgement. The member sins but the whole body is judged; divorce leads to adultery and there is an assumption in this passage in talking about adultery that remarriage will occur if one gets a divorce. Think about it: why does divorce occur? It's to be free to remarry. If you look at the divorce certificate; in Judaism you will see that with it comes the right to remarry. 'He who divorces his wife must give her a legal document.' You get a description of the rights that come with divorce. This is controversial because you have exception clauses in Matthew that you don't have in Mark and Luke. This is from the Mishna, the written collection of Jewish oral tradition. You are to examine yourself from the heart and keep your vows. You aren't supposed to look for a way out of marriage, even though there is an exception that's noted.

**Beatitudes – Oaths:** In regards to Oaths in Matthew 5:33-37, the Old Testament background comes from the third commandment. Jewish background concerns text from Josephus dealing with the proper and improper ways to take Oaths. You were taught to keep any Oath to God and not to swear for something else that belongs to God already. You are not to swear by your own person since your personal integrity should be such that an oath isn't necessary. Your word should be all that is needed. The need to take an oath assumes a lack of integrity, so your integrity should be strong enough to speak for itself. There is also retaliation in Matthew 5: 38-42 and Luke 6:29-30. The phrase is also from Exodus 21:24 and Leviticus 24:20 and Deuteronomy 19:21 discusses how the laws are to be applied in cases of personal injury. The context is in regards to what judgement should do. Jesus, in contrast, advocates non-retaliation in personal interaction. It involves how to respond to personal legal attack. If you look at this text in the way Jesus presents it, 'you have heard that it was said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, do not resist the evildoer.' There is a huge debate about the anti-thesis that goes something like this: is Jesus simply commenting on the Jewish tradition about the Law or is he talking about the Law? As Jesus has made changes in the way this is seen, some people get nervous when Jesus talks about the Torah directly. They say that Jesus is dealing with the Jewish interpretation of the Law, not the Law. But that presents a problem with this example which cites the Torah. But Jesus is showing his authority here also. The illustration is a slap on the cheek, turn the other cheek; Jesus is not saying that we need to get beaten senseless. It's a picture of rejection; a slap on the cheek in all likelihood pictures the rejection that one experiences from a synagogue. You are to remain vulnerable; this is the point as you minister on God's behalf. You are to be vulnerable and remain vulnerable to rejection. With regard to suing, you not only give the shirt, but you give your coat also. The same as a forced journey, you go double over what's requested. You give when asked and you don't refuse nor look for interest. All of this represents Jesus' use of hyperbole, but it is also making the point that you do everything you can to be of help. Luke's phrasing comes with the discussion of loving the enemy as an example and again, it is the same sequence as in Matthew. Thus non-retaliation is the ethical standard in relationships as is an element of generosity and service. Thus, this is a new revelation and a fresh emphasis, justice is something that is left to God and God's people are going to serve and they will serve venerably, rather than be self-protective.

'You have heard that it was said to love your neighbor and hate your enemy, but I say to love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be like your Father in heaven. The love aspect of

the saying is in Leviticus 19:18 and the second could be a summary of Old Testament teaching given in some of the Psalms. It also appears in certain Jewish texts, like the testament of Benjamin 4:2. If you love only those who love you and greet you as brothers, that is only what publicans and gentiles do and nothing more. The standard for a disciple is greater than the way the world relates to people. This is the point being made here. 'Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.' Cause to love and do good things and bless, pray, love and do good things. You will be sons and you will be merciful as the Father is merciful; be gracious to friends and enemies. It's an interesting text because Jesus changes it by saying, 'but I say to you love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be like your Father in heaven, since he causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good alike, and sends rain on the righteous and unrighteous. God treats the unrighteous with provision; you should do the same because you are supposed to be a child of and like the Father. This is the end of the beatitudes and now we talk about certain kinds of acts of charity.

**Acts of Charity, Divorce and Remarriage:** In regards to charity and Christian service. On the one hand, you have the freedom to engage society with your values, but you have to be open to rejection on the other hand, and your goal is to engage and serve. Due to the cultural wars today, we tend to see everything through a confronting mode. But do we ask how we can serve. We can complain about abortion, but do we spend the money and take the effort and open up the clinics that will take care of people who choose not to have an abortion; or might even serve people who are emotionally disturbed by having an abortion? Does our word match our deed? The church and many Christians often have a confrontational attitude toward others instead of a servant's attitude that the Scriptures teach. We think the Gospel is most effectively moved by using power like the world does, when in fact the Gospel is often used most effectively through service and through caring, which sometimes mean not acting out of power. But we don't want to take the risk of vulnerability. My sense is that there are tolerated exceptions in divorce. Jesus' standard is, don't get divorced; that's the emphasis and that's why you get the no exception in Mark and in Luke. But Matthew qualifies it, there is a certain exception and that that exception is unfaithfulness and in that case divorce is permitted. It's tolerated, not recommended, not required; it's simply tolerated. The reason I think that is important, when we come to 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7 and Paul is ask about an unbeliever's desertion and whether or not it's proper to divorce in that situation. Paul knows the Lord's teaching because he cites it. If Jesus' teaching had been, 'no divorce,' Paul would have never opened up what is called the Pauline exceptions. He creates this other category in the mitts of his writings alongside this idea of adultery. This seems to be seen as an intense martial unfaithfulness, to desert a spouse; and so he permits it. Those are the two exceptions in Scripture.

Remarriage is a little more difficult because the exhortation is that you are better off not remarrying. In fact, the assumptions in these passages are, if you remarry, you create an adulteress situation in some cases. The difficulty is knowing whether or not that applies to the exception. The way I would read it, no, it doesn't apply to the exception because the point of granting the exception is to put you in the position of remarriage as the extra Biblical material shows us. I treat the exception as a legible exception, a complete exception if you will; tolerated, permitted, not required but there. Any other divorce situation for any other reason creates an immoral situation on the other end with remarriage. But then if that happens, what do you then, get a second divorce and make matters worse. The emphasis in Scripture is that a person needs to try and honor their vows. The goal is not to get out of the relationship. And note that the only unforgiveable sin is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. What is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? It is denying the testimony of the Spirit about Jesus Christ. If a person has gotten a divorce and remarried (If it is done in the mist of the church then there is disciplinary actions associated with it). Can a person repent from that? Absolutely, they can repent and some people come into a church situation as having already done that and it should be communicated that this is something that God forgives. In difficult situations where there is physical violence, a time of separation could be recommended with the goal of getting the marriage back together. But if physical violence or intense abuse continues, divorce isn't the greatest option but there are times when separation or divorce might be necessary. In terms of abuse, I would say that it is no different than adultery and I would think Jesus would say the same thing but, of course, he doesn't say that and he didn't say that and we don't have the freedom to think that. Abuse and physical violence is not a theoretical situation, but it happens all the time with everyone, this includes Christians also. This is because we live in a fallen world and a fallen world is not easy to live in. You need to be faithful as you can to what the Lord wants as you try to deal with these situations. We cannot do this in our own strength,

we don't have that capability; we are to draw on the Lord's strength.

In regards to giving, do not practice your piety before people, there's no reward for this. Piety is something that should not be displayed to draw attention to it. It should just be. If someone else sees that you are in fact pious, that's different. But Matthew 6:1-18 is not talking about self-promotion here. The examples used in these verses deal with alms, prayer and fasting. This is contrasted with the hypocrites who do something in public but could care less about the people around them or the situation around them. The hypocrites here only care about themselves and no one else. Note that alms in Judaism was a very honored thing to do. There are a lot of texts that deal with the giving of alms. And God values people who give to others who are in need. The point is, there is to be no trumpet, no broadcasting and those who draw attention to themselves will have their full reward. There is a kind of public righteousness associated with this, but this is not real righteousness. 'Give alms in secret so that the Father may reward you in secret.' Acts of piety is not to be done for personal show.

For praying, the exhortation is not to pray in order to be seen. Pray in the inner room. The store room of one's house then, was the most isolated part of the house. Pray to the Father in secret and he will reward you in secret. Please note that this doesn't mean there can't be public prayer as Jesus himself prayed in public. This has to do with the motivation of the prayer. Am I praying in public to draw attention to the fact that I am praying in public; this is to be avoided. Don't pray with empty thoughtless words; for the Father knows what you need. So we get an example that is called the Lord's Prayer but is really the disciples' prayer. It's a prayer that the Lord taught the disciples to pray, expressing intense dependence on God in all the major areas of life, after reminding oneself of how unique God is.

In the first line, the Father is to be honored or set apart, 'your will be done as it is in heaven,' an expression of dependence. Then the prayer moves into the requests. Notice also that this prayer is not a personal private prayer. It is a corporate prayer; we pray as a community for one another in the midst of asking this. It's not just for myself as it starts off with, 'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, as it is in heaven.' Again, 'give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' This is not a private prayer; there is a sense of connection to other people. I am praying for the community as a disciple. I am praying for a dependent community as disciples. Note that there is a background to this prayer. There is the *Kadesh* in Judaism that was a prayer of Judaism. We know from another scene that John the Baptist taught his disciples certain prayers.

In Matthew, you get one address, three affirmations and four requests. The address is to God as Father communicating the intimacy of being in a family, but at the same time, recognition of respect because the exhortation is that your name be set apart, your kingdom come, your will be done. Then the requests of giving us bread and forgiving our sins and not leading us into temptation and deliver us from evil. The last is a text critical problem, 'for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory.' For our debts as we forgive those who sin against us. To be forgiven, you must be forgiving. Jesus says elsewhere, the measure by which you measure is the measure by which you are going to be measured. That is the standard that is being set up. There's a parable in Matthew that says the same thing. Luke is slightly different: one address, two affirmations and three requests. 'Father, sanctify your name, your kingdom come, give us our daily bread, forgive us our sins, lead us not into temptation,' a slightly shorter version. In both cases, we have a prayer of dependence and commitment to God. The focus is on God and what God can do. This shows the dependence of the disciples on God for daily needs, for spiritual and relational well-being and for spiritual direction and protection.

In Judaism, a fast was required only on the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament. There were voluntary fasts held for many reasons such as for remembrance, group confession and petitioning God. Pharisees and others had developed the process of fasting twice a week. Other customs are described in the Mishna Taanit. It also says that you shouldn't disfigure yourself when you fast so that everyone knows you are fasting. The closest we get to this in Christian circles is Ash Wednesday. You go and confess your sins and get marked with a little piece of ash. Those who draw attention to themselves, they already have their reward. Observe a fast without drawing attention to it; your piety is to be natural and private, not a matter of public broadcast.

# Lecture 4: Life of Christ - The Sermon on the Mount-Part 2

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> lecture in the online series of lectures on the Life of Christ by Dr. Darrell Bock. Recommended Reading includes: Jesus According to Scripture: restoring the Portrait from the Gospels by Bock, Baker, 2002 and Jesus in Context by Darrel Bock and Greg Herrick, eds., Baker, 2005 and Jesus Under Fire by Mike Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, Zondervan, 1995.

**The Sermon on the Mount:** In Matthew 6:19-21. The Sermon on the Mount shifts to discussing images and practices that influences a person. (The lecturer shows a picture of an eye.) This picture is fairly straight forward in one way; it basically says the eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is healthy then your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is diseased, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the dark. There is some debate in the ancient world as whether the eye is seen as that which takes something in or it is seen as something that comes out of a person. We seem to think of the eye as that taking in the outside world. The ancient world suggests that what comes into the eye reflects what's inside the person. We talk about a person having a gleam in their eye; that kind of reflects what they are feeling on the inside. Another example would be like seeing someone or an animal in headlights of your car. So from a person's eyes, you can see what going on inside of them. So the image is probably from the inside out, not outside in. The point here is, the eye is sending out healthy signals; thus it is sending out light if the body is made up of light, but if it's unhealthy, the body is dark and that darkness is really dark.

In Luke 11:33-36; Luke's context seems to be a little more distinct here. It may include; watch what you take in. But the point is, either way; the passage is a warning about what one is on the inside and you are to be healthy on the inside, regardless how you interpret the imaginary presented. The point is to be clean on the inside and thus the emphasis of the entire sermon. Part of this thinking has to do with knowing which master you serve. You cannot serve two masters at once. In the end, you will make a choice between one and the other. You will hate one and love the other and in applying this to God, you can't serve God and something else, such as the world or money or material possessions. Luke only supplies the idea of a householder or domestic slave serving two masters. Again the choice is about life's values and here the idea is concerned with the call to honor God and being devoted to him above all else, even that which is most likely to get our attention from being faithful to God.

In Matthew 6:25-34; the next passage is a unit on anxiety. We see it as well in Luke 12 and again because of the two masters' issue. The point might be; don't worry about food, drink or clothing, if you are dependent upon God, you can trust him for that as well. Relating to Greek, if you ask a question, you can expect a positive or negative answer depending on how you ask. So the question that is ask here, is not life more than food and clothing? One would expect a positive answer to this question; there, life is more than food and clothing. God takes care of the birds, he takes care of us. Worry doesn't add to any of this, to you as a person; God takes care of you like the flowers in a field and they don't work. Solomon wasn't even clothed like these. God even take care of the grass and you are so much more important; you of such little faith. This is the way Jesus sometimes addresses people when they don't stand up to the spirituality he thinks they should. So don't worry about food, drink or clothing, the nations do that; rather focus on the kingdom of God, for God knows you need these things. Thus, seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and these things will be added to you. Don't worry for tomorrow, for tomorrow has enough worry for itself. All this is designed for you to trust God and pursue righteousness and God will



care for you.

So the dependence we see in the prayer, in the first part of the chapter in the disciple's prayer is now working itself out practically in the attitude which that is supposed to generate in the disciples, a lack of anxiety. This is a negative remark; it's a way of saying that's how the world reacts but not how God's people react. Jesus didn't live in a politically correct world. They said things fairly directly; so his point is to say, 'that's living in a way a pagan or godless person lives.' Of course, part of the reason they're drawn to him is because he is offering everybody, both Jew and Gentile something about the relationship with God that they don't see to be anywhere else.

In Matthew 7:5; everybody knows that you are not to judge, unless you are to be judged. This passage is not about a lack of spiritual accountability which is the way unbelievers want to use it. By the standard you judge, you will be judged. Be very careful how you treat others for you might be treated the same way. The measure you use will be the measure you receive. Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye but fail to see the beam of wood in your own? How can you say to your brother, let me remove the speck from your eye, while the beam is in your own. You hypocrites first remove the beam from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. There is accountability in this passage. There is an assumption that it is appropriate to be accountable, but it's to be accountable with a humility and recognition that we are capable of doing the very same thing we are encouraging someone else not to do. We need to pay attention to the fact, whether or not we are doing those things as well.

In Galatians 6:1; a similar passage deals with the same principle, 'if brothers and sisters in a person is discovered in some sin, you should restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness. Please pay close attention to yourselves so that you are not attempted also; carry one another's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the Law of Christ.' So spiritual accountability is to be there; the judging here has to do with judging in such a way that you mark someone off, shoving them away. There is an inner relationship and accountability that is supposed to be maintained. Look to your own righteousness and avoid hypocrisy, and then you are in a position to help. Luke has several additions to this: do not contempt but forgive, forgive so as not to be condemned, forgive enables you to be forgiven. How will you be forgiven; a full measure of grain pressed down. The picture in the ancient world in regards to grain in being sifted out and you put it in the fold of your garment and you shake it to level it so you can get more grain in. The parable that follows: can the blind lead the blind? Both of them will fall in the pit; the disciple is not better than the teacher and so this becomes a warning about who you follow. You will be like your teacher so be careful who you follow.

The next passage is a singular verse, 'don't profane holy things.' Don't give holy things to dogs, the house dogs that are unclean nor cast pearls before swine which are considered unclean animals. Pearls are used to describe the gates of the heavenly city. Less they turn and trample and maul you. The term maul gives the image of a rabbit animal that destroys things with their teeth. There are all kinds of conceptual parallels to these. Don't entrust something spiritual presage to someone who will not appreciate it, but use it against you. Holy things should be treated and shared wisely with respect. Make your request to God and he will answer with the good (Matthew 7:7-12). The conceptual parallel is Luke 11:9-13. Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who ask will receive; and the one who seeks finds and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. There are two illustrations in Matthew, asking for bread and getting stones; asking for fish and getting a serpent. No one would do that. Luke lacks the bread and stone illustration but adds: asking for an egg and get a scorpion. The application is straight forward, if we being evil can give good gifts, how much more the Father will give good gifts to those who ask. Luke says that the heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask him, a slightly more specific benefit. This is in parallel with Luke 11. As God for your needs, he knows them and will give them to you. The golden rule, what you wish people to do to you, so do to them. This is the Law in the prophets; it is a remark unique to Matthew. It emphasis is on the relational dimension that Jesus is trying to establish in interacting with the Law. There are numerous parallels to this idea in the ancient world. I've just listed a group of them here. In my commentary on Luke, I actually have a couple of pages of these parallels. Jesus states it in the most emphatic way possible; whatever you do not want someone to do to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Law and

the rest of it is just explanation. This equals the Law of love that we see elsewhere in the New Testament, of what is sometimes called the royal Law. You can see it in Romans 13 and Galatians 5 and 6 and also in James 2. A lot of people like to pitch Paul against James, but when it comes to the appeal to the royal Law, Paul and James both agree. Have consideration and sensitivity toward others. This section reads almost like proverbs with some sections of proverbs connecting while others are independent. In the Jewish sense, this is wisdom; skillful living and things that are involved in living well.

Two ways that Jesus starts to finish the sermon are in terms of the choices. The call is to enter by the narrow gate, for the way of destruction is wide and easy and many enter into it; whereas the gate of life is narrow and hard and those who find it are few. This is a real exhortation to say that the way in is not easy, it is not straight forward; it's the narrow way. Sometimes preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ is seen as narrow. Well, it is! Luke has this saying in response to a question in Luke 13 about whether the saved will be few. Jesus replies by saying strive to enter the narrow door for many seek and will not be able. So he turns the question around and says, 'the question is not whether the saved will be few, the question is whether the saved will be you.' He turns the question to get the person to reflect on whether they are walking down the narrow way or not. The way to life is narrowly defined and it's not easy. You got to watch the choices you make and you also have to watch the teachers that you follow, but you will know the teachers you follow by their fruit. This is the next to last section on the sermon. Watch out for the false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are voracious wolves. You will recognize them by their fruit; as you know, grapes are not gathered from thorns. In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. The exhortation is to pay attention to the kind of fruit that the teachers teach you yield. Test the prophets and test the teachers by the products of their lives.

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven; on that day, many will say to me Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesize in your name and in your name didn't we cast out demons and do powerful deeds. Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you, go away from me, you Law breakers. This is a difficult passage in Jesus' teaching. It suggests what the standard of Judgement is going to be and that standard is related to obedience. But it is also related to knowing Jesus. That is where the passage ends. So when we embrace what the Lord is doing and teaching us, we aren't just embracing ideas. We are entering into a relationship with the Living God. We are coming to know, Jesus our Lord. That is part of what faith in a person is, even though he doesn't use the word, faith, here. Luke 6 has, 'Why do you call me Lord, Lord and not do what I tell you?' And that's all that it says. The remark is a probing question about potential hypocrisy. We get a distinct use of imagery in Luke 13; we get a story of a householder who refuses entry to those who ate and drank with him as he taught among them. The mere exposure to Jesus means nothing, even giving Jesus lip service means nothing; knowing Jesus and what he teaches is everything. Claiming to know him or laboring for him isn't the same thing as knowing him. Knowing him is indicated by allegiance to him.

We come to the closing part of the sermon, the house built upon a rock. Those who hear the words of mine is like the man who built his house on a rock, dug deep and laid a foundation. The rains and flood and wind did not destroy the house, but those who hear and do not do are like the foolish man who built his house on the sand where the floods and winds caused the house to fall and great was its fall. The emphasis in this passage is the tragedy of having had the opportunity to hear and not respond. Look at where the passage ends by saying, 'and the fall of it, the destruction of it was great.' The sermon is saying that you have been given an opportunity, don't stop here. Jesus refers to his teachings in ways the rabbis referred to the Law. That it is something that is built upon the rock. This is a radical claim to divulge authority, especially in light of the previous verses about calling me Lord and not doing what I say. Don't be foolish; hear and do what I teach. These are stable words that prevent ruin. The crowd's reaction to this sermon, they are astonished at Jesus' teaching. This is with the same tone as that in Capernaum where it says that he taught with authority, and not like the Scribes. Verses 29 says, 'he taught them like one having authority, not like the experts in the Law.' So there is recognition of Jesus' authority. Luke has a shorter version of the beatitudes, he doesn't have the six anti-thesis, and he doesn't discuss the religious practices relating to fasting, prayers and alms giving. In fact, nothing of Matthew 6 appears here. It is scattered throughout other portions of Luke's Gospel. So Luke's version is in three parts of the beatitudes and woes, of loving ones enemies and then a discussion on judging, fruit and how you respond to what Jesus is saying.

**The Galilean Ministry:** You can see the section that's covered here. We are talking about Matthew 8:12-21, Luke 7:1-8:3 and Mark 3:19b-35. At this point, the story is returning to a treatment of Jesus' ministry. The sequence of events varies between the Gospels; some that follow in Matthew have already been treated in Mark and Luke. Because of the things that are happening in this section, it is hard to do a harmony. Of the next four events in Matthew 8:1-17, three of them were treated in Mark and Luke: the cleansing of the leper, healing of Peter's mother-in-law, and the healing of the sick in the evening. The only event not yet present in any of the Gospels is the event of the healing of the centurion in Matthew 8:5-13 which equal Luke 7:1-10 and possibly John 4:46-54. The last two events are part of the Capernaum ministry. The location of the leper's event is left to Galilee in general, for these three events you can refer back to their earlier treatment. However, note that what Matthew details here is in effect, his first survey of Jesus' Galilean ministry. So in Matthew, we get an introduction of Jesus coming into Galilee, he's gathering crowds. The first thing that comes is the teaching unit of the Sermon on the Mount and then we get his activity. Interestingly, Luke does something similar; he has Jesus to come in and teach in the synagogue and we get his activity in Capernaum and eventually we get to the Sermon on the Plain.

Matthew 8 and 9 are a series of mostly miraculous material, part of the *perikope* (Greek – sections, act of cutting up or setting apart) out of the fourteen shown in these two chapters, of which deal with miracles. And that serves to underscore Jesus' authority of which all the Gospels focus on as they present this material. These miracles are also the means by which Jesus starts to raise the question of who he is; this is by way of what he does. The scenes are important for this reason. Some events in these chapters in Matthew were treated earlier: the paralytic, the call of Levi and the question on fasting. In this section, issues of authority and controversy are being raised as Jesus reveals his power. So Matthew has the controversies coming in as he surveys the overview of the ministry as well. Finally, Matthew 8:1-17 is a series of four healing *perikopes*: lepers, centurion servant, Peter's mother-in-law, and the demon-possessed people in the evening. Again, we have a kind of topical groupings. The healing of the centurion is important in that it involves a gentile whose faith is commended as exemplary in Israel. That healing appears in both Luke and Matthew; it's told differently in the two Gospels. That the centurion was commended by Jews in Luke is lacking in Matthew; however in Matthew, the centurion has a conversation directly with Jesus. In Luke, Jewish emissaries are sent on behalf of the centurion to make an appeal on behalf of the centurion. This may explain in part why the event wasn't seen as offensive, as is the Jewish emissaries went on behalf of the centurion rather than him going directly himself. Luke's unique account of the widow's son comes in the mits of this messianic cluster. So, all of this is the background of the situation.

**Three Triads:** In the themes of Matthew 8 and 9, there are three triads of miracles built around these passages. There are three sets of miracles then intervening teaching, three sets of miracles then intervening teaching. The first triad deals with the fringe and the common and a new miracle involving the centurion healing. We have already looked at the elements of the first triad with regards to the healing of the leper, we have the centurion's son, both of which we have looked at. The second triad is Jesus' activity over creation, the elements, demons and sin. This is going to appeal in Luke 8:22-37 and last is the healing of the paralytic, then the teaching; so the order is reversed from what we see in Luke 5 and in Mark 2. Matthew's calling and reaction of a fasting issue also comes in association with the second triad. The third triad is the double miracle: the healing of the woman with the hemorrhage and Lazarus' daughter, the two blind men which is only in Matthew and the dumb man healed which is also only in Matthew. The teaching that follows, deals with compassion that Jesus had for the people without a shepherd. The healing focuses on those who are excluded: the leper, the gentile, the sick and the possessed. These groups were never given a lot of attention in Jesus' day. Discipleship intervenes at times with the intervening teaching material that breaks up the triad. The first of Matthew's teaching is what comes later in Luke 9:57-62; it's teaching the disciples that Jesus is the first priority. Then there comes a call to missions in chapter 10 where he sends out a group of twelve to minister on his behalf. Then there is the issue of Jesus' authority which is the point of Matthew 11 and 12. Leading to a rejection that comes from the leadership which then helps to drive what happens in the remaining of Matthew. These themes are also paralleled in Luke 7:1-8:3. All of this represents the background for this section. Now, let's look at some of those triads.

**The First Triad:** The first triad deals with the fringe and common people as already mentioned. It's the leper, the gentile and Peter's mother-in-law. We have already covered the leper and Peter's mother-in-law so we will focus on the gentile in this passage. The focus in the healing of the centurion's servant is on the exemplary faith of this centurion. The passage ends with a note, unique to Matthew that many will come from the east and the west and many Jewish people be excluded in the end. The Old Testament is used as an explanation in Isaiah 53:4 where sin is reversed and compassion being made available. This actually ends the triad where it says, 'he took our weaknesses and carried our diseases, talking about the ministry with the servant.'

A closer look at the scene involving the centurion in Matthew 8:5; first, read the passage and think about what makes the centurion faith as exemplary. You'll see by Jesus was so awed by this man's faith. He understands that Jesus doesn't have to be present physically in order for Jesus to affect something else. The second point: he understands authority. He also understands humility in considering that he wasn't worthy. The centurion crosses ethnic boundaries. Jesus responds, 'I haven't seen such faith in Israel.' Jesus closes it by saying, 'I tell you, many will come from the east and west to share the banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the sons of the kingdom will be thrown out into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Jesus is comparing the faith of the centurion with the Israelites. Now in Matthew, whenever there is the mention of weeping and gnashing of teeth, it is not good! It is judgement and when he talks about sons of the kingdom, he is talking about those for whom the kingdom was originally promised. He is saying, those who should have responded and didn't are going to end up weeping and gnashing of teeth and who were seemingly on the outside, they will be in; that is the gentiles. 'Then Jesus said to the centurion, go; just as you believed, it will be done for you. And the servant was healed at that hour.' Interestingly, his faith leads to Jesus' response. The elements of his faith were: Jesus can work from a distance, he understood authority, his humility shows that he submits to it and he was able to cross ethnic boundaries.

The first round of teaching the disciples now comes. This appears in the later part of Luke 9 as well. Mark saves discipleship until after we get an announcement of the cross which is after we get the confession of Peter at Caesarea, Philippi. So it comes much later. Jesus wants the disciples to know what they are in for at the beginning. Jesus draws them in and gets them saved and he informs them what they are to expect in following him. The first part is easy but the second step is difficult for anyone choosing to follow Jesus. So Jesus informs them from the beginning of what they should expect to face. There's a commitment and nothing, not even family comes ahead of this. This point is made rhetorically and hyperbole Jesus wants his followers to know the cost, the priority points to the importance of the time and Jesus' response here is not like the rabbis. Note that there's a book called the Charismatic Leader by Martin Hengel, a German, who goes through this background in great detail. In Matthew, the first chooses him. The second the implication is that Jesus chose him so he has to wait and the third example is only in Luke. The two examples that we have in Matthew involve: teacher, I will follow you wherever you go. Jesus said to him, 'foxes have dens, birds in the sky have their nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.' You had better be ready to be somewhat homeless, to not have a receiving home, to follow Jesus. Another of the disciples said to him, 'Lord let me first go and bury my father.'

Note, that in the Jewish world of that time, the family was the priority and within that priority, there was nothing more important than making sure you took care of your parents until they were dead and buried. This is not a random example. This is the highest familial priority he is asking to perform. And Jesus says with sensitivity, 'follow me and let the dead bury their own dead.' That's harsh, direct, rhetorical response is saying, 'perusing me is the priority,' It's a higher priority even than the highest family obligation. Jesus is not a rabbi in the formal sense of the term. He functions like a rabbi, but even more than a rabbi for those who are around him because he is a teacher. Those who were calling Jesus a rabbi, they saw that Jesus was functioning like a rabbi out of Judaism. They aren't using it in the most technical sense of the term; they are using it functionally and recognized that he was acting out of the power of God. What the Christological content of their understanding is, I don't think we know.

**Now for the Second Triad;** we have the storm, it is like divine authority. Who is able to control the sea? Only God! That is what the Psalms are telling us. There is also a hint in one text in one Psalm about the

King having something to do with this kind of authority. However, the scene closes with a question to ponder. Part of what you need to appreciate about the way the Gospels are told, often times the key part of the unit comes toward the end. This is certainly the case in the stilling of the storm. 'Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it was dead calm. In 8:26b-27 and the men were amazed and said what sort of person is this? Even the winds and the sea obey him!' In terms of their perception, Jesus is rising up. This is one of those scenes where you realize something is not normal. Who could this possible be? If God controls the seas and Jesus is able to be in charge of the seas, then who is this that is among us? They're thinking that this isn't just a rabbi or just a prophet. He may not even be just the Messiah. They answer the question in their minds only.

There is a work by Eric Evie on Jesus' miracles. He distinguishes between three kinds of miraculous works: one invokes numinous power and when this is invoked, it's clear that you are not doing the work, someone else is. Another way in which numinous power is invoked is through various forms of incantations or rituals. In the gentile world, they would do it through some intermediate means or form of appeal. And then the third category was what he called direct numinous power. That means there was no petition, no intermediate means, it was done directly. Note that the vast majority of Jesus' miracles were done here and the vast majority of other miracles are included in one of these two categories. Mark and Luke handle the stilling of the storm differently. There is first the stilling of the storm, we get the healing of the demonic, there is the healing of the woman with the hemorrhage and then we get the raising of Lazarus' daughter. These are threats to life and well-being starting from the outside and working inward. This is a sequence that depicts comprehensive authority that is illustrated by Creation, spiritual forces, disease, and death. If you run across this when studying in a Gospel, study the whole unit at one time. As a side line, we have people who were able to manipulate the weather: Moses and Elijah. They are the two miracle workers in the Old Testament. In regards to how they did it, there's an interesting passage in Exodus 7:1. The Lord said to Moses, 'I will make you like God to Pharaoh.' Other translations read, it may be added in italics: 'I will make you God to Pharaoh.' The word 'like' is not there. Thus, when Jesus is doing these things, he is not like God but he is God. Jesus is exercising divine like authority. The next scene is the demonic.

This is Matthew's first exorcism of which there are two. This is one of three times in which Matthew has this. In Mark and Luke, it involves a legion of demons along with swine in a gentile area. Rejection is found in the face of God's work. The person is crazy with being demon possessed and then they are cast out and go into the swine which then runs over a cliff into the sea. Then the people of the city come out and asked them to leave. They become very fearful. Even though God is acting as something unusual is happening, they want nothing to do with it.

The next passage deals with the paralytic and authority. Notice what this triad does; as already stated, it has authority over creation, demons and over sin. It's another kind of comprehensive authority but distinct from what is in Mark and Luke where the calming of the storm appears. We get the storm, the demons, disease and death. Here, we get the storm, demons and sin. They are both doing the same thing with different lists. The teaching that Jesus has for sinners, follows this. There is the teaching on fasting that God is bringing something new. The authority claim is tied to the claim for newness. Remember that Mark and Luke had the miracle sequence of the storm, the demonic, the woman with the hemorrhage, and the raising of Lazarus' daughter. That list is over creation, over the demon, over disease and over death. This list is over creation, over the demons, and over sin. But both lists deal with the comprehensive scope of Jesus' authority. Death and disease is not in Mark and Luke's list in their sequence with the storm and sin is not in the list Mark and Luke's show. (Here, in answer to a student's question, the lecturer responds that the fallen world is a product of sin.) So there are two sets of lists covering a comprehensive authority. We need to let each list speak for itself.

**The Third Triad:** The third triad pictures a ministry of compassion. We see Jesus interacting with the woman and Jairus in Matthew 9:18-26. Faith is the focus here, whether a weak faith or a faith that requires patience. This is an interesting event; we have this woman whose faith exists but very weak and Jesus brings it out of her. Imagine how she felt when Jesus stopped and said, 'someone touched me.' Peter was somewhat amazed as this, as there were people crowded around him. For the, would be preacher, this story can be told from a variety of angles or viewpoints: from the viewpoint of the woman,

from the viewpoint of Peter, or you could tell it from Jairus' perspective. For Jairus, whose mind is on his daughter who has already died and then Jesus stops to deal with a woman! How would Jairus be feeling or thinking about this woman? For Jairus, his faith needed patience. 'When Jesus entered the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the disorderly crowd, he said, go away, for the girl is not dead but asleep. He went in and gently took her by the hand, and the girl got up.' This passage is about the juxtaposition about these two kinds of faith. Each of them learns something about faith in this experience with Jesus. The woman realizes that her faith needs to be stronger.

Interestingly, Jesus honors the faith that she does have. And Jairus' faith needs patience, trusting in the Lord's timing. Look at the parallel here. In Matthew 9:18, 'My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her and she will live.' In Mark 5:23, 'My little daughter is near death. Come and lay your hands on her so that she may be healed and live.' In 5:35 we get the news, 'your daughter has died, why trouble the teacher any longer?' In Luke 8:41, 'Then a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue, came up, falling at Jesus' feet, he pleaded with him to come to this house, because he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying.' And in 8:49, 'your daughter is dead; do not trouble the teacher any longer.' As Matthew often does, he has simplified it or shortened it. By the time they get to where Jesus deals with the daughter, she's dead. This is how Matthew frames the story. The more detailed account comes in Mark and Luke.

At the end of the passage in Mark 5:43, 'he strictly ordered that no one should know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.' In Luke 8:56, 'her parents were astonished, but he orders them to tell no one what had happened.' Why did Jesus say this? People know that she is dead as there are mourners outside the house, yet Jesus doesn't want them to say anything about what he did. Jesus doesn't want to be the focus of his ministry strictly on his miracle here. He doesn't want to be known as simply a miracle worker; therefore he tries to play down the event, even though it is obvious what took place. Thus, we see a hesitation, in the Gospel by Jesus, of people just coming to him because he performs miracles. When the disciples confess Christ, he warns them not to tell others, because they don't completely understand the kind of Messiah he's going to be. They can talk about the coming of the Kingdom but Jesus doesn't want them to talk about him yet.

**The Two Blind Men:** Then in Matthew 9:27, Jesus interacts with two blind men. They call out for the Son of David to heal them, but how did they know it was Jesus and that he was the Son of David? There is a tradition in Judaism that Solomon was so wise that he was able to give formula for exorcisms, etc. It's not sure whether this is happening here or not. Then we have the dumb, the guy who can't speak, but he understands that he can come to Jesus for healing and then we have the Pharisees who can talk about what God is doing, but yet don't understand what Jesus is doing as they render a negative judgement, 'by the ruler of demons he casts out demons.' This is a certain apologetic category, 'he is either a liar, a lunatic, or he is Lord.' This is the way Scripture sets it up. In the passage with Luke, he adds, 'it can't be of the devil or Beelzebub, because his house would be divided and a house divided, can't stand. But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.' Jesus sees that the people are without a shepherd as also mentioned in Ezekiel 34 where God rebukes the leaders of Israel for not shepherding his people, so he promises that he will be their shepherd and he will send one to shepherd them at the same time. God and David will be their shepherd; the one who is sent to shepherd is called David. This is part of where the Davidic Son of David comes from.

**Missions and Jesus Answers John:** In Matthew 9:35, we get the picture of mission, the twelve in Israel and service in the face of opposition. And in chapter 10, we get the Kingdom as being the message. Jesus called the disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits so that they could cast them out and heal every kind of sickness and disease. We get the naming of the twelve he sends out, instructing them not to go to the gentile regions or any Samaritan town, but go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. So for now, the ministry is restricted to the Nation of Israel. The opposition can be faced; God knows the reaction of others and Jesus will vindicate them. So he predicts the persecution of the disciples in verse 16; I'm sending you out like sheep surrounded by wolves so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Jesus says that they will be brought before governors and kings and the gentiles. In verse 20, he says that the Spirit of the Father will speak through them. Families will be divided and you will be hated because of my name but whoever receives you will receive me and they will receive a prophet's reward.

And in the mist of his, John the Baptist is in trouble. He preached the coming of the Eschaton which he expected to be the vindication of the righteous. And the righteous is being vindicated as he has been locked up in prison. John wants to know what is happening; so he sends some messengers to ask (11:3), 'are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?' The answer is, 'the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news proclaimed to them. Blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me, Jesus says.'

There are a couple of important points here: the blind see; a miracle that was never performed in the Old Testament. The idea of lepers being cleansed has no Old Testament preference for that part of the passage. However, most of the passage comes from Isaiah where passages are describing what God will do in the Eschaton. 'So, are you the one to come or not?' The answer is, look at the nature of the time. Look at what is happening and look at what the Scripture says at the time these things are happening. Jesus doesn't answer yes or no but look at what's happening; and we get the promises like in Isaiah 29, 35, 42, 26:61 etc. John is compared to the figure in Malachi 3:1 and the image of Exodus 23:20, the one who goes before and then we get a discussion of the new era. Listen to this in 11:11, 'I tell you truth, among those born of women, no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist.' Jesus says that he is there at the top. 'Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.' Jesus reveals to us the difference between the two eras and John the Baptist represents an end of an era, an end of the era of promise. The coming of Jesus and the Kingdom he brings represents the arrival of a new era, the arrival of the promise. In order to participate in the promise is better than to look forward to the promise. The kingdom comes despite the violence or despite the opposition that it faces. And John is Elijah. The new era is supposed to come with an Elijah figure and John is that figure. That's why in Luke 1:17, it says that he came in the spirit of Elijah and Luke talks about the different reactions of the Pharisees and the people to John the Baptist. The Pharisees rejected him, the tax collectors and sinners embraced him.

**The Naughty Children and the Yoke of Jesus:** And then we get the parable of naughty children in 11:16. 'To what should I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces who call out to one another, we played the flute for you, yet you did not dance or wailed in mourning, yet you did not weep.' You are not playing the game the way we want, they are saying, so we don't want to play with you. John came neither eating nor drinking and they said that he had a demon. The Son of Man came eating and drinking and they said, 'look at him, a gulden and a drunk.' God sends a messenger in two forms and neither one satisfies you. You complain about both forms, but the passage ends by, 'but wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.' Here is rejection and invitation, side by side. There are woes to Chorazin, Capernaum and Bethsaida. If what had been done for you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Like the Old Testament prophets, these cities stand condemned and they are being condemned by some of the notorious Old Testament cities. Sodom is also in that list. Jesus' invitation, on the other hand, 'I praise you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and revealed them to little children. Yes Father, for this was your gracious will.' And we have something that is similar to what's in the Gospel of John, 'all things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son decides to reveal him. This is the inseparable relationship between the Father and the Son. This sounds like the Gospel of John. And so the invitation, 'come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and my load is not hard to carry.' So come to the person of Jesus, embrace him, and get to know him. Take what he offers. The authority is delivered to the Son, you are to come and rest and take on the yoke that Jesus has because it is lite and learned. The image of the yoke; wisdom was sometimes called in Judaism, a good yoke. It was viewed like honey; it was sweet to the taste. So this idea could be in the background. So Jesus and his teachings stand at the core of these texts. So in this invitation to learn is Jesus' activity on the Sabbath that produces a reaction. Did they learn? No.

**Controversies and Beelzebub:** Note that Jesus goes and tries to lift the burdens of the Sabbath and what did they complain about? Not about the burdens being lifted from them but they complained that he did this on the Sabbath. The Sabbath controversies become like a last straw and Matthew 12 is full of controversy. What is unique here; it is the picture of spirit anointed servants who proclaim justice to the

gentiles and this point contrasts with Israel's rejection. So we get this long citation of Isaiah in the middle of the chapter (verses 18-21). It talks about the servant who God has chosen, has come. God's spirit is placed upon him and he proclaims justice to the nations. The nations in this passage ends up being the gentiles nations as this is confirmed in verse 21, 'and in his name the Gentiles will hope.' The next scene involves the Beelzebub controversy where in verse 28, the point is made, 'but if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has already overtaken you.' We've already discussed this. Here is a reference in regards to the sign of Jonah being three days in the whale and then the difficult passage on the return of the unclean spirit.

The return of the unclean spirit is a strange passage. When it leaves a person, it looks for another place but can't find it. So it returns to the person it was in and finds that person, more or less, hollow inside. It goes and collects others to live in the person with him. So, there was an exorcism. How do people react? If they don't do anything and leave their minds empty; they don't respond to the Gospel, the Word of God, then the very forces that were extracted come back, more powerful than before. It's worse to have been exposed to the truth and not appreciate it, than it is to encounter the truth for the first time. Thus Israel has not responded to Jesus' invitation and what will happen? In Mark and Luke, we have the anointed by the simple woman which underscored the appreciation of God's offer of grace. The women's senses God's forgiveness and cleansed. From the parable Jesus tells about the person given the most money, which of them will love him more; the one who has been forgiven the most. The assumption is the person appreciates forgiveness and the reaction comes out of the forgiveness. There is also another point; if you don't have an appreciation of what God has done, you may not have an appreciation for what God has forgiven. People who are in cruise control (satisfied with life and without any concerns) may not really appreciate how much God has forgiven them. The problem with the Pharisee, he thought he was forgiven little so he didn't think he owed God very much. For the simple woman response, she knew she owed God everything.

In 8:1-3, Luke notes the support of Jesus and Mark talks about the family effort to protect Jesus because people are rejecting him and they think Jesus might be beside himself (unaware of these things). These controversies have led to his rejection and this is the earliest note of Beelzebub charge in Mark, along with the reference to the blasphemy of the Spirit which is called the eternal sin. Of all the passages in the Gospel, Mark has the clearest presentation of what blasphemy of the Spirit is. Luke, Chapter 3:28-29, 'I tell you the truth, people will be forgiven for all sins, even all the blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, but is guilty of an eternal sin.' Jesus said this because the experts in the law said that he had an unclean spirit. What is the unclean spirit? It is to judge and say that Jesus has not come from God! It is rejecting the testimony that the Spirit has attached to the person and work of Jesus Christ. There is more controversy that leads to the Son of David speculation in Matthew 12:23 as we come to the end of the unit, 'could this one be the Son of David?' When the Pharisees heard this, they immediately wanted to cast doubt with the Beelzebub charge. Notice something else about this scene in 12:22, 'then they brought to him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute. Jesus healed him so that he could speak and see.' This is an incredible miracle told in one verse. In most miracle stories we get an image of the setting, an exchange or request for healing, Jesus does something and the crowd reacts. The Gerasene demoniac takes up Mark 5:1-20; it covers twenty verses. This is a reversal of a normal miracle story in which the miracle is told in one verse and the reaction is the remainder of the unit.

This passage not only illustrates its importance, but it summarizes miracles as a whole and exorcisms as a whole. It is a huge commentary of Jesus' miraculous ministry as a whole, and so the climactic remark, 'if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God and the Kingdom of God has already overtaken you,' is talking about what Jesus is doing as a whole. And he images it with a parable. How else can someone enter a strong man's house and steal his property unless he first ties up the strongman? How is Jesus able to do this? He must be tying up the strong man who has people oppressed and confined and who binds people. Look at Luke 4, 'He's come to liberate the oppressed.' So there's a warning about rejecting the testimony of Jesus and his miracles. Mark calls this rejection an eternal sin. Then there is a discussion about trees bearing good fruit and then a reference to the sign of Jonah. Then the unclean spirit we talked about.

The chapter ends with Jesus talking about his true family. In 12:46, 'while Jesus was still speaking to the



crowds, his mother and brothers came and stood outside, asking to speak to him. Someone told him, look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside wanting to speak to you. To the one who had said this, Jesus replied, who is my mother and who are my brothers? And pointing toward his disciples he said, here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.' His family is more than just biology. Jesus' true family is whoever does the will of his Father. Jesus speaks about, 'my Father in heaven.' In Matthew, it comes in the context of controversy; in Mark, it comes in context of Jesus being beside himself. In Luke, it comes in the context of telling kingdom parables. In summarizing this section, there is a claim to restore and bring the new era. This is supporting by miracles of authority and claims of authority extending to Satan, sin and the Sabbath. That is a three some! The audience extends to the fringes of society, the authority resides in the Son of Man, the opposition emerges but so does the mission; Jesus constantly warns and challenges about a response so people can't say that they didn't have the opportunity to respond. He's constantly warning about the importance of the decision, again and again and again. In the controversy accounts are important keys to authenticity while the miracles are authoritative.

**Jesus According to Scripture:** Each of the synoptic Gospels discusses the Kingdom parable. The fundamental character of Jesus' ministry is evident. These words are supported by evidence of miraculous deeds. These deeds are to be neither focused on nor promoted as the main point of his ministry. They are rather a picture of the restoration he seeks to bring. Jesus has proclaimed a fulfillment of promise and of Law and his message. He is the one with authority to forgive sin and determine what is right on the Sabbath. He also seeks to reach out to the lost and those who know their needs. He comes to challenge the ravages of sin and Satan on the earth. His ministry reaches out to those on the fringe of society. He calls the nation to repent and turn back to God. His ethical calls that relate to God involves extending love even to outsiders and enemies as well as examining a person's own walk with God, looking especially to attitudes on the inside. These claims are focused on a figure that he refers to as 'Son of Man,' by way of self-description. He is God's commissioned representative for humanity. This authority represents the approach and arrival of God's rule; something he will discuss in even more detail as the ministry moves ahead.

The issues of authority that Jesus raises suggest that the way the current leadership of the way Jews interacts with God is inadequate. This view has raised a strong opposition to him. So Jesus calls a group of disciples to himself and has them engage in mission, knowing full well that they too will face opposition. He prepares them for it in his teaching and stresses that an alliance with him will cost them as much as it has cost him. In considering the authenticity of Jesus' ministry, crucial studies often work one event at a time, operating unit by unit in detail. Such close examination of the details of the text is appropriate and has its place, but often the effect of such study is to divide and conquer. Look at each event as a separate piece and don't connect it to what comes before or after it, so I lose the story in the process. Losing the story is what I mean by divide and conquer. By cutting the ministry of Jesus up into micro bits, the critic can lose a sense of the whole and by means of the separation make claims about a lack of credibility in the little portions that are left in isolation from one another. In contrast, when one looks at Jesus' ministry as a whole and sees the interlacing and overlapping between the parts as the synoptic Gospels present them, a credible story of his ministry emerges. His challenge to the leadership did give rise to intense opposition, of which might become a formidable opponent and threat to life. Anyone tied to Jesus will be associated with the cause and evaluated in a similar way as the teacher. After all, Jesus has challenged the Jewish leadership in a direct call for repentance, has formed a server critique of the leaders own way of walking with God. Jesus presented a real threat to the Jewish leaders' authority.

When the student works with this general portrait in the way the major themes are woven into every level of the synoptic Gospels, a solid case emerges for the credibility of the Gospel portrait of Jesus' ministry and the reaction his ministry produced. The general class of dispute text is mutably attested. In other words, it's in all the layers of the tradition. It's in the tradition of Mark and in 'Q', 'M' and also 'L', the materials unique to Matthew and the material unique to Luke. It's at all levels; it's distributed across all aspects that talk about Jesus. If it's that widely distributed, it's a good reason to believe it authentic. Yet this type of passage comes with similarities and distinctiveness in terms of those Jewish practices and later church practices showing it to be a set of transitional events. If these disputes are real then the portrait reaction to them is a natural consequence of such challenges, as are the words about opposition

to the disciples. In other words, the character of Jesus' ministry as the synoptic Gospels set it out makes cultural sense for the 1<sup>st</sup> century once the reader sees that these disputes are rooted in history. Thus the controversy accounts are important as historical sources and as a historical base from, in which to appreciate the confrontation that Jesus' ministry produces with Judaism. So if you can make sense out of the controversy account, you can learn a lot about what Jesus is doing in his ministry.

Obviously, there are world view issues which are wrapped up into how the miracles are associated with some of these disputes. Yet, the historical record, even of Jesus' opponents shows that they did not doubt his powers, only their source. Thus, these ancient sources both Christian and non-Christian do not leave us an explanation, one that skeptical readers would like to provide. The miracles are key and manifestly authentic merely reflecting a premodern embrace of the supernatural and the miraculous which history cannot affirm. The text doesn't support that they are simply a fabrication motivated by enthusiasm to exalt Jesus. My response would be that these ministry miracles, though controversial and significant are supportive of a more central element in the tradition, namely these controversies. In other words, first you have the controversies and then the miracles inter into the controversy passages. The controversies and the issues that raise, not the miracles as such, are a bone of contention. Because these disputes spotlighted the issues of whose way and authority spoke for the hope of Israel and of God. After all, it was not the miracles of Mark 1 and 3 that brought controversy, but the claims of forgiveness associated with one particular healing. It is these controversies that demand the careful attention of anyone who seeks to study and understand Jesus' ministry, historically. The miracles, though important, only enhance the issues these disputes reflect. Interestingly, even the synoptic tradition moves in this direction as Jesus is repeatedly careful to make sure that the miracles don't get too much attention. This is not the early church creating legendary material to exalt Jesus, because the synoptic presentation of the miracles often down play these events in their promotion. But once the miracles are given their proper place in the traditions, it is then that the real issues of Jesus' ministry surface. Jesus claimed to have authority; the miracles served to underscore that claim, the issue explains why the leadership later will raise the question directly to Jesus, 'where did you get the authority to say and do these things?' But put in another way, 'who gave you the right to challenge us?' In other words, does God's rule and way come in a faith that Jesus advocated with the focus on him as the representative of human kind and Son of Man, or was the hope rooted in tradition as the Jewish leadership argued?

To gather further insight into this dispute and the issue of opposition and rejection that could be explained as a part of God's plan, the reader's attention must now turn to how Jesus explained God's Kingdom program. What moved the disciples to confess Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God is the topic and focus of the chapter. That's where we are going. So we have laid a foundation that says if you understand the controversies and raising the opposition, you will understand how the miracles support the controversies. They are not the key; they are rather the signs and indicators about the controversies. And if you begin to see the reaction, you can begin to see what's at stake because Jesus is claiming through his authority that God is ruling and is active in the world. That's the challenge of Jesus' message and that's what he's calling Israel to believe. And that's what the leadership is having trouble believing. They think he is misleading the people and them, not actually revealing the way to God. And so the question becomes, what does Jesus have in mind when he talks about the Kingdom of God?

# Lecture 5: Life of Christ - Kingdom Parables

This is the 5<sup>th</sup> lecture in the online series of lectures on the Life of Christ by Dr. Darrell Bock.

Recommended Reading includes: Jesus According to Scripture: restoring the Portrait from the Gospels by Bock, Baker, 2002 and Jesus in Context by Darrel Bock and Greg Herrick, eds., Baker, 2005 and Jesus Under Fire by Mike Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, Zondervan, 1995.

**The Kingdom Parables:** Matthew 13 and the kingdom parables; we will cover Mark, chapter 4 through 8 and also Luke 8:4 – 9:17. Matthew and Mark run fairly parallel through this unit as does Luke except that Luke lacks Mark 6:45 – 8:26, of what has been called the Great Omission of Luke. This is on the assumption that Luke and Mark know each other and yet there is this unit missing in Luke. And the question is why and sometimes the position is taken of simply being lot of duplication in this section of Mark, which is true but it doesn't explain every unit in the section. That could be the explanation. Luke says, well there's enough duplication in here, I'll just jump to this next section. We don't really know why this section is lacking. Some people even wonder whether there was one version of Mark that Luke had access to and then there was finally the canonical version which had additional material of which Luke's copy didn't have, sometimes called proto-Mark.

The issue of this section expresses how the disciples come to realize who Jesus was and developing understanding of trust in him. We will make some decisive moves toward Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah. So Jesus explains the kingdom and the special character in this section and we also get more controversy and rejection. So on the one hand, Jesus is explaining to his disciples what he is doing and as Jesus is demonstrating those actions in public, he's getting reactions. Matthew has eight kingdom parables; Mark has five kingdom parables while Luke has two. Luke distributes kingdom parables because he has two more in Luke 13, so he ends up with a total of four. The Sower represents the key parable to the kingdom because it shows the responses to obstacles of the kingdom message. Those are: Satan, persecution, and the distractions of normal life, particularly the cares of life and the pursuit of riches. If you think about what distracts people from being good disciples, a large list can be shown. The parables are designed to reveal the mysteries of the kingdom to insiders and conceal in judgement to outsiders. Opposing the message of the Gospel is risky because there is always the risk that you shut yourself off from more revelation as a result. So you start with the insiders first, even though it takes work for them to grasp what's going on. Mark speaks of the secret of the kingdom, a kingdom of divinely directed growth leading to blessing and judgement. The picture is of a kingdom that goes from small to large. The mystery is present but not completely new because the Old Testament saints longed to see what is being described here. This is different in how some dispensationalists (This word reflects a view that biblical history is best understood as a series of dispensations, or separated time-periods, in the Bible.) handle mystery. But I don't think that mystery is new revelation. Some mysteries are things that are revealed but are not completely understood or appreciated. It comes from the Old Testament idea of a dream that is interpreted, it exists but you just don't understand it.

**The Sower:** The fruit that we see in the Parable of the Sower is varied in Matthew and Mark, but there's a single yield in Luke. Both of them take a receptive heart, but they make the point that different people have different levels of fruit, at least Matthew and Mark do. Luke is simply interested in the fact that sometimes it takes root and there is a product. The Parable of the Lamp and Measure are ways of saying that revelation is like light. The role of the revelation of the kingdom is to give illumination. Mark warns us to watch the measure by which we measure. The seed is pictured as the kingdom and it is a mysteriously divine cause of growth to harvest, the fruit which is the design of the seed. So, again, the kingdom starts out small and end of being comprehensive. This is contrary to Jewish expectation which thought that the kingdom would start out big. So Jesus' teaching of the kingdom from the very beginning gives the idea of starting out small. This is not the kingdom presentation as it comes out of the Old Testament. The

kingdom program of Jesus is not merely built on the Old Testament; there is a combination of old and the new. The small nature of the kingdom is something that comes with Jesus and is already present and Jesus is announcing something new with regard to that kingdom.

**The Wheat:** This tells us that the kingdom is mixed with the world until the end and that the devil is also at work planting seeds of evil in the world alongside the seeds of the kingdom. The kingdom operates and makes a claim on the entire world. There is a lot of sloppy thinking about the kingdom in the church. There's an idea that it is the role of the church to take over the world in the framework of this history. This is a form of a Calvinist cultural mandate which has recently misdirected the church on a lot of things. There is a mission mandate to take the message of the Gospel into the world and to challenge the world on how it lives. The goal is not to take over world institutions; it may want to influence them but it is not to engage in the power politics that goes on in the world. The place where the kingdom is supposed to be particularly manifested is in the communities of God. The place where you are to see kingdom principles at work is in the community of the people of God. That, alongside the preaching becomes a testimony to the world. It's a missing link in the cultural mandate in the way in which some forms of Christ and culture work. In 13:24, 'he presented them with another parable: the kingdom of heaven is like a person who sowed good seed in this field. But while everyone was sleeping, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. When the plants sprouted and bore grain, then the weeds also appeared. So the slaves of the owner came and said to him, sir didn't you sow good seed in your field? Then where did the weeds come from. He said, an enemy has done this. So the slaves replied do you want us to go and gather them? But he said, no, since in gathering the weeds you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At the harvest time I will tell the reapers, first collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned, and then gather the wheat into my barn.'

The judgement will be the sorting out at the end. Jesus interprets this in 13:36, 'the one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world and the good seed are the people of the kingdom.' The field is not merely the church. The kingdom is a word sown in the world so it makes a claim on the entire world, but it doesn't force itself on the world. It presents itself to the world. 'The weeds are the people of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. As the weeds are collected and burned with fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather from his kingdom everything that causes sin as well as all lawbreakers. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.' This is the end of Revelation, but in the meantime we are dealing with a growing kingdom that hasn't come of age yet. The judgement will come when Jesus decides.

**The Way of the Kingdom:** Interestingly during the medieval period, the church forced people to accept Christ and if they didn't those people were killed. That was wrong or rather satanic inspired evil. Often we try to force the hand of the kingdom in a way, yet a way the kingdom is not designed to be presented. The church doesn't have the right to impose itself on the rest of creation. That's not the model Jesus is demonstrating. The kingdom does not necessarily equal to what we understand as the church. Note: if the kingdom makes a claim on the world, then you need to be engaged with the world in order to do the mission of the kingdom. So an effective kingdom, a place where we should see the kingdom at work and being effective is in the church community. These are the people who have embraced it. But there is an accountability that comes to the entire world. Another implication of this, if there is a kingdom claim on the entire world, then that means everyone is ultimately accountable to the kingdom program regardless of how they respond to it. The claim is on everybody. The role of Christians is not to create a theocracy; this is not the role of the church. The church is to be an agent of persuasion in the world; this involves an engagement, not force. In the Gospel mandate, we often go from Gospel to culture and we miss what is going on in the communities, themselves. The goal is to make sure that a kingdom ethic is being modeled in the church in such a way that as you experience culture; you have a place that is an audio visual of what is being talked about.

A lot of people who lead evangelicals on the religious right are practically in practice post-millennials (this is a theological doctrine that states the second coming of Christ will occur after the millennium instead of before it). These parables are suggesting that the post-millennial model is flawed. Engagement with the

culture is what progressive dispensationalism is all about. (Note that progressive dispensationalism is a variation of traditional dispensationalism, dispensationalists view the dispensations as chronologically successive. But progressive dispensationalists view the dispensations as progressive stages in salvation history. This is not related to progressive Christianity.) There is a tone of engagement, a way of appeal and a way of interacting and I think a post millennial influenced model. They have thought through the implications of what this parable is saying. So we are going to have to live with this mix until the judgement comes. Our calling is to represent God faithfully in the world; that's a significantly difference. And note that the growth in one sense of the kingdom, are the people who opt in and participate in it, but alongside of it, you've got this other sphere, the world which is doing its own thing and then there is the contrast between the two spheres. The post-millennialists are arguing for the process; and so are some Amillennialists. (Amillennialism involves the rejection of the belief that Jesus will have a literal thousand year physical reign on the earth. This rejection contrasts with premillennial and some post millennial interpretations of chapter 20 of the Book of Revelation.) Today, there is a danger that the church is losing its prophetic voice in thinking through how we do what we do. A question to consider: why the second coming? Is Jesus returning simply to say that you guys did a great job, but now I'm in charge? Or is the impression, he comes back to really set things right? Note that the world has its own sphere of influence, doing its own thing and becoming more radical at the same time. The conflict and pressure in some respects is rising. In the mitts of a kingdom message saying to the world, you are accountable to God. What does Jesus say the likely fate of a disciple? What do you have to be prepared for? It is persecution. There is a difference between being faithful, pursuing Biblical values and understanding and that the pursuit of Biblical values may not always be successful.

I'm called to be faithful and that means that I should pursue justice and be concerned about things that reflect Biblical value. That means that I should care about my stewardship in the world. I still pursue those as part of what God has called me to do and to be in a culture that allows me to engage on those issues with people who may or may not agree with me. I still have all those responsibilities as a faithful Christian, but that doesn't mean that I pursue it in a way that insists that I have to win. My calling is to be faithful in carrying that out. But the sovereignty of how it turns out is not my business in one sense. You are called to witness in the totality in what God calls you to be. Don't equate success with political victory. Equate success with being faithful and carrying out your values and in representing them. It may be that faithfully carrying out what God has called you to do, in the context of political defeat, may actually serve the kingdom more than having political victory. Note that one of the lessons we have learned historically is that sometimes when we win, we lose. And why do we lose? It's because we handle power poorly. In the mitts of that process, sometimes in the way the church is to function as catalyst in that process, we tend to think individually, not corporately or we tend to think politically, in terms of the political party rather than corporately. So the church is this entity that operates and if I'm supposed to ask people where they are supposed to see the kingdom at work today; I'm not going to take them to the world. Where should I be able to take them? To the church! Therefore, I should be able to go as that is the place we are supposed to see evidence of reconciled relationships. The church is where people should see Christians engaging with the poor in a proper kind of way. It is the place where people should see evidence of justice being exercised and justice being called for. That's where people are supposed to see sensitivity to the way in which we deal with creation over which God has given us stewardship. That's where we should it. But because we tend to leap over this and think about how we as a church model it and engage it, but go directly into confronting the world, we miss a risk of providing a positive model for what it is we are appealing to the world to be.

When a church is basically a 'holy huddle' or a great time to be singing praise to God, we may be missing the dynamic relational dimension and example of what the church community could be doing in contributing to society. Reach out to places that are down trodden, poor and where the destitute abode. These places are everywhere; they are in every city and town in the world. They are usually the worst of the worst places, where drugs and prostitution proliferate. There are even non-Christian institutions in place trying to help; why not go there and serve? This represents a different kind of model of how we engage the world. We somehow place these situations into a type of contextualized structures that become off limits to the church. In thinking about what the kingdom is and what God's people are to do in the kingdom world, sorting out what is going on is important. The level of church commitment and attendance is different all over the world, but that doesn't change the fact of what the church can do. We

need to sort out God's expectations of us; he has called us to be faithful in carrying out the message and living out the values both individually and corporately. You know that we often portray this as a spiritual war; there's a danger using the metaphor of war. Note that the goal of war is to win territory and kill the enemy and then take control. What is the goal of the Christian in the world in reference to the enemy? One part is to love the enemy and to win the enemy over at a person level which is the point of mission. If that is the goal, does that change the meanings? So when we think about spiritual warfare as a metaphor, you've got to articulate how it's different than normal warfare. Your goal as a Christian is much more complicated. It's easier to just bomb somebody.

**The Mustard Seed and the Yeast:** Matthew 13:31 is an example of small to large. This is an example of a small growing to become a tree. The background to this is like Ezekiel 17:23 which speak of a sprig being pulled, out of which a tree will come where birds will nest that reflects the Davidic House. It displays an interesting parallel kind of image. Then we have the Parable of the Yeast which again reflects something that is small but increases in size. What we see in Matthew 13:35 in allusion to Psalm 78 says, 'I will open my mouth in parables, I will announce what has been hidden from the foundation of the world.' So clearly Jesus is doing something revelatory. Look in verse 44, 'The kingdom of God is like a treasure, hidden in a field that a person found and hid. Then because of joy he went and sold all that he had and bought that field. The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he found a pearl of great value, he went out and sold everything he had and bought it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the sea that caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, they pulled it ashore, sat down, and put the good fish into containers and threw the bad away. It will be this way at the end of the age. Angels will come and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then he said to them, therefore every expert in the law who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his treasure what is new and old.' Note that the kingdom teaching is a combination of things you've seen before and new things, which is why Jesus and his ministry is now going to lunch on a huge teaching program for his disciples. To help them put the fresh parts of the package together of what they have already been exposed to. This is where we get the rejection scene in Nazareth in Matthew and in Mark, followed by the death of John the Baptist and the discussion of John the Baptist.

It is at this point in Mark and in Matthew that we get the beginning of a breaking in of a new series of miracles. In Luke and Mark, we get the four miracle sequence we talked about in the last lecture: the calming of the storm, the exorcism of the demonic, the healing of woman and the raising of Lazarus' daughter. The question at the end of the storm scene is important. The driving question for the disciples is the question of who this person is. It's a 'from the earth up' question. Who is this that is able to calm the winds and the ways? The demonic in the gentile setting is told to say what God has done and he goes out talking about what Jesus did. It doesn't seem that the demonic has done anything terribly bad here. He can't talk about what God has done without what Jesus did. The two are inseparable in terms of what has happened to him. Jairus and the woman, we talk about the scope of faith and the call to silence because Jesus has to do his work which shows what he is about without the attention from the miracles. In Mark, the miracle series do not lead to belief. In Luke the miracles sequence and make an impression on the disciples. We get in Matthew the rejection at Nazareth and the commissioning of the twelve. We see word and service together and we get Herod asking the question, who might Jesus be; John the Baptist, come back from the dead which raises the question, if Jesus is John the Baptist come back from the dead, it is raising the possibility that an execution or death may not stop the program of God. The death of John the Baptist shows that there is opposition to God's plan. John the Baptist was challenging the nation; it wasn't where it should have been. The leadership shouldn't be where it is. It was a rebuke to the leadership. They thought if they kill John the Baptist, the prophet, we may be able to stop this religious fervor. We may need to prepare for the same thing someday. In regards to Jesus' death, as he was coming to the point of being noticed as much more than John the Baptist; so does one need revelation to figure that he is next to die? And for someone who has presuppositions about the Christian faith, you don't have to deposit a supernatural understanding in order for Jesus to have an understanding of his coming death.

**The Five Thousand:** We get the five thousand fed which is a picture of the need through which Jesus and the disciples help provide. It's a foretaste of the banquet, it's the sheep being given a shepherd, it is Jesus showing compassion, and it is provision for God's people like we see in the desert. We get these

two things juxtaposed. We get Herod's banquet where John the Baptist is put to death. We get Jesus' banquet where food and life are represented as being provided. There's a miracle of hope, the only one in all four Gospels. At this point, Luke drops out of Mark's storyline until we get the declaration by Peter. There are more miracles and controversy. We have the walking on the water in Matthew 14:22-33.

**Walking on the Water:** We need to give Peter some credit here: he had the nerve to get out of the boat and actually take several steps on the water. Peter walks out and does great until he gets distracted. The event in Matthew leads to an appreciation of who Jesus is, because of the control of creation. This is from the 'earth upwards' in Matthew and interestingly in the same passage in Mark 6:45-52, it becomes a test as Mark highlights the lack of understanding in the event. What I think is going on here is at the time in which this event happened they weren't able to make sense of how Jesus was able to do this. That is what Mark highlights. As a result of this event, they came to a deeper appreciation of who Jesus was and this is what Matthew highlights. He highlights the product of the event while Mark is highlighting the lack of understanding during the event. This is an interesting contrast between the two passages, yet the same event. It illustrates that there can be one action going through an event and a completely different reaction as a result of what the event generates. Both are historical! A different time frame reflects the historicity of the two. This also shows the complexity of what it is to work with historicity. Because a writer writing about these events has the choice of focusing in on how it felt at the time or what grew out of it.

Next comes the Gennesaret summary, the contact with Jesus brings healing. We get the passage in Matthew 17 and in Mark 7 that talks about traditions tied to cleanliness. Jesus emphasizes that it isn't what goes in the mouth but what comes out. We get Jesus' rebuke about ignoring the word for selfless interest in case of property or lack of love. In Matthew, this is seen as speech but in Mark it has to do with our behavior in general. We have seven things listed as vices in Mark. In Matthew, we get the disciples speak of Jesus offending and rebuking the disciples whereas in Mark when we get to the end of this scene, he makes the statement, 'by this Jesus declared all foods clean' even though it was years before the church realized it. What incident am I referring to? Acts 10 where Peter was told that all things were clean. So 7:19 is a narrative remark by Mark about the implications of what Jesus was saying.

**Miracles and the Request for Signs:** Then there is the Syrophoenician woman, another example of humble faith by a gentile, which is commented. She comes out of Tyre and Sidon and understands that Jesus is the Son of David. She understands that she has the rights only to the crumbs. This attitude is very different than the attitude of many people today, even Christians. What we see in the healings is Jesus removing impediments for people. He also wishes to control how important miracles are perceived in his ministry. They are not the point of the ministry but point to something else. The four thousand are fed in what I call a doublet. This is a mirror event that mirrors something earlier to see that something has been learned by reproducing the event and seeing the later action. It seems that in the feeding of the four thousand, nothing has been learned. The reactions are all the same. Interestingly, Jesus has been performing miracles and then someone walks up and says to him, gives us a sign! They were probably asking for a specific kind of sign that was associated with the coming of the Eschaton. This leads Jesus to rebuke them because they want to dictate how God does things. Next is the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees or Leaven of Herod in Mark. The disciples do not understand initially of where the provision is coming from. The disciples need to appreciate and never forget where spiritual provisions are and aren't. It's part of the new era that Jesus has brought about. The blind man comes next and this is the only gradual miracle that uses spit and has a gradual coming of sight. Most every other miracle happened immediately. This reveals what's going on with the disciples. Things are slowly coming into focus and it's no accident that this is happening right before we get to Peter's confession of Christ.

The summary: we get continued work in the face of opposition which is beginning to lead the disciples to appreciate and realize who Jesus is. We are led into the declaration of Peter in Matthew 16:13 and now we get the remainder of the lesson of understanding and appreciating that Jesus is the Messiah. He is at the hub of what God is doing. He is the central point in their arrival of the new era. Jesus can now begin to shape that understanding and he's got to do it by saying before there is glory there has to be suffering.

# Lecture 6: Life of Christ - Journey to Jerusalem

This is the 6<sup>th</sup> lecture in the online series of lectures on the Life of Christ by Dr. Darrell Bock.

Recommended Reading includes: Jesus According to Scripture: restoring the Portrait from the Gospels by Bock, Baker, 2002 and Jesus in Context by Darrel Bock and Greg Herrick, eds., Baker, 2005 and Jesus Under Fire by Mike Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, Zondervan, 1995.

**Introduction:** This section now in Matthew, Mark and Luke overlap and then Luke goes his own way. There's a unique section of the Journey to Jerusalem in which much of the material is uniquely structured in this section of Luke and represents parabolic material. It's when Jesus turns his face to go to Jerusalem, yet training his disciples as he launches into the journey of providence that going to take him to his death in Jerusalem. He wants to prepare his disciples in the mists of that journey. It's not direct but it is one important segment that Luke highlights. We get instruction and silence of who Jesus is; he instructs them on one hand but tells them to keep quiet about it. And why the silence, it's because the disciples still need instructions. So at the transfiguration, we get the voice from heaven saying, 'this is my one dear Son, in whom I take great delight, listen to him!' This is a call from Deuteronomy 18, 'there is a prophet like Moses that needs to be listened to.' Then we get Jesus introducing his upcoming suffering and what that means for the disciples and what they need to understand about it. This is a major paradigm shift for the disciple's expectation of the Messiah. They expected a Messiah who would use his power to take care of things. They think the solution is to forcibly take control. For Mark, this is the second part of his narrative emphasis. Mark pivots with Peter's confession in Caesarea, Philippi. Luke uses this introductory instruction to set up the following journey to Jerusalem. Matthew mostly parallels Mark with a few additional points in his discourse materials of Matthew 18.

**Peter's Confession:** At Peter's confession of Jesus as being the Christ, it was said, 'God has revealed this to you and upon this rock I will build my church.' Interestingly, in the center of Caesarea, Philippi, there were a series of temples: Zeus, Tannir Anips, Temple of Augustus which was near the Bunya Springs, and Grotto of the god, Pan where a spring ran out of a cave. It was Herod's son who renamed the place Caesarea, Philippi and it eventually became the capital of one of the regents. But the name Paneas was its earlier name from the Hellenistic period and that mutated in time to Banias, as it is known today. The sanctuary as it was called continued its worship of these gods well into the age of Christianity. So this site is associated with the atmosphere of when pagan gods were being proclaimed and in the midst of that, Jesus claimed deity within the framework of Jewish monotheism. However, the context of Peter's confession is concerned with the popular perception of Jesus as prophet. The key to all the versions of Peter's reply is the recognition that Jesus is the Christ. That he is more than a prophet or that he isn't just a prophet. However, what we tend to do with this is do the reverse. The only passage that alludes to the fact Jesus is the Son of God as a confession is Matthew's version of the text. In Matthew, it reads, 'you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.' In Mark, it reads, 'you are the Christ.' In Luke, it reads, 'the Christ of God.' The three versions of the confession share a declaration that Jesus is a Messianic figure. So when Peter makes this confession, is he confessing recognition that Jesus is 'the Son of God,' that is, is he deity? Or is he simply confessing that Jesus is the Christ, the anointed one? I would say that most people in thinking about this passage and preach it would let Matthew speak for all three Gospels and say, 'Son of the Living God,' that is, 'deity.'

I think what makes this declaration so important is that Peter is confessing that Jesus is the anointed one of God. That Jesus is at the hub of the eschatological program of God. He's not merely a prophet and then from that Jesus builds the portrait of who he is. Why do I think that? Afterwards, Jesus begins to predict his death. When Jesus starts to predict his death, what does Peter do? Peter says that can't happen! One or two things are going on, either Peter has a lot of nerve to counter Jesus as deity and Son of God or else Peter still doesn't understand yet and says, 'wait a minute Lord, the suffering Messiah isn't part of the equation.' And Jesus responds, 'get behind me Satan.' This is a passage that is not going to



be invented by the church. So what I think is going on here, Jesus elicits a confession from Peter of which he's going to build on. Peter has given a starting point for building the church. If you understand that I (Jesus) am at the hub of what God is doing and you ask what that is, you will begin to understand who I am. And now I'm going to teach you what that is. That's why he elicits the confession and then immediately tells them to be quiet. It says, 'who do the people say that I am?' They say, 'John the Baptist,' others say Elijah, and still others say, 'one of the prophets.' But Jesus asks, 'but who do you say that I am.' Peter answered him, 'you are the Christ.' Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him. The title is accepted and welcomed but yet it still needs clarification. And this is what Jesus is going to do.

**Peter's Rebuke:** In Mark 8:32 Jesus continued teaching them, saying that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and experts in the law, and be killed, and after three days, rise again. He spoke openly about this. So Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But after turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan. You do not have your mind on God's interests, but on man's.' So Jesus is saying this is not going to happen the way you think, this isn't a raw exercise of power. Then in verse 34, Jesus called the crowd along with his disciples and says to them, 'if anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.' Now the cross in those days was a sign of the most horrific culturally humiliating form of death. They knew what it meant to take up a cross. Jesus was talking about total rejection, a baptism of rejection, immersed in rejection. Mark continued, 'for whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and for the Gospel will save it. For what benefit is it for a person to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his life? What can a person give in exchange for his life? For if anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. And he said to them, 'I tell you the truth, there are some here who will not experience death before they see the kingdom of God come with power.'

**The Keys of the Kingdom:** So in Matthew I think Christ equals Son; look at Matthew 14:33, 'Then those who were in the boat worshiped him saying, truly you are the Son of God.' This is a level higher than in Peter's confession. They are still not totally sure who Jesus is, but they are getting closer. Note that church is only used by Matthew of all the Gospel writers. No other worldly authority will prevail against the church for it will have the key to the entry into kingdom blessings. This is why whenever you see Peter in a lot of paintings in western civilization; he always has keys in his hands, the keys of the kingdom. Notice the victory that resides in kingdom blessings and the church and kingdom here overlap. We get the passion prediction. We have already talked about the authenticity; you would not create a story in which Peter was called Satan. We get the prediction after three days, potential imprecision. I have already suggested that the example of John the Baptist might have allowed Jesus to deduce what was going to happen to him. There is new teaching being emphasized, both in Matthew 16:21 and Mark 8:31 emphasizing the fact that this is new teaching. And we get the picture of the rejected stone which has become the cornerstone, which is part of the background of the imagery of the passage. And Peter's reaction states that there is no way this is going to happen. Jesus' rebuke is an indication that Peter needs to learn. (Note, the lecturer answers a student's question regarding the three days of Jesus' death, saying that three days are taken inclusively, it's not 72 hours. Each day counts as a day, even if it's only part of a day that's being counted. Even after you get this phrase, 'after three days and three nights in scripture, it's still being counted that way.)

**The Son of Man:** this is part of the exhortation related to discipleship. We get, 'deny and take up your cross and then follow me,' is an ongoing exhortation in the Greek; we get two basic commitments: to deny oneself, to take up the cross, to take up the way of suffering and then go about the process of daily following. In fact, Luke will add the word, 'daily.' Note the kingdom, and Son of Man connection here. There is kingdom judgement by the Son of Man; the Son of Man judges in relationship to response to Jesus. Notice also that we are getting the Son of Man consistently presented by Jesus as a third person; he's almost discussed as being a separate figure from Jesus. This has caused some scholars to say, 'did Jesus anticipate a judgement figure outside of himself who would exercise this judgement?' I think not, it's an indirect way to refer to himself, and there is precedence for this and there are other examples of this. There are even examples of this today: Margaret Thatcher always referred to herself as the 'lady' in the third person, in an indirect kind of way. Jesus does the same when he speaks about the Son of Man

when he speaks about himself. The beauty of this title, even though it means a human being, 'Son of Adam' means Adam's child, Son of Man means a human's child. In Daniel that human being rides the clouds and the only figure who rides the clouds in the Old Testament is deity: either Yahweh or the description in rebuke of Baal. So it has a unique mix of divinity and humanity associated with it. But Jesus doesn't reveal the connection of the Son of Man to the Daniel 7 passage until late in his ministry in the Olivet Discourse. Some people would talk about the Christ and Jesus and then would use other titles to talk about himself as the Son of Man.

**The Transfiguration:** This is a preview of the glory, a repetition of the baptism and a call to hear in a language of a prophet like Moses. You are supposed to obey the prophet that is like Moses. He is a leader delivering prophet. He is sometimes described as the eschatological prophet, which is what Jesus also was. And he is to be obeyed. To fail to obey the prophet like Moses is to be subject to being cut off from the people. Moses and Elijah are present probably representing the Law and eschatological restoration (Mark 9:4). In Luke alone, we are told that what they discussed was Jesus' exodus or Jesus' departure; that is to say, Jesus' death and what would follow after it. The disciples needed instructions because when Moses and Elijah and Jesus were there, Peter suggested that they set up shelters. But then the voice, 'this is my beloved Son, listen to him!' It's obvious that Peter didn't know what he was saying. They still needed to learn. 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2 talks about this event, verses 16-18. What about Elijah, the question that Matthew 17 raises? The background to this is Malachi 4:5 and Syriac 48:10, 'at the appointed time it is written you are destined to calm the wrath of God ... to turn the hearts of parents to their children to restore the tribes of Jacob.' This is the language we saw in Luke chapter 1. Elijah will come and then Jesus declares that he has come as John the Baptist. Mark says there is no glory without the suffering of the Son of Man and Matthew highlights the Son of Man will suffer similarly to John the Baptist and the disciples need to understand this. They are beginning to grasp something of what Jesus is saying.

**Continued Discourses:** The next scene is of an epileptic possessed boy who was not able to be healed while Jesus and the inner circle were up on the mountain. Jesus rebuked the generation and the critique is of the disciples for a lack of faith in prayer. Only in Luke does it show that the crowd marveled at God's majesty when the healing comes and in Matthew and Mark, there is a question about why they failed. In Matthew there is an emphasis on faith and in Mark there is an emphasis on prayer. Apparently they were acting alone and put into a position of needing to learn. After this there is another prediction of Jesus dying and being raised on the third day. Matthew 17:23 says it will be on the third day while Mark says after three days; again this is inclusive in the variation of wording in the Gospels as we sometimes see in the parallels. It says that the disciples did not understand as they were distressed.

In understanding Biblical truth, when it says that the disciples did not understand, this does not mean that they did not understand the words. It means they did not grasp the word's significance. The text tells us they were distressed; they understood the content but didn't understand how it fit into what they were doing. They had yet to be able to connect everything together. They couldn't understand how this could be the Messiah. And they are bothered by what Jesus is telling them.

The next scene in Matthew 17 has to do with the kingdom and the tax. In 17:24-27 there is teaching with regard to tax and whether or not they were going to pay it. There was a half shekel temple tax. 'After they arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter and said, your teacher pays the double drachma tax, doesn't he? He said, yes. When Peter came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, what do you think, Simon? From whom do earthly kings collect tolls or taxes – from their sons or from foreigners? And he said, from foreigners. Jesus said to him, and then the sons are free, but so that we don't offend them, go to the lake and throw out a hook. Take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth, you will find a four drachma coin. Take that and give it to them for me and for you.' On the one hand, Jesus declares that they are free from paying the tax because they are genuine sons of the kingdom but yet, we will pay the tax. This shows a little of the two spheres idea; there is the sphere of the kingdom and the sphere of the world that is working alongside the kingdom. This is also a lesson on God providing what they need.

In Matthew 18:1, the fourth set of discourses using the key word of teaching. There is a discussion about

who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven and Jesus brings a child in front of him. This is another cultural script. In our world, a child is a cute thing; in the ancient world, a child is best not seen or not heard from until they are useful. So Jesus is taking someone with no cultural status and bringing that child before them. 'I tell you the truth, unless you turn around and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven! Whoever humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven and whoever welcomes a child like this in my name, welcomes me.' In saying this last part about welcoming a child goes against the cultural status of the time and the place. Another way of putting this, whoever welcomes someone with no social standing like this in my name, welcomes me. He is showing the disciples that their ministry will not be just to the rich and powerful, it will reach out in all directions. 'But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a huge millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the open sea.' This is the deep six text and to see what a millstone is like, you can imagine something weighing fifteen or so pounds around your neck. 'Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! It is necessary that stumbling blocks come, but woe to the person through whom they come. If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fiery hell.' You must separate yourself from that which causes sin. The exhortation here is to have a sense of accountability for how you behave; this impacts those that are around you. We are not independent entities. What we do impacts people around us.

**Parable of the Lost Sheep:** The Lost Sheep in this context is not like that of Luke 15. 'See that you do not disdain one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. What do you think? If someone owns a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go look for the one that went astray? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he will rejoice more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. In the same way, your Father in heaven is not willing that one of these little ones be lost.' The little ones in this context are people who are straying from the faith. This has to do with seeking to recover someone who risks straying from the faith, whereas in Luke 15, we are dealing with tax collectors and sinners in evangelism; the same image but a different application. So we are accountable to one another, we are supposed to pay attention to one another. We have a community where there is spiritual accountability, what about that? Well, if your brother sins go show him his fault when the two of you are alone. If he listens to you, you have regained your brother, but if he doesn't listen to you, take one or two others so that the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter may be established. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, if he refuses to listen to the church, treat him like a gentile or tax collector. This process is what we call church discipline.

'I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will have been released in heaven. Again, I tell you the truth, if two of you on earth agree about whatever you ask my Father in heaven, he will do it for you. For where two or three are assembled in my name, I am there among them.' Note that most people really love Matthew 18 and 19 but they ignore the context. This has to do about what to do in relationship to church discipline. There is a process of accountability in the case of someone who is stubborn with regard to the church and which may sometimes call the church to rebuke someone. And then Peter comes and asks this, 'Lord, how many times must I forgive my brother who sins against me, as many as seven times? Note that in Judaism, you forgave someone three times. After three times, they were taking advantage of you. So Peter understands this, he's got more than twice the amount, but it still isn't enough. Jesus answered, 'not seven times, I tell you, but seventy-seven times!' The parallel text in Luke, we have seventy times seven or four hundred and ninety. What does this mean? Does Jesus want us to keep an accounting of this? No, you must simply forgive? So how important is this? If you create a community where there is accountability and there is discipline but there is not forgiveness, you have an oppressive environment. So the spiritual accountability and discipline with the balance of compassion and forgiveness; and thus the Parable of the Unforgiving Slave.

**The Parable of the Unforgiving Slave:** 'For this reason, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his slaves. As he began settling his accounts, a man who owed ten

thousand talents was brought to him.’ This is a lot of money even in today’s economy. It’s equal to 6,000 Denarii and one denarius is what you earned in one day. This would equal to twenty years of labor. ‘Because he was not able to repay it, the lord ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, children, and whatever he possessed, and repayment to be made. Then the slave threw himself to the ground before the lord, saying be patient with me and I will repay you everything and the lord had compassion on that slave and released him, and forgave him the debt. After he went out, that same slave found one of his fellow slaves who owed him one hundred silver coins.’ This was nothing compared to what he owed to the lord who had forgave him of the debt. This was a hundred days of labor. ‘So he grabbed him by the throat and started to choke him, saying, pay back what you owe me! Then this fellow slave threw himself down and begged him, be patient with me, and I will repay you. But he refused. Instead, he went out and threw him in prison until he repaid the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were very upset and went and told their lord everything that had taken place. Then his lord called the first slave and said to him, evil slave! I forgave you of your entire debit because you begged me! Should you not have shown mercy to your fellow slave, just as I showed it to you? And in anger his lord turned him over to the prison guards to torture him until he repaid all he owed.’ Of course, he will not be able to repay the debt from debtor’s prison. So my heavenly Father will do to you, if you don’t forgive your brother from your heart.’ If God is capable of forgiving us for what we have done in our lives, of such a huge debt; why can’t we forgive people for the little things they do against us. The environment of the community is supposed to be fuel by this recognition of how this forgiveness is made to ultimately drive the community, even in the mitts of this spiritually accountable environment. Without the ability to forgive and move on, the environment will become oppressive. And look what happens when legalism runs rampant. This is on community relationships. This is a very important text to building community and getting others to think about it. So you are to be like a child, you are to be humble and realize that even the least is great and thus open to anyone and then you are to pursue forgiveness.

Now in Mark 9:38 and Luke at this point, we get the outside exorcist, just to make sure you understand this point. Note that there is a person who is casting out demons in Jesus’ name but he isn’t part of the twelve. They tried to stop the man but Jesus said, ‘do not stop him, because no one does a miracle in my name will be able soon afterward to say anything bad about me.’ Here, we see that the ministry is much bigger than just the twelve. So again, the disciples need more teaching and instructions. Those who are not against us should not be stopped. But there is an obvious issue of sincerity here because when we come to Acts 19 and we get others trying to use the name of Jesus, they are stopped and rebuked. Mark continued with talking about children and not doing anything against them. Note that mutilation was prohibited in Judaism so the suggestion of removing a limb that sinned was a radical teaching. Next, an image of salt is mentioned again, reminding them of their accountability. Be at peace with one another and be salt in the world.

Now we deal with the prospect of the rejection by the world and suffering in the community. Turn and depend on God, willing to face the world’s rejection but do it in community pursuing holiness with accountability, not causing others any offence and being quick to forgive. And in all of this, the shadow of listening to him is still above us.

**Jesus in Samaria:** We are up to the journey to Jerusalem section in Luke 9:51 – 19:44 which is mostly unique material up until 18:14. This is a journey of divine faith and the following themes apply: discipleship instruction, rising opposition and Jesus’ challenges of it and opportunities to that opposition, there is teaching, invitation and warnings to the crowds. They are caught in the middle between Jesus’ teaching and the reaction to him. From this point onward, many passages remind us of that journey and this is the focus point of what’s happening. Matthew and Mark have Jesus heading for Judea as well but Luke is the one who emphasizes it. All the synoptic Gospels cover it but it is more detailed in Luke. We start off with mission and rejection and then we go beyond Israel. So now, Jesus moves into Samaria and there is preparation for a time of ministry in Samaria. ‘Now when the days drew near for him to be taken up, Jesus set out resolutely to go to Jerusalem. He sent messengers on ahead of him. As they went along, they entered a Samaritan village to make things ready in advance for him, but the villagers refused to welcome him, because he was determined to go to Jerusalem. Now when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, do you want us to call fire to come down from heaven and consume them? But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they went on to another village.’ So the disciple’s solution is to

'kill them all solution.' What did Jesus say in his rebuke? What did he tell them? All we know is that they gave the wrong response. The idea of throwing out retribution at this point is wrong. If they reject us, just move on and perform the mission in another location. Then we get the sayings about discipleship that we have already covered in the other Gospels. As they were walking, someone said, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' And then Jesus said, 'Foxes have dens and the birds in the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.' And Jesus continues to teach in regards to putting himself first in their lives. Jesus said, 'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.' These texts emphasize the priority in following Jesus. It is greater than anything else in one's own life and they should not look back. Note that the number of Samaritans left alive today only equal to around five hundred people or so. They are seen in Acts as a kind of transition group as you move from Israel proper. On the one hand, they have a connection to the Torah, but on the other hand they've changed part of it to suit their own belief.

**The Seventy-Two are Sent Out:** We have kingdom mission in the face of rejection. When they return, they have some interesting things to talk about. There's the image of Satan's fall and the Messiah's victory. Remember that one of the signs of the arrival of the kingdom is Satan being defeated. It is language about Satan falling and being defeated and the kingdom coming and there is the exhortation to rejoice because this is being offered to babes, while it's what others long for. There are two parts of this passage that are really important that you don't want to miss. One of them is Luke 10:17-20 which says a lot and many in the church should be very aware of it. 'Then the seventy-two returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name!' Jesus said to them, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Look, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions and on the full force of the enemy, and nothing will hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice that spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names stand written in heaven.' This passage shows how Jesus prioritizes the activity of miracles to the activity of new life. What are you supposed to appreciate? Not that you have this power, but the relationship. In 10:23-24, another interesting passage, 'then Jesus turned to his disciples and said privately, blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it!' When I think about this passage, the way some people react. Some people react when they watch the Ten Commandments and their reaction: I would have liked to have been there with them to see the Red Sea part and the Ten Commandments delivered. But this passage is saying the opposite. What Moses, David, and Isaiah would want is to experience what I am offering to you now. This emphasizes that the new era has come, that which was promised and looked forward to, is not being realized and that's why those prophets and kings longed to look forward to this day.

**The Good Samaritan:** There is a call to be loyal to others, to Jesus and to God. And so we get the Good Samaritan. Near the old Jericho to Jerusalem road are caves where bandits could hide. This is a perception of what the parable is built on. So here the scene: 'now an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus, saying, teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He replied by a question, what is written in the law? How do you understand it? The expert answered, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with your entire mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus said to him, you have answered correctly; do this and you will live.' But does he really understand it? The next question tells you no. 'The expert, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, and who is my neighbor?' He's actually trying to ask, there are people who are neighbors and there are people who are not neighbors. It's like they don't exist. So he's trying to exclude people to whom he is accountable, and so he's justifying himself. 'I'm doing this', he is saying indirectly.

So Jesus begins the Parable of the Good Samaritan, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him up, and went off, leaving him half dead.' That's the image of what we have here. It's the heat of the day in the desert. 'Now by chance a priest was going down that road, but when he saw the injured man he passed by on the other side; so too a Levite, when he came up to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.' The text is very clear, they saw the person in need and they simply went to the other side and left him. Whatever reason, they just left him.' Now the story slows down. We are now getting every action this person performed for the person in need. It's like going to slow motion. 'But a Samaritan who was traveling came to where the injured man was, and when he saw him, he felt compassion for him.' He went up to him and bandaged his wounds,

pouring oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.' The Samaritan put him on his own animal so the Samaritan had to be walking now. 'The next day he took out two silver coins and gave the two coins to the innkeeper, saying, take care of him, and whatever else you spend, I will repay you when I come back this way. Which of these three do you think became a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' The expert in religious law said the one who showed mercy to him. So Jesus said to him, go and do the same.' Notice that there are two things happening here. The one who showed mercy to him; the expert can't even say the word, Samaritan. So who is my neighbor? Are there some people that aren't our neighbors? Jesus' answer, be a neighbor. Don't ask to be a neighbor to someone, just be that neighbor and remember that neighbors can be very different. Jesus begins to discuss with the disciples in regards to what is necessary as they walk with him. In doing so, we realize that we need to be available to serve literally anybody. There is no restriction on who our neighbors are; the call is simply to be a neighbor and of service.

And the next scene is Martha with Mary in Bethany. And Mary is sitting at Jesus' feet while Martha is busy preparing a meal. There are a lot of Martha's around who are very hard workers. They are usually so busy that they have trouble stopping and even taking a breath. And so Martha is laboring away and Mary is doing nothing but listening to Jesus. Martha then asks Jesus to intervene; however, Jesus usually refuses in such situations. 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work alone? Tell her to help me. But the Lord said, Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things, but one thing is needed. Mary has chosen the best part; it will not be taken away from her.' The double name calling here has a certain meaning as it did when Jesus called Saul on the Damascus road, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' So Jesus doesn't intervene. Mary has made a good choice. Jesus rebukes Martha for trying to bother Mary and what she is doing. She's spending time with Jesus.

friend to lend you three loaves of bread because another friend has stopped by while on a journey. Do not bother me, my door is locked, my children are already in bed and I cannot get up and give you anything.' In this setting, you don't have a shop readily available to go to like you would today. And within that socio-economic culture, the family most likely lived in one room. So if you disturb the house, you disturb everybody. Also, once you get young children to bed and asleep, you don't want to wake them up. 'But because of the man's sheer persistence, he will get up and give the man everything he needs.' The context of this is prayer. You are supposed to be persistent in prayer. 'So I tell you, ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.' The paragraph closes with verse 13, 'If you then, although you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!' This is specific; this is a request for spiritual insight or spiritual direction or for spiritual presence as opposed to the parallel in Matthew, it simply says, 'will he not give good gifts for those who ask.' We have disciples who are being taught to be dependent, to turn to the Lord in prayer and to do so with the expectation that God will answer and give the request that is sought.

So, in this unit as a whole, we have devotion in the Good Samaritan and service to the neighbor. We also have the choice to sit at Jesus' feet and then we have dependence on God and turning to him in prayer. So we have people, Christ and God in a reverse order of what introduced the unit. Love God with all your heart, mind and soul and love your neighbor as yourself. That brings us to the Beelzebub's controversy and we will start there in the next lecture.

# Lecture 7: Life of Christ - Journey to Jerusalem Pt 2

This is the 7<sup>th</sup> lecture in the online series of lectures on the Life of Christ by Dr. Darrell Bock.

Recommended Reading includes: Jesus According to Scripture: restoring the Portrait from the Gospels by Bock, Baker, 2002 and Jesus in Context by Darrel Bock and Greg Herrick, eds., Baker, 2005 and Jesus Under Fire by Mike Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, Zondervan, 1995.

**The Sign of Jonah and Exhortations to the Pharisees:** We pick up our story in Luke 11:14 in a key location as we have discussed this passage already. It is a reverse of a normal miracle account in which the miracle is told in one verse with the remainder of the passage being the reaction. The key verse in this passage is verse 20, 'But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has already overtaken you.' We have talked about the 'not yet' make-up of the kingdom and that Jesus is coming is the center of the kingdom which represents the arrival of that kingdom. This will be the background as we move through this section. Jesus is giving an opportunity for people to respond and how they respond becomes very important. We get this parable that we also have in Matthew about the unclean spirit being cast out of a person and the person left empty and doesn't fill it with anything so the spirit comes back with seven more spirits like himself and enters the person. So the situation is worse than before. We then look at the Sign of Jonah in 11:29. This is a good example of a parallel passage between two Gospels that's doing something slightly different. In Matthew, we are concerned with the image of the three days and three nights in the belly of the whale and the sign representing the resurrection. 'As the crowds were increasing, Jesus began to teach, this generation is a wicked generation; it looks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.' Most Christians know that this is dealing with the resurrection. 'For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh; so the Son of Man will be a sign to this generation. The queen of the South will rise up at the judgement with the people of this generation and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the Wisdom of Solomon – and now, something greater than Solomon is here! The people of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented when Jonah preached to them – and now, something greater than Jonah is here!' So what is the sign of Jonah in this passage? It is the preaching and the message and the call to repentance. This is the only sign that will be given.

There is no mention of Jonah in the belly of the whale. This fits the movement of what's in the passage. We have Jesus performing certain acts that are an affirmation of his teaching. We've got the call to respond to his word; don't leave a cleaned out vessel empty, fill it with something. Then we get this exhortation about the sign of Jonah and look what comes after it. 'No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a hidden place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, so that those who come in can see the light. Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is diseased, your body is full of darkness. Therefore see to it that the light in you is not darkness. If your whole body is full of light, with no part in the dark, it will be as full of light as when the light of a lamp shines on you.' Here, we have another call to respond. This entire section is dealing with what Jesus offers and how you are supposed to respond to it. In contrast, we get the inner action with the Pharisees and experts in the Law. This is like the passage coming later in Matthew 23. 'As he spoke, a Pharisee invited Jesus to have a meal with him, so he went in and took his place at the table. The Pharisee was astonished when he saw that Jesus did not first wash his hands before the meal. But the Lord said to him, how you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools! Didn't the one who made the outside make the inside as well? But give from your heart to those in need, and then everything will be clean for you.' The first exhortation is the hypocrisy of those who are watching over Jesus.

**Woe to the Pharisees:** The second exhortation, 'woe to you Pharisees, you give a tenth of your mint, rue, and every herb, yet you neglect justice and love for God!' Now, about what it takes to tithe this stuff.



It takes a lot to do it properly. When he says, 'you give a tenth of your mint, rue, and every herb; even down to the smallest amount, even the spices. 'Yet you neglect the justice and love for God. But you should have done these things without neglecting the others.' The third exhortation, 'woe to you Pharisees, you love the best seats in the synagogues and elaborate greetings in the marketplace!' They had special greetings for those who were teachers, marking the teachers out as being separate. 'Woe to you, you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without realizing it!' Note that an unmarked grave in Judaism means a lack of cleanliness. So the Pharisees think that they are a source of cleanliness, you think you are a source of righteousness, but in fact, you are a source of uncleanness. When someone is unclean, they can't worship nor go into the temple. It produces a separation from God. They can't enter into the presence of God. So Jesus is saying, here you think you are a cause of righteousness, but you are creating uncleanness all around and unconsciously for people. You are completely misleading everybody. This was very challenging to them. So 'one of the experts in religious law answered him, teacher, when you say these things you insult us too.' This is the Scribe speaking showing a bit of nerve. Jesus responds, 'woe to you experts in religious law as well! You load people down with burdens difficult to bear, yet you yourselves refuse to touch the burdens with even one of your fingers!' So basically, you give them burdens that you don't keep yourselves or you give them burdens you don't help them to keep. The point is they don't follow through on helping people to meet the burdens that they lay before the people. These burdens indicate a weight that they put on people's backs that Jesus is suggesting isn't necessary. Then it goes on, 'woe to you, you build the tombs of the prophets whom your ancestors killed. So you testify that you approve of the deeds of your ancestors, because they killed the prophets and you build their tombs! For this reason also the wisdom of God says that I will send them the prophets and apostles, some whom they will kill and persecute.' This is both a prediction and warning. Jesus is saying that they are so committed to this path that God is going to send more messengers and you are going to remove them as well.

'This generation may be held accountable for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, from the blood of Abel to the Blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary.' Jesus is saying that they are responsible for it all because they are acting in the same way. You remove God's messengers all the way back to the very beginning; from Abel to Zechariah. 'Yes, I tell you, it will be charged against this generation. Woe to you experts in religious law! You have taken away the key to knowledge!' This is the exact opposite to what they thought they were doing. 'You did not go in yourselves, and you hindered those who were going in!' They were a big road block to access God. There is nothing more fundamentally challenging that Jesus could have said to them than this. This is what in American culture would be, in your face. This was incredibly provocative. So their response was, 'when he went out from there, the experts in the law and the Pharisees began to oppose him bitterly, and to ask him hostile questions about many things, plotting against him, to catch him in something he might say.' The 'catch him' phrase in Greek represents a hunting term. It's the word used to hunt animals. The reaction is, they have been warned about what they've been and they absolutely reject Jesus' warning.

This causes Jesus to talk about fearing God verses fearing people. The exhortation is to be aware of the leaven; they produce hypocrisy because hypocrisy is something that God will hold you accountable for. The call is to fear God and to acknowledge the Son of Man and not blaspheme the Spirit. We have already discussed these passages as they were in other locations of the other Gospels. Don't worry; the Spirit will teach you in the face of rejection. If you meet up with rejection the Spirit will supply what you need to say.

**The Rich Landowner:** And now we come to the parable of the Rich Landowner. 'Then someone from the crowd said to him, teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.' We've talked about this principle, someone has asked Jesus to fix a problem between two people. Jesus refuses to do this as he did with Martha and Mary. The point, Jesus is trying to tell them that they should be able to work this out themselves. So Jesus replied, 'man, who made me a judge or arbitrator between you two? Watch out and guard yourself from all types of greed, because one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.' And Jesus then told them a parable, 'the land of a certain rich man produced an abundant crop, so he thought to himself; what should I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops? I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and I will store all my grain and my goods there. And I will say to myself, you have plenty of goods stored up for years; relax, eat, drink and celebrate!' This person's

focus was on himself. This is a self-focus on one's own possessions, and as a result, he is very misdirected. Notice that the issue is not the fact he has abundance. God blessed him with an abundant crop; the issue is what he did with it. How he viewed it. He didn't look at it as a stewardship to manage, but as his own possessions. This is one of the great dangers of wealth and riches; it turns everything into an object which I own and control. But God say to him, 'you fool, this very night your life will be demanded back from you, but who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' This is an interesting question for us all to consider, who will get what is prepared for you? It will not be you. 'So it is with the one who stores up riches for himself, but is not rich toward God.' That's a warning not to be distracted by the material possessions of the world that not only over take the energy and consumption of a person but cause him to turn both what they receive and other people into objects for one's own control. You must store up treasures toward God and not be covetous which undercuts relationships. At the start of the parable, the person is more interested in making sure he gets his, not his relationship to his brother. That's part of what going on in Jesus' review and if anyone who has been involved in a nasty divorce case as a pastoral counselor or has seen the way which inheritance can sometimes tear apart families. So you can understand what's going on in this passage.

**A Call to Faithful Stewardship:** The next passage introduces some interesting features. Luke 12:35 'get dressed for service and keep your lamps burning; be like people waiting for their master to come back from the wedding celebration, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him.' This is an image of stewardship and the absence of their master. There are certain responsibilities that are to be carried out. 'Blessed are those slaves whom their master finds alert when he returns! I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, have them take their place at the table, and will come and wait on them!' This is an interesting picture where the master serves the servants. Even if he comes in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> watch in the night, so be ready because you don't know when the return is going to happen. If the owner of the house knew what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You must be ready because the Son of Man will come in an hour you least expect it. One of the things that happened in the early church was that they anticipated the possibility that Jesus could return at any time. And as the period got longer and longer and longer and he hadn't come back, the tendency was cease to pay attention and cease to be tentative to the accountabilities that they have. And there is no different to that today, the Lord may come for us at any time but the longer it goes, the less we tend to pay attention to it, or at least that is the risk. So he tells this parable in response to a question Peter asked. 'Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for everyone?' Again Jesus takes the answer in a completely different direction, so the question is never clearly answered. Peter wanted to know which it was. Instead Jesus gives them another parable that simply emphasizes the call to be faithful. Don't worry about who it's for, just do this. By the way, we do this all the time. We take exhortations of Scripture and wonder if it applies to us or someone else. But Jesus is saying, don't worry about who it is for, just respond to it.

The issue is your response. So Jesus replied to Peter, 'who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his household servants, to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds at work when he returns. I tell you the truth, the master will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that slave should say to himself, my master is delayed in returning, and he begins to beat the other slaves, both men and women, and to eat, and get drunk, then the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not foresee, and will cut him in two, and assign him a place with the unfaithful.' Here, he dichotomizes him, the actual word in Greek. This is not a place you want to end up, in a parable describing the judgement. This is not a good place and not something you will survive. You may have an association with the Lord and a stewardship with the Lord but you don't know the Lord. 'And we will assign him a place with the unfaithful.' This is not being on the edge of light. This is being out. Here, Zahn Hoggans is mentioned here as saying that all you have to do is begin in faith in what Jesus has done and that is the only requirement and discipleship is a completely separate step. They read this passage and see this dichotomized slave because he as a steward is barely being safe. But that is not the image here; this guy is put with the unfaithful. The other categories in the parable are people who survive, they're different and here's what it goes on to say, 'that servant who knew his master's will, but did not get ready or do what his master asked will receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know his master's will and did things worthy of punishment will receive a light beating.' We have three penalties in this parable. We have

the guy who will be thrown in with the unfaithful, he doesn't survive. We have the guy who knows but doesn't do what he was required to do. He doesn't do anything destructive but neither is he obedient. He receives a survive beating. Then we have the person who never knew it and never did it. He receives a light beating. So there are three different levels, and then the fourth one, the one we should be is to do what the master's tell him. That person will have the master serving at the banquet table. And it goes on to say, 'from everyone who has been given much, much will be required, and from the one who has been entrusted with much, even more will be asked.' So you are accountable. Jesus never actually answered Peter's question. Jesus simply says, 'be this.' This is the same as in the Good Samaritan. 'Who is my neighbor?' The answer in the parable 'be a neighbor.' So the point here is to be a faithful steward.

In the next two passages, one is about division and the other is about signs, 'I have come to bring fire on the earth – and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is finished! Do you think I have come to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! For from now on, there will be five in one household divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.' So in the context Jesus is saying that there will be divisions within the family of Jews. This will be between people who embrace him and people who don't. In regards to reading signs, 'Jesus also says to the crowds, when you see a cloud coming in the west, you say at once, a rainstorm is coming, and it does.' (In understanding the geography of Israel, it's on the Mediterranean coast. So what is to the west, the Med Sea; so when the wind blows in from the west, it brings moisture from the sea and so you get rain?) So he goes on to say, 'and when you see the south wind blowing, you say, there will be scorching heat, and there is.' It's because the desert is south of Israel. 'You hypocrites, you know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky, but how can you not know how to interpret the present time?' In other words, look at what is going on around you! Look at the winds blowing all around me. Look at what I'm doing; how is it possible that you can't be responding? Of course we know that spiritual blindness is the answer. But it's strange on one hand, humans have the sensitive ability to understand the physical world, but yet they are insensitive in obeying the spiritual world. It seems that the natural order would be the other way around.

This idea seems to continue in 12:57 where it says, 'And why don't you judge for yourselves what is right? As you are going with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, so that he will not drag you before the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer throws you into prison! I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last cent!' Everything about this section is about accountability to the will of God. This passage, even though it is similar to that of the Sermon of the Mount, it's about relationships between people. In this context in Luke, you had better settle with the magistrate and with the judge. You accountability to God or else you will end up in jail. We can see as Jesus is travelling to Jerusalem, he is revealing himself more and more through his preaching and actions. He is confronting others more and more by challenging them to respond and he continued to call them to repentance. You need to be ready for his return and appreciate the reward for the faithful and there is discipline for the disobedient and judgement for those who reject him. Jesus will bring division, a picture of fire and you are to watch the signs and reconcile with those around you. And at the beginning of chapter 13, we get two more calls for repentance. There are two illustrations of happenings that have caused death and the question presented, were they worse sinners than the other Galileans? Jesus tells them to repent or this will happen to you.

Then we see the fig tree that doesn't yield fruit. The exhortation is to leave it to bear fruit and if it doesn't cut it down. This is laid out with two consecutive 'if clauses' where the possibility of not bearing fruit is stated with more certainty than the possibility that fruit will come. This entire section is looking toward the end and toward judgement, accountability and faithfulness to set up a call to repent. That's why the challenge has a hard edge to it. And the question becomes, given this confrontation, how will they respond?

**Odd Man Out:** Note that there are a series of parables that Jesus teaches what I call the odd man out parables. This is someone that is described in the parable as being in, but in the end the persons is actually out. They have an association with Jesus but they don't know Jesus so they end up being

judged. In their view they are probably in. They think they are part of the kingdom but they don't actually know him. Think with me for a second, if you had gone to the twelve while Jesus was ministering, before we get to Jerusalem in the last week and you had asked the twelve, 'is Judas a believer?' What would they have told you? They would have said, 'yes' because he's with us. The Lord picked him and he's one of the twelve. He even keeps the money. But what does Scripture tell us about Judas? That he was the son of perdition; he's the son of the devil. So here is someone who has the appearance of being in but really isn't. Judas is a picture of the odd man out. And these parables are calling for faithfulness and in part are designed to push a person like this out. This is difficult to understand especially when it comes to understanding God's grace because it suggests that judgement in part is based on works, and by the way, Jesus teaches this and so does Paul; look at Romans 2:5, Jesus is talking to the Jews here, 'but because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourselves in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgement is revealed! He will reward each one according to his works.' This is Paul, the apostle of grace, not by works that anyone should boast, not by works of the law. 'There is eternal life to those who by perseverance in good works seek glory and honor and immortality, but wrath and anger to those who live in selfish ambition and do not obey the truth but follow unrighteousness.' This couldn't be any clearer. A lot of people say that Roman 2:5 is a hypothetical situation; this is not so. In putting this whole thing together, if someone comes to the Lord in faith by God's grace, what do they get? They not only get forgiveness of sins, they get the Holy Spirit.

So having the Holy Spirit is the reestablishment of the relationship with God. So what is the Holy Spirit designed to do? It is to generate Christ likeness, thus fruits of the Spirit, righteousness, sanctification and good works. This is the product of God's grace because you get the Spirit by God's grace but there's a product on the other end. James tells us this; this is what James 2 is all about. So you don't need to fear good works as a product of the Spirit of God that is rooted in the Grace of God. You don't need to fear that at all. What you do need to fear is the works of the law that demand that God save us which makes salvation to be no longer by grace. In fact, that is the thrust of what Romans is about. Think about how Romans works; you are dead in your trespasses in sin. So there is no power in a dead body. The Book of Romans says, 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation.' Before salvation, you are a dead body, and then the grace of God appears apart from the law. At this point, your sins are forgiven and you become dead to your sin and become new in Christ. In this action, a powerless body is raised. And in Romans 8:2, 'For the law of the life-giving Spirit in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death.' The Holy Spirit produces someone who walks in the way of God. So many think that the central part of the Gospel is that Christ died for sin; this is not the whole Gospel in and of itself. The Gospel is not about avoiding something; it is about receiving something positive. It is the power of God unto salvation; it is coming into a relationship with God. It is living and breathing in fellowship with God. That's positive; the Gospel is not about missing hell but being face to face with the living God as a member of his family. When we preach a Gospel about only dealing with sin, we miss a key part of the Gospel. Sadly, in the end, the church gets what it pays for in its Gospel offer. So to change this, people need to understand what they get by being saved from a positive way, not a negative way and to realize that they are accountable to the Living God. The ability to relate properly to God upsets the entire table for a walk of discipleship. But if it is just for sin, I haven't done that.

Let me refer back to the state of uncleanness in Judaism. We have talked about one of the unusual features about Judaism being uncleanness, so when you are unclean, what happens? You can't come into the presence of God. So if you are in an unclean state in Judaism, what do you do? You wash! And what is the washing of yourself designed to do? It is to make you clean. When you are clean, you can go to the temple and approach God. Think about this in relation to the Gospel. If we put the Gospel in a Jewish frame, we will help people understand it. If I have sinned and I'm separated from God and if I have a washing or a cleansing that comes through an image of a sacrifice, then what have I done? I have put this vessel in the position of being clean which means I am now able to approach God. But here's the key point. In contrast to the old era where I go and walk into the presence to God, in the Gospel, God takes the initiative and fills this unclean vessel with his presence, the Spirit and seals me in cleanliness by his declaration and then brings me into a permanent relationship with God. That's the Gospel. Paul was not excited about the Gospel just because sins were forgiven, he was excited because relationships with God were restored, which assumes the forgiveness of sins.

**Mirror Miracles:** So Jesus has set up his teaching and an opportunity for the nation in a call to respond in repentance. This is what happens next. Jesus now preforms a series of what I call mirror miracles. They are simply similar versions of things that he has already done. They are repetitive miracles, things that he did earlier with the warning that you need to turn and repent. So he is going to repeat some of things that he's done already to see if anything has changed. First we get some Sabbath miracles, starting in Luke 13:10, to answer the question, has anything been learned? Have the challenges worked? Have people reflected on the things that he's already taught? 'Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, and a woman was there who had been disabled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten herself up completely. When Jesus saw her, he called her to him and said, woman you are freed from your infirmity.' So Jesus just performed a miracle on the Sabbath. Interestingly today in Israel, you have elevators that work automatically. These are called Sabbath elevators because you don't have to push any buttons since this is considered work; the elevator starts to move after thirty seconds and it stops at every floor. So the idea of working on the Sabbath is interesting when it's pushed to its limits. In one sense, it's well motivated since they are trying not to break the law. But it creates craziness. The section continues in 13:13, 'then he placed his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the crowd, there are six days on which work should be done! So come and be healed on those days, and not on the Sabbath day. Then the Lord answered him, you hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from its stall, and head it to water?'

Note that there are two competing theologies here, the leader of the synagogue has a theology that says on any day but the Sabbath, mercy is okay. Jesus' theology says what better way than on the Sabbath to celebrate what God has done and to free someone from the devil. 'Then shouldn't this woman, a daughter of Abraham who Satan bound for eighteen long years, be released from this imprisonment on the Sabbath day?' When he said this all his adversaries were humiliated, but the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things he was doing.' So had the mirror miracle revealed any changes in their lives? No, not really. Satan was defeated on the Sabbath and that was a wonderful thing and yet there was a complaint. By the way, notice something else that Jesus is doing here. We have two options in the Gospel for what Jesus is doing and where his power is coming from? If Jesus is defeating Satan on the Sabbath, where does that leave us? This is from God which is a dilemma for the leader of the synagogue. He wonders how we got this healing. If Satan is defeated, if Satan's work is being reversed, you mean God is working through Jesus on the Sabbath?

**The Kingdom of God:** 'What is the kingdom of God like? To what should I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the wild birds nested in its branches.' We have talked about this passage already. This is the Ezekiel 17 background where a sprig of David grows into a tree. Normally, a mustard seed doesn't grow into a tree, which makes this comment somewhat unusual. So we are getting unusual growth. 'To what should I compare the Kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of flour until all of the dough had risen.' So this is a lot of bread. A measure was sixteen pounds, so there was fifty pounds of dough.

'Jesus then traveled throughout the towns and villages, teaching and making his way toward Jerusalem. Someone asked him, Lord, will only a few be saved?' Note, like in other places, Jesus doesn't answer this question. So he said to them, 'exert every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you will try to enter and will not be able to. Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, then you will stand outside and start to knock on the door and beg him, Lord, let us in! But he will answer I don't know where you come from. Then you will begin to say, we ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets. But he will reply that he doesn't know where you came from! Go away from me, all you evildoers! Then there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves thrown out. The people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and take their places at the banquet table in the kingdom of God. But indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.' Jesus takes the question of whether the saved be few and turns it into, will the saved be you? This is exactly what he does with these kinds of questions. Someone asked who is my neighbor? Jesus tells us to be a neighbor.

Someone asked is this for us or everyone? Respond and be faithful to what you hear. Will the saved be few? No, the question is, will the saved be you? Concentrate on your own accountability for God and his will. That is what Jesus is doing with these passages.

'Some of the Pharisees came to Jesus and said, get away from here, because Herod wants to kill you. Jesus said, go and tell that fox, I am casting out demons and performing healings today and tomorrow and the next day, because it is impossible that a prophet should be killed outside of Jerusalem.' And then there is a lament over Jerusalem, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem; you who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would have none of it! Look, your house is forsaken! And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!' The first part of verse 35 is an exilic condemnation coming out of the language from the Book of Jeremiah. It is a judgement on the nation as if she is going into exile, but it is not permanent. It will be the case until they say, 'blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!' This can reverse the exile.

The next scene is another mirror miracle. Thus, in this miracle, they are given yet another chance. 'Now one Sabbath when Jesus went to dine at the house of a leader of the Pharisees, they were watching him closely. There right in front of him was a man suffering from dropsy. So Jesus asked the experts in religious law and the Pharisees, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not? But they remained silent. So Jesus took hold of the man, healed him, and sent him away. Then Jesus said to them, which of you, if you have a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull it out?' They still haven't learned anything. And the same thing happens in churches week after week. Pastors preach the Gospel again and again and people listen again and again; they are in a mirror declaration situation.

So we have worked our way through a significant amount of the journey section. We have come to another mirror miracle where nothing is learned. Their leering eyes are watching Jesus. The problem that the Jews have is they believe that God would not work through a sinner on the Sabbath. There is tradition that says this. So they have a dilemma, because healing is taking place on the Sabbath, just like before and God doesn't work through a sinner on the Sabbath, Jesus is doing things that reverse the work of Satan on the Sabbath. Jesus is giving all kinds of signs and indications of who he is, but what is being done with it? Nothing!

In Luke 14:7, we have the paragraph in regards to seeking seats of Honor. This is a major scene and Luke usually places these scenes during a dinner or a banquet. This is another case of Jesus teaching about having sensitivity toward people on the fringe. The passage is very well known and talks about how guests chose places of honor. It can be very embarrassing if you are told to move further away if someone really important shows up. It's better to take the furthest seat and have the host to move you up to the important seat. 'For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.' Jesus goes on to tell us not to invite important people necessarily so we can be invited back by them but instead invite the needy and the poor, then you'll be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous. In the Jewish culture there was a tradition of invited people and they would invite you back. Even today we invite those friends of ours who usually invite us back. The focus here is to be generous, not with just those who can pay you back with those who can't pay you back. In this sense the generosity is genuine generosity. 'When one of those at the meal with Jesus heard this, he said to him, 'Blessed is everyone who will feast in the kingdom of God!' This person may be sensing a bit of tension with what Jesus has said. So he suggests, isn't it going to be great in the future when we are all at the banquet table of God. Jesus replies by telling a story of a person inviting different people to a banquet but they all gave excuses why they couldn't come.

So the master told the slave to go out and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame. So this happened and the master said that one of the other people who didn't come will never taste his banquet. Of course today, one sends out an invitation with RSVP which asks those invited to say whether they are coming or not. A similar situation is assumed in the above banquet. So those who were invited and said that they would come all gave excuses why they couldn't come. So everybody knew the time and place of the banquet and had said that they would come, but when the time came, other things were more

important to them. You will see that verse 21 matches that of verse 13 in regards to inviting the poor, the crippled, and lame and the blind. So here the people that were included were people that most others would not think about including. Still having room to spare, others were invited from the highways and country roads. This could refer to the gentiles. Interestingly, the one who said, 'blessed is everyone who will feast in the kingdom of God' is assuming he will be there. The parable is a warning, maybe not! Jesus was at a dinner held by the leader of the Pharisees and the people there was probably his friends and they assume because they're righteous, they are included. But Jesus is saying that it is not so automatic.

In the following discipleship teaching, there were large crowds following Jesus, he instructs them that they have to leave everything and everyone and even give up their own lives to follow him. Here, the warning that they have to carry their own cross again, which we have already explained was a cruel Roman death. Jesus says that they had better count the cost in following him; otherwise they will be surprised at what might happen. Jesus is saying this to the crowds, not the disciples. So everyone knows what they are getting into in following Jesus. There is another discipleship passage but not quite the same. 'Or what king, going out to confront another king in battle, will not sit down first and determine whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot succeed, he will send a representative while the other is still a long way off and ask for terms of peace. In the same way therefore not one of you can be my disciple if he does not renounce all his own possessions. 'So in verse 32, think about who you are accountable to. If he has more power than you do, you should sue for terms of peace. Within his message is the opportunity to sue for peace. I think that this second illustration is about the accountability running through the section that one has with God and here the idea is that Jesus is giving them an opportunity to reconcile with God. God is more powerful than you are, so you ought to sue for peace and you ought to embrace the terms he gives you. And your possessions cannot do that for you.

The following verses in regards to salt and its flavor is in the context of people who think they have the right to the access of God by default. And this is also being taught to the crowds around Jesus. So we have a picture of inviting those who cannot pay you back, God will repay you. There is an image of the great banquet with Jesus and those who were invited decided not to come and so others, the poor and the needy and the lame were invited and they came instead. Notice here that the banquet was not put off but other people came. This parable is against the idea of the kingdom being postponed. The kingdom is coming with Jesus and when he issues the invitation, that's your opportunity to participate. Even though the kingdom of God is coming with Jesus, it has already come with Jesus, so the kingdom actually exists now. There will even be a time when Israel actually ops in and became part of this kingdom. What Jesus brought was coming all along and in the form in which he was presenting it. In Romans, Israel will be graphed out and will eventually be graphed back in. And to restate, the Jews believe they are the people of God and their ethnicity and in some cases their piety qualifies them to enter into the kingdom. We have a picture of discipleship, the call to hate the family and carry your cross, otherwise you can't be a disciple, to count the cost and understand what the commitment involves and understand the accountability you have and know that useless salt is cast out.

What we see in contrast to this, Jesus turns now talking about fellowshipping with sinners and seeking the lost. That is where we get the parable of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son. In the beginning of chapter 15, the first two parables talk about the joy and initiative to seek the lost and the joy that heaven experiences when a lost person is found. The third parable is much more complicated. It's often called the Parable of the Prodigal Son but it is really the Parable of the Compassionate Father. The father is the subject and how he reacts to the prodigal is the key. Of course you know the story; the man had two sons and one wants to take his inheritance and leaves and eventually finds himself eating the corn that is being fed to the pigs. For a Jewish person, this is about the lowest you can be. So not only is he feeding pigs, he wants to eat their food. He then decides to return home and the Father accepts him with open arms, but yet the other son is upset because he has never been treated that way. (Interestingly, it's found in the apocrypha warning of not giving his children the inheritance too early as that is irresponsible. The expectation is they may not be older enough to deal with it.) This also pictures the fact that God does let us go our own way. He didn't lose his ethical core and he acknowledges that he has sinned against heaven and his father. The father is so excited to see his son return with his son

immediately confessing his sins. The father doesn't let him finish and orders a celebration for his returning son. The father has returned the status to the son, which he had before he left. Up to this point, this parable mirrors the other parable but now we get an additional feature of his brother becoming angry and refusing to attend the party. But his father appealed to him.

Note the use of space in this parable. When we come to the end of the scene, who is in and who is out? The returned prodigal son is in and the other son is out, looking in. The older son represents someone who thinks of himself as righteous and questions why this person is getting the grace he is receiving. Basically, the older son is saying, 'that's not fair.' This is a very human story. Here you are, giving the younger brother top level attention and I've never got anything. The older son seems to speak disrespectfully to his father; look, these many years I have worked like a slave for you, and I never disobeyed your commands, yet you have never even given me a goat to celebrate with my friends! 'But when this son of yours comes back, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes; you killed the fattened calf for him! The two interesting features of verse 30 concerns the lack of acknowledgement that the younger man was his brother, instead the older brother says, 'your son.' The older brother has disowned his younger brother. What about the point, 'he has devoured your assets with prostitutes.' How does he know that? He doesn't know how the younger brother wasted his assets. He's not just saying, 'this is your son,' but also, 'how irresponsible and unfair of you.' Then the father said to him, 'son, you are always with me, and everything that belongs to me is yours. It was appropriate to celebrate and be glad, for your brother was dead, and is alive now; he was lost and is now found.' The father isn't going to break the relationship between him and his young brother. He has reminded the older brother of their relationship. We don't find out how the older brother responded in this opened ended parable. He is left to decide the next step in the story just as you the reader is left to decide the next step in your story. Of course, the older brother should go back inside and join the party. So when someone comes in by God's grace, no matter how disgraceful or wasteful their life has been up until this point; they should be welcomed in. That's why we pursue sinners, not because they have sinned, it's because of what God can do with them. One looks back and the other looks forward. So in contrast with the Pharisees who worry about what the state of the person is; just leave them alone, they are unrighteous, don't take any initiative, just live as righteously as you can in your own world. Jesus says that we are to take the initiative. As the church turns more inward today, it risks losing the sense of mission that Jesus has called us to have. Do we think the world is stronger than God's grace or do we think our allegiance to God's grace is stronger than the world? Often we think that the world is a far more dangerous place than the power of the provision that God give his saints.

**Possessions and Values:** In chapter 16, we have a rich man who has fired his manager from his job. There were accusations that his manger was wasting his assets. Interestingly at this point the manager does go out and reduces the bills owing to his master. The man realized that he wasn't capable of begging and he wants to be taken care of afterwards. 'The master commended the dishonest manager because he acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are shrewder in dealing with their contemporaries than the people of light. And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by how you use worldly wealth, so that when it runs out you will be welcomed into the eternal homes.' This parable is about using the resources God gives you generously and responsibly. The one who is faithful in very little is also faithful in much and the one who is dishonest in very little is dishonest in much. If you haven't been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth then who will trust you with riches; if you haven't been trustworthy with someone else's property who will give you your own. No servant can serve two masters; he will be devoted to one and not the other. You cannot serve God and money. Another warning from Jesus and from Luke about money and riches and the way it deflects attention from discipleship. These passages are not easy in a western context because western context runs on materialism. It's a deeply embedded value in the culture and it is death to spirituality if you are not careful. 'The Pharisees who loved money heard all this and ridiculed him. But Jesus said to them, you are the ones who justify yourselves in men's eyes, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly prized among men is utterly detestable in God's sight.'

'The law and the prophets were in force until John; since then, the good news of the kingdom of God has been proclaimed, and everyone is urged to enter it. But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tiny stroke of a letter in the law to become void.' The warnings about the Pharisees



continues; 'everyone who divorces his wife and marries someone else commits adultery, and the one who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.' In other words, we see that the standards of the kingdom are not changing. They are still high even though they are operating differently and your word is still your word and this example with marriage is an example of that point. The kingdom of God is coming but it isn't changing the fundamental ethics of what God requires. Then we come to the Rich Man and Lazarus which is worded like a parable.

The Rich Man and Lazarus: 'There was a rich man who dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day.' Purple was a sign of wealth and fine linen in those days. 'But at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus whose body was covered with sores, who longed to eat what fell from the rich man's table. In addition, the dogs came and licked his sores.' This means that he was unclean. There is a passage in Jewish tradition that says a man who cannot eat, a man who is licked by the dogs and a man who is nagged by his wife has no life. So Lazarus is two out of three. In calling this a parable, some are afraid that they will lose the teaching about the afterlife. There is teaching about the afterlife wrapped up in this parable, but the answer often given why it is not a parable is the idea that Lazarus has a name. And the claim is made that this is the only parable where a character has a name, if this is a parable. By the way that is true. But there is a reason why he has a name in the narrative. 'Now the poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. And in hell, as he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far off with Lazarus at his side.' One aspect in believing this is a parable is the communication that takes place between the below and the above. I don't think there is a heavenly internet. 'So he called out, father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in this fire.' There are two points here: how does the rich man use the poor man, the poor man is still below him; he needs to serve me. He can even serve me even though he is in heaven and I'm down here in hell. So what is the danger of riches? It views people as objects. Another point, why is the poor man in this parable named? The rich man knew who he was because he saw him out there, but did not help Lazarus in any way, even though it would not have cost him anything. This parable is in a chapter about money. 'Child, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things and Lazarus likewise bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in anguish. Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us, so that those who want to cross over from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' So the rich realizes that his fate is sealed so he tries to help his family. 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house for I have five brothers to warn them so that they don't come into this place of torment.' He still thinks that Lazarus is anyone's servant. 'But Abraham said they have Moses and the prophets; they must respond to them.' Moses and prophets would have taught the brothers to take care of the poor.

The irony here in this is what is being denied in the story. Abraham refuses to send anyone from the dead to the brothers but what's the narrative of the parable. Someone speaking beyond the grave to the living; so what is denied in the story? The rich man becomes a voice from beyond death, speaking to the living saying, watch how you live. 'Then the rich man said, no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent. He replied to him, if they do not respond to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' If they aren't open to what the Scriptures are already saying, they will not respond to a sign when it appears right in front of their eyes. This is actually in the story of Jesus' ministry. Jesus has been providing signs right in front of them, on the Sabbath, not on the Sabbath and what was the response? They haven't embraced it, even if someone has spoken from the beyond. So if you send someone from the dead, they will still miss it, which of course is what happens. If you are not open to the Word of God in the world, you will not see the Word of God when it happens, even if it happens in an amazing way. People will find some way to explain it away. Being a parable doesn't undercut the theological point that is being taught here. Once you are dead, there is no opting out, there is no purgatory. Your fate is sealed and as well as the responsibility you have to respond to Moses and the prophets, the implications about caring for the poor and being sensitive. This was the state of discussion during the time of Jesus when he invokes the afterlife. This is the image that is presented, he doesn't cite 1<sup>st</sup> Enoch. Remember that in Judaism, there is an intermediate state until the final judgement takes place. This passage is leaping over the intermediate state idea. You have the righteousness in one place and the unrighteous in another. In a world of cleanliness you cannot mix the clean and the unclean. The unclean here is represented by the rich man in hell and the clean is

represented by Lazarus in heaven. The gulf is there between the two which cannot approach each other. In addition, this parable is told from the view point; we know where people have ended up. Lazarus has ended up on the side of Abraham and the rich man has ended up in hell, a place so dreadful that he was in anguish in the non-consuming fire. Of course, this is told in a very Jewish context being with Abraham and being in hell.

This story is not framed by early church theology; this is Jesus speaking to his Jewish audience. Hell here is shoal and in Jewish thinking, it is where the dead gather. With this, there is a distinction and a distance and the unrighteous do not end up in the same place as the righteous in the afterlife. In Judaism also, there was the common thought that if a person was rich, they were blessed. We will see this later when the rich young ruler comes to Jesus and he is told to sell all he has but he goes away sadly. Jesus says that it is easier for a camel to go through a head of a needle than for a rich man to enter into heaven. So in human terms, it's impossible. So the disciples asked, 'then who can be saved?' If it's hard for the blessed to get in then who can get saved. The disciples said that they had left everything to follow Jesus and Jesus affirms them at that point. So here, again in Jewish thought, riches means blessings, means salvation. Not so. Jesus is undercutting this idea radically. So if riches means salvation, then what does poverty mean? It would mean condemnation. But who is Jesus telling his disciples to pay attention to? They are to be sensitive to the poor! In the chapters of Acts, thousands of Jews are coming to the Lord but the leadership is not. And the leadership directs where the nation as a whole is going. They become representative to some degree of the nation.

# Lecture 8: Life of Christ - Journey to Jerusalem Pt 3

This is the 8<sup>th</sup> lecture in the online series of lectures on the Life of Christ by Dr. Darrell Bock.

Recommended Reading includes: Jesus According to Scripture: restoring the Portrait from the Gospels by Bock, Baker, 2002 and Jesus in Context by Darrel Bock and Greg Herrick, eds., Baker, 2005 and Jesus Under Fire by Mike Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, Zondervan, 1995.

*(Any slides, photos or outlines that the lecturer refers to should be down loaded separately. If they are not available, you may be able to find something similar using the Google© search engine.)*

**Faith and The Kingdom of God:** We are in Luke chapter 17 which shows a list of several passages. We get exhortations of faithfulness and we have a warning not to be stumbling blocks for others. There is the exhortation to be forgiving, seven times a day which is different from other passages. 'Even if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times returns to you saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him.' Think about this, even if unrealistically, a person asks you to forgive them throughout the day, hour after hour. We are to forgive.

'The apostles said to the Lord, increase our faith! So the Lord replied, if you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this black mulberry tree, 'be pulled out of the roots and planted in the sea, and it would obey you.' Okay, obviously trees don't grow in the sea; interestingly a black mulberry tree has an extensive root system and to extract it would take a lot of work. So Jesus is saying that you can do very unusual things with very little faith. We think we have to have lots of faith to do things but this passage says that we only need a small amount of faith. The importance is not how much faith is present but that faith is simply present. Just use the faith that you have is what Jesus is teaching us. Luke continues, 'would any one of you say to your slave who comes in from the field after plowing or shepherding sheep, come at once and sit down for a meal? Won't the master instead say to him, get my dinner ready, and make yourself ready to serve me while I eat and drink. Then you may eat and drink? He will not thank the slave because he did what he was told, will he? So you too, when you have done everything you were commanded to do, should say, we are slaves undeserving of special praise; we have only done what was our duty.' Note that after this passage of the ten Lepers reveals a faith of foreigners. Jesus heals the ten lepers but only the foreigner comes back. It's really important to appreciate what God has done for us and for you.

At the end of chapter 17, we get Luke presenting one part of an eschatological discourse, of what is in Mark 13 in the Olivet Discourse and what is in Matthew 24 and 25, which is split up into three passages in Luke. One of the parables shows up at the end of chapter 12, which was our dichotomizing parable and one of the units happens here and another unit happens in chapter 21. We have a text that first talk about the coming of the kingdom, the present form of the kingdom and then talks about the consummate form of the kingdom. The present form of the kingdom is in verses 20 & 21. 'Now at one point the Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God was coming, so he answered, the kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, look, here it is, or there! For indeed the kingdom God is in your midst.' The kingdom of God is right in front of you, it is right here and this was said publicly. He then turns to the disciples to teach them privately. 'Then he said to the disciples, the days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.' The coming of the Lord will not come as soon as you think. 'Then the people will say to you, look, there he is, or look, here he is! Do not go out or chase after them. For just like the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day.' The lightning indicates that either it will be very clear when it is happening or it will be quick just like lightning is quick when it flashes, or it could be both. We know that lightning lights up the whole sky even during the light when it happens and it's very fast. It's there and it's

gone. It will be obvious, there will be no guessing to it, nor will you need anyone to tell that it has come. 'But first the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. Just as it was in the days of Noah, so too it will be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage – right up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.' It's going to come and with it there will be judgement. It's going to come in the mits of life. I don't think this is sneak preview of the rapture; it is exactly what it says. It's going to come in the mits of life and it's going to mean judgement. 'Likewise it was in the days of Lot, people were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building, but on the day Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.' The coming of Jesus will be about Judgement. It will be like the days of Noah and so like the days of Lot. 'On that day, anyone who is on the roof, with his goods in the house, must not come down to take them away, and likewise the person in the field must not turn back. Remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, in that night there will be two people in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. There will be two women grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left.' This will bring judgement and it will separate. The theme of judgement is carried all the way through by the final imagery. 'Where, Lord?' Jesus replied, where the dead are, there the vultures will gather.' This isn't a nice image.

**The Persistent Widow, the Self-righteous Pharisee, the Tax Collector and a Little Child:** 'Then Jesus told a parable to show them they should always pray and not lose heart.' This is in the context of the coming of the Son of Man. 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected people. There was also a widow in a city that kept coming to him, saying, give me justice against my adversary. Later on he said, I neither fear God nor have regard for people, yet because this widow keeps on bothering me, I will give her justice, or in the end she will wear me out by her unending pleas. The Lord said, listen to what the unrighteous judge say! Won't God give justice to his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will it be a long delay before he helps them? I tell you, he will give them justice speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?' Let me paraphrase that; judgement will come quickly in reference to God's time in context to eternity, but it will be delayed long enough that when the Son of Man returns there will be some who may have given up the faith as a result. So this is explaining that it isn't going to come so soon that people shouldn't persistently pray for it and plea for judgement. And it is not going to be so soon that when the Son of Man comes back, some people may have given up.

'Jesus also told them a parable to those who though they were righteous and looked down on everyone else. Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed, God, I thank you that I am not like other people, extortionists, unrighteous people, adulterers – or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of everything I get. The tax collector, however, stood far off and would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, God, be merciful to me, sinner that I am! I tell you that this man went down to his home justified rather than the Pharisee. For everyone who exalts himself, will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.' Let me paraphrase this for you. God, I think you that I'm such a wonderful righteous person. Most such praise praises God for he is done, but not so this one. The theology of the Gospels is that if you understand you are a sinner and in need of the forgiveness of God, God can work with you. And if you think, you are okay and that God owes you something, hell can't open fast enough. 'For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.' And then we get the picture of Jesus putting a little child in front of them, calling for humility. Jesus didn't have time to deal with children, but Jesus made it plain that the kingdom of God belonged to the little children and if we couldn't humble ourselves like those little children, we would never enter the kingdom of God.

This ends the part of Luke that contains information which was only in Luke. So in Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, we have come to a place where Luke joins with Marks' Gospel. The information from this part of Luke includes Jesus' teaching about discipleship, about rejection and patience with the timing of God in terms of the consummation of the kingdom. Jesus has warned us about the danger in regards to our possessions and called them and us to remain faithful and he has openly challenged the opposition and given them numerous opportunities to turn, but they did not respond to what Jesus offered. The unit ends in praise and a call to be humble.

**The Theology and History of Jesus:** We will start to cover the following topics in Matthew 19:1-21:9, Mark 10:1-11:10 and Luke 18:15-19:44. The citation that I'm alluding to from Ben Myers, a book he did on the historical Jesus called, 'The Aims of Jesus'; it was one of the original works that represented the 3<sup>rd</sup> quest for the historical Jesus. He emphasized in the book that Jesus' ministry was Messianic and involved a fusion of history and theology which had interplay to it. With some historical Jesus scholars, they say history is whatever I can collaborate and so if any other statement is theology, you can't have a sentence in which God is the subject that involves history. Theology and history is so inextricably linked in the Jesus story, you cannot separate the two. So as we move to this final key phase of Jesus' life, we will see this very clearly. The Major theme of this last part of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is faithfulness in the face of opposition and the emphasis in Matthew and Mark is on teaching as he heads to Judea. It will be the same as it was in the entire section in Luke.

**Divorce:** Matthew 19 - The first scene is the discussion on divorce which is a controversy account because what is going on here is in the context of Judaism is that Jesus was being tested with his faithfulness to Scripture on marriage and divorce. This happens right after Jesus leaves Galilee and travels to Judea beyond the Jordan River. This is east of the Jordan River in the country of Jordan. It was then that some Pharisee tried to test Jesus asking him whether it was lawful or not to divorce a wife for any cause. In the first century there were two schools of Jewish thought, the School of Shammai and the School of Hillel. The School of Shammai believed only worthy students should be admitted to study the Torah while the School of Hillel believed that the Torah may be taught to anyone, in the expectation that they would repent and become worthy. The School of Shammai also held that a man may divorce his wife for a serious transgression, but the House of Hillel allowed divorce for even trivial offenses, such as burning a meal. This is the context and background of what's going on here. Jesus quoted, 'for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and will be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one, 'therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate. They said, why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her? Jesus said, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of your hard hearts, but from the beginning it was not this way. Now I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries commits adultery.' So it wasn't God's intent and it's the wrong kind of question to ask, because basically the question was: what was the minimal requirement to get out of a marriage? The intent should be to stay in the marriage, which is the point that Jesus is making. For the exception here, 'except for immorality', comes from the Greek term *pornea*. So God allowed exceptions for the hardness of human hearts.

'The disciples said to him if this is the case of a husband with a wife, it is better not to marry!' This is taking place within a context of any reasons for a divorce, we must remember. The idea of not marrying is not a good argument as a man and women were meant for each other. Jesus confirms this by saying, 'except those to whom it has been given.' And that includes eunuchs from birth and those who were made that way for the sake of the kingdom of God. The one who is able to accept this should accept it.' So, yes, it may be possible not to marry, but you should not insist it. The Essenes who lived out in the desert were said to discourage marriage for the reasons of dedication to God. But Note that within Judaism it was an expectation that you would marry as it was part of the command in Genesis to be fruitful and multiple. Even priests were married. And there was an extreme expectation from the family to get married and they were very involved in arranging such things as it was part of the culture. Marriage is something you do for children, there is an obligation and it often came through family choices. There are parts of the world that still do it this way. A person, then and even now did not have very much of a choice whether or not to get married. There were practical pragmatic ramifications for having a big family. Remember also that the Jewish culture was extremely patriarchal. But since there were two schools of thinking on this, it was obviously debated in that time; perhaps because of the pressure on those to get married and be married to people they didn't want to be married to. One should also note the way in which Jesus engages both women and men in his ministry. This was in a way that was somewhat exceptional in the culture of that time. As an example, think about Jesus engaging the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus tended to treat and respect everyone, male and female equally.

**The Rich Man and the Poor Man:** We come to this section where Jesus starts to increase his teaching

and his challenges. This is where the rich young ruler appears in Luke 18:18 that say, 'good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus seems to challenge him in his reply. 'Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother. The man replied that he had wholeheartedly obeyed all these laws since his youth. When Jesus heard this, he said, one thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.' A lot of people think that Jesus' answer ends with his initial reply, but instead, this is an extended answer to this question. In answering the question, Jesus first cites the commandment of God and a call to keep those and when the man says that he has obeyed that and he calls Jesus a good teacher. So Jesus now issues the real challenge, sell all you have, give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come and follow me. So the extended answer includes that of following Jesus. 'When the man heard this he became very sad, for he was extremely wealthy. When Jesus noticed this, he said, how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Those who heard this, said, and then who can be saved? Jesus replied, what is impossible for mere humans, it is possible for God. Peter said, we have left everything we own to follow you!' I really like this question by Peter and I guarantee that he didn't ask it this way. Peter didn't ask it with emotional difference. This is a question that asked to try and get Jesus to reassure the disciples that they have done what the rich man failed to do. Perhaps the question was actually phrased this way, 'look, we have left everything we owned to follow you, haven't we?' Or it was something like that.

'Then Jesus said to them, I tell you the truth, there is not one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of God's kingdom who will not receive many times more in this age – and in the age to come, eternal life.' This answer ends with the question that was started in verse 18, 'good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' How do you get eternal life? You embrace the kingdom of God. You come and follow me and you embrace the kingdom of God. But here, the rich man has no sense of a need to repent by Jesus' request, even though it is a very demanding request. Would we do the same thing living in a rich western society? So will he follow the God, the good teacher? Sell all and come and follow me and you will have treasure in heaven. We have a promise. The treasure is being associated with the kingdom, which is what Jesus is offering the young man. But he decides that he would rather have earthly good than this treasure. It is impossible for the rich to come, but it is possible with God and only God can do this. The disciples are okay because they have left everything. In the parallels between the synoptic Gospels, the rationale for giving up family, etc. is expressed differently in the three versions. One expresses it for Jesus' name sake and another it's for the sake of the Gospel and in another it's for the kingdom. But it is all the same basic concept.

Following on from this in the later part of the chapter, we get a prediction of Jesus' passion and a healing of a blind man, a person who then sees. The blind man was sitting on the road to Jericho begging. Once he realized that it was Jesus that was passing he called out, calling him Son of David and asking Jesus for mercy. 'Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.' And so the blind man immediately received his sight and followed Jesus. The man understood who Jesus was and he understood that Jesus had power to heal him. This miracle pictured that Jesus can give sight, not just to the physical blind but to the spiritually blind. This is what his entire ministry is about. 'And those who were in front scolded him to get him to be quiet, but he shouted even more.' Jesus ordered the beggar to be brought to him. So we first have a wealthy man who has everything this world has to offer who can see! We have a blind man who has very little, if anything and sits on the road begging and this person sees everything very clearly in Jesus. So Jesus' reply to the rich man stresses not what is permitted but what should be pursued which is the kingdom of God.

**The Vineyard Workers:** There are more parables beginning in chapter 20 of Matthew. For the workers in the vineyard, 'the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. And after agreeing with the workers for the standard wage, he sent them into his vineyard.' This would be a denarius a day. The parable continues saying that the landowner went out at nine o'clock to hire more workers, and then the same thing at noon time and again at three in the afternoon and yet again at five in the early evening with all receiving the same wage, a full day's pay. But those who were hired first thought that they would get more and when they didn't they complained. Interestingly, you had better not ask for fairness from God, this is bad for the person asking. Just enjoy

his grace. The landowners told them that he was giving them what he agreed to. 'Are you envious because I am generous? So the last will be first, and the first last.' What gets us in trouble in regards to many of these passages is when we worry about what is happening with someone else. The function of God's grace is something not to be sneered at.

In Matthew 20:17, we have yet another passion prediction like we had in chapter 19. In Matthew and Mark, this is the third prediction and in Luke it is number six. Mark has the most detailed, Luke emphasizes the Scripture on the Son of Man as being fulfilled and he also notes that they did not understand. Again I tend to take all the sayings as authentic because of the way in which the reactions are coming. Their inability to understand is called, 'the Criterion of Embarrassment'. The leadership just didn't get it. You would not create a story like this. The story is like this because that is the way it was. Mark and Matthew deals with the question about the seats of preference showing the disciples continued in lack of understanding. They wanted to know where they ranked in the program of God. They wanted to be able to exercise a certain kind of power in the program of God. Jesus just refuses to go there. Jesus' response was, 'are you ready to suffer?' The disciples truly only understood Jesus after he died and rose again; then they fully understood everything that Jesus had told them. So the role that we have is a matter of the Father's call and leading, but this is not like the world's leading as shown by their worry of rank or who their benefactor was. It's simply a matter of service and being prepared to serve and honor God's call. The way this passage ends in Matthew 20:28 is, 'just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' And this is supposed to be the example to the disciples as well. Are you ready to serve? Are you ready to give your life for the ransom for many? No, you may not have to die on a cross on behalf of all humanity, but are you ready to serve?

Next in verse 29, we get a symbolic healing of the blind men who see. We have already covered this in Luke. Faith heals them; as Jesus touched their eyes, they received their sight and followed him. We now switch over to Luke 19:1 where we have the story of Jesus with Zacchaeus. This is the passage where Jesus says that the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost. The next passage is the parable of the pounds.

**The Ten Minas:** We get Jesus gathering up disciples and telling another story of the ten minas; 'while the people were listening to these things, Jesus proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.' So he says a nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom and return. There is a sense here that the benefits of the kingdom doesn't come until he has performed the sacrifice and has been raised. Note that the Spirit comes after the crucifixion, after the resurrection. So the man gave ten minas to ten of his slaves to invest and to do business with. Upon his return he asked what they had earned. One earned ten more minas, another earned five more minas but one did not invest it and kept it for the man's return. The first two received rewards but the man took the mina from the third man and gave it to another. Then Jesus said, 'I tell you that everyone who has will be given more, but from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.' For the people who didn't want him as a king, the man slaughtered them. This is an 'Odd Man Out' parable. The stress is on the last person. Why didn't you do something with what I gave you? You did nothing! Verse 26 is new math, 'but from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.'

**The Triumphal Entry:** Usually when a dignitary comes to a city, officials go out from the city and greet the dignitary. So Jesus enters Jerusalem as a king but what do the leaders do? They complain, tell your disciples to stop. What does Jesus say? If they do not cry out, the stones will cry out. Note that whenever creation is said to talk or have the possibility of talking, that's important. The creation of God which is animated in this passage, seen as living and breathing, accepts the witness of what is represented here and if the disciples had not done it, the creation would have responded. So when creation speaks, people are supposed to listen. The background to this is from Zachariah 9:9 'Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! Look! Your king is coming to you: he is legitimate and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey – on a young donkey, the foal of a female donkey. Also there is a passage in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings where Solomon comes into the city. There's praise for God's great work, there is praise for Davidic hope. He enters as the promised King, offering himself to the city. The disciples are praising him as doing the works of God and the other people are those who are pouring into the city during these pilgrim feasts.

The leader's reaction which is only in Luke is to stop. There are other passages from Genesis 4 and Habakkuk 2 that are also examples of creation talk. The blood of Able cries out in one of those passages. And then Jesus weeps and predicts the judgement for covenant unfaithfulness. 'So Jesus wept over it, saying, if you had only known on this day, even you, the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Jesus continues, for the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and surround you and close in on you from every side. They will demolish you – you and your children within your walls – and they will not leave within you one stone on top of another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.' And so the exile judgement declared in Luke 13 is confirmed here by this remark in a prediction that comes in the destruction of Jerusalem. Note now that the judgement that followed in AD 70 was part of the eschatological calendar. It represents a confirmation that the nation has been judged and the nation in effect is now in exile.



# Lecture 9: Life of Christ - Cleansing the Temple

This is the 9<sup>th</sup> lecture in the online series of lectures on the Life of Christ by Dr. Darrell Bock.

Recommended Reading includes: Jesus According to Scripture: restoring the Portrait from the Gospels by Bock, Baker, 2002 and Jesus in Context by Darrel Bock and Greg Herrick, eds., Baker, 2005 and Jesus Under Fire by Mike Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, Zondervan, 1995.

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**Jesus Enters as King:** This is a very key section on Jesus' life and ministry. It's out of these events you will come to appreciate what was going on with Jesus. These represent less disputed events where people talk about the life of Jesus. It is probably the earliest portion of Jesus' life that has been reordered in a more structured way. But the passages are filled with controversy about Jesus' authority. Where did he get the right to do the things he was doing. And for Mark, this is almost half his Gospel which has been described as a passion with a long prologue. The events start with the entry into the temple area with the first major incident being the cleansing of the temple by Jesus. However, before this there is the triumphal entry in Luke 19:28 at a place called the Mount of Olives near Bethphage and Bethany; Jesus sent two of the disciples ahead to get a colt that was tied up. Jesus told them if anyone questioned what they were doing, they were just to say, the Lord needs it.' In going down from the Mount of Olives, his disciples began to rejoice and praise God. They began to spread their cloaks on the road before Jesus. And the next scene is where Jesus weeps for Jerusalem under Judgment. Then the incident at the temple happens, of which two major views are often heard; one is the prediction of the destruction of the temple by which we mean the permanent destruction of the temple. The other is the temple cleansing which is calling for the reformation of the temple practice, but not the destruction of the temple. N.T. Wright holds this view.

**By Whose Authority:** So Jesus drives out the people selling things at the temple and quoting, 'my house will be a house of prayer,' but you have turned it into 'a den of robbers!' As Jesus was teaching daily in the temple courts, the chief priests, the experts and leaders were trying to find a reason to kill him. Notice how the language of the text seems to suggest reform rather than destruction. It's only when you put this text next to the picture of the fig tree withering that you think about destruction, but it's the idea of cleansing is slightly more likely here. The money changers had been placed in the court of the gentiles fairly recently from a location farther away. Note that money changing was required as the temple tax was supposed to be paid in a certain way and also the sacrifices were supposed to be spotless. Thus for those who brought animals for sacrifice off from a distance, it was a risk that they would become blemished. So, this was a place to buy spotless and unblemished sacrificial animals. All of this was required so that the demands of the law could be met. But it could be the moving of this into the temple was what Jesus was protesting or whether he was protesting the way in which the charges were arranged on how to do this. But the practice was something that the law required. So how it was being done was probably the issue.

It was to be in the end times that God was to renew the worship in the temple. This is covered in the history of the Jewish war with Josephus to Tobit which is in the Apocrypha in the Book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees. It's also in 1<sup>st</sup> Enoch and Jubilees which is in the Pseudepigrapha. (These were falsely attributed collections written between 300 BC – 300 AD and the afore mentioned Book of Enoch and Book of Jubilees were categorized as pseudepigraph from the point of view of Chalcedonian Christianity. These documents were assigned to authors from the past which were in some cases perfectly acceptable by standards of the time.) This also shows up in the expectations tied to the Qumran documents. Interestingly, Israel had a prayer that was considered a sort of state prayer called the eighteen

benedictions. It was a prayer for the hope of the nation and benediction 14 juxtaposed two ideas: the renewal of the Davidic House, the prayer for a king and renewal of the temple. So when Jesus walks in and cleanses the temple, having just ridden on a donkey, thus declaring himself to be king; this combination is screaming eschaton and Messiah, coming in on the back of a donkey in language that reflects Zechariah 9 and moving immediately to the temple to cleanse it. Thus, this is a cultural script, not just a prophetic act. He was not a prophet acting in the temple, but was a Messiah acting in the temple. In addition, this event becomes a key to the trial in Mark. It triggers a question about who gives you the authority to do these things.

But first, a question: what is the holiest place on earth for a Jew? It's the temple. And in the 1<sup>st</sup> century the Sadducees were in charge of it. It was run by the Sanhedrin and the high priest family. The Romans even let them police the area. Gentiles were not allowed into certain parts of the temple as was seen on signs dug up from archeological digs around the area. And the Roman built a fortress, a place called Antonia that overlooked the temple. So Jesus comes into the most sacred spot, run by the Sadducees and overturns the tables and in a symbolic act declares the temple to be corrupt. How do you think the Sadducees would have felt about this? There a German expression that summarizes this, 'not happy'. They would not have been happy about this. This was a direct challenge to their authority. In Mark, we are told that the temple is not a place of prayer for the nations as it should have been, but a place of robbery. This was a complaint about the spiritual condition of the temple. The nation had corrupted the worship in intense disobedience. The language used here echoes Jeremiah 7 which is one of the Old Testament's strongest rebuke of the nation of Israel. And Jesus isn't alone in thinking that the temple worship is corrupt. Remember the Dead Sea School community that is out in the wilderness, the Essene community. The whole reason they withdrew from Jerusalem, they thought that the city was corrupt along with the worship at the temple. Remember the cursing of the fig tree. We have a contrast between Jesus' healing work and praise as the Son of David, accepted by the disciples and the cleansing of the temple, followed by the cursing of the fig tree which pictures judgement of the nation. Jesus curses the fig tree being a picture of the nation of Israel and thus it withers and dies.

With the cursing of the fig tree as back ground, some think he is predicting the destruction of the temple, but his remarks in the temple indicate what the temple should be rather than pronouncing a word of judgement over it. In thinking that it is all about the destruction of the temple, one might think in terms that this is permanent. And that is indeed part of the view, whether or not we have a prediction of a permanent destruction. Judaism has the hope of a rebuilt or reformed temple and Jesus appears to also have this view as well. So Jesus states that the temple is a house of prayer, spiritualizes it and turns it into the church. So the chief priests and scribes are against Jesus. In Matthew and Mark there's a comment about the importance of faith in regards to the fig tree in the context of prayer. This is where the mulberry bush in Luke 17 shows up in Matthew and Mark and where Mark talks about the offer of forgiveness as well. A reference to a mountain in Matthew may be a reference to judgement on Jerusalem.

**Six Controversies:** From this point, we enter into six controversies within the last week that come one after another. Matthew, who likes to work in threes, has two parables to make another triad unit like Matthew 8 and 9. So we get multiple parables in Matthew in a way we don't in the other Gospels. This becomes a 'battle royal' on who speaks for God. We have Jesus and the leadership dueling on a variety of different things where Jesus comes out ahead in all of them. So from the standpoint of the narrative, it wants you to ask the question, 'who would you rather follow', the Jewish leadership or Jesus. The unit begins with the question, by whose authority do you do these things? This is stated as a plural. Jesus' acts in the temple have precipitated the question because Jesus views himself as having the right to do this. Another question is raised as to who has the right to do anything with God's temple? Not just be in charge of it, but to do anything with it. Who gives you the right to do these things? The text, 'tell us by what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?' There is the question and then there is what motivates the question. However, what they are really saying, 'we didn't give you this authority.' Jesus asked them whether John's baptism was from heaven or from people. Jesus knew that they wouldn't answer such a question because the people would have come against them. In the movement of this narrative, this scene is ironic; of course Jesus knew it came from God but the leaders of the temple would not answer but instead said that they didn't know. So, another question, did the leadership appoint John the Baptist? No! John the Baptist was the same kind of authoritative position as

Jesus. They didn't appoint him, God did. The answer to Jesus' question about John is in some degree obvious. So Jesus would not tell them but yet at the same time, he did tell them. It was very obvious.

**Three Parables:** In Matthew 21:28, we get three parables at this point: of the two sons, of the wicked tenants which is also in Mark and Luke and we get the parable of the king's marriage feast. In the parable of the two sons, a man asked his son to go to the vineyard and work. At first he refused but then decided to obey his father. The second son immediately said that he would go but never did. Out of these, Jesus was showing that tax collectors and prostitutes would go ahead of religious leaders into the kingdom of God. They believed in John the Baptist but even though they saw this, they wouldn't change their minds. This builds off the picture of John the Baptist having the authority which in turn shows how Jesus should be viewed. The parable of the wicked tenants is seen as one of the clearest allegorical parables Jesus tells. Note that Jesus did teach allegorical parables. This is not the same as allegorical interpretation. Allegories are a genre of literature that someone can use. An allegorical interpretation is a way of reading the text that is not intended by the person writing it. This is two different things. This is clearly allegorical because there are many features that have corresponding events in history. In this parable, a landowner developed a vineyard with fences, winepress and watchtower. He leased it out and sent his slaves to collect his portion. But they were beaten up and killed and stoned. He sent others and they were treated the same way. Then he sent his son, thinking that they would respect him, but no, they killed him also. So the question is posed, what will the land owner do to these wicked people? Often times, Israel is pictured as a vineyard as stated in Isaiah 5. Obviously here, the father represents God, the vineyard represents Israel, the tenants represent Israel's leadership, the slaves represent the prophets and the son represents Jesus. This parable also shows how blind and crazy sin can be. What makes you think that if you kill the heir that you will be the heir? However, they are thinking that if they kill the heir, they will get the land. Jesus continues and says to them that the kingdom of God will be taken from them and given to those who produce fruit. This is confrontation between them and Jesus where Jesus is telling them what God is going to do to them and they don't like it. Jesus tells them that they have lost their right to be in charge. He is answering their question of who gave Jesus the right to do this. Look to John the Baptist and how he came to be appointed and you will understand Jesus' appointment. There is a proverb in Judaism that goes like this; a stone falls on a pot, the pot falls on a stone; it's bad for the pot either way. In verse 44, 'the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and the one on whom it falls will be crushed.' There is a judgement coming. When the religious leaders heard this, they wanted to arrest him but feared the crowds around Jesus.

The third parable is comparing the kingdom of heaven to a wedding banquet with those invited not coming. They were indifferent and gave excuses why they couldn't come, while others who were also invited actually kills the slaves that had been sent out with the invitation. This is a picture of killing the prophets. The king killed them all and set the city on fire and then invited others, both bad and good; they were all dressed in wedding clothes except for one. And that one was taken and thrown into the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, for many are called, but few are chosen. Setting the city on fire is alluding to AD 70. This is a variation of what we saw earlier in Luke. In verse 11, we have an Odd Man out where a person was not dressed in wedding clothes. The Odd Man out is a person in the community but is not really a part of it. So we have three parables stressing the need for obedience to the Father's will and the allegory of Israel leaders who refused the invitation to the Kingdom of God.

**Controversies:** There is more confrontation in regards to paying taxes to Caesar and Jesus answers by turning an either or question into answer and question. Do we pay taxes to Caesar or not? This is a political question that is designed to get Jesus into trouble, no matter how he answers. If he says to pay taxes, it is perceived that he is siding with Rome and if he says not to pay taxes, he is going against Rome directly. Of course Jesus sees their evilness and turns the question around showing that the denarius had already belonged to Caesar seeing as his image was imprinted on it and thus Jesus says, 'give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. Then the Sadducees took their turn and tried to trap him with a question about resurrection and marriage in heaven. The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection. Jesus simply tells them that they don't know the Scriptures or the power of God, as none are given in marriage in the resurrection. But Jesus goes farther assuring them that there is a resurrection by quoting Old Testament Scripture, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob and they all live, they are not dead. This story shows you the problem the

resurrection presents for a lot of people. Of course the supposed dilemma is how can this woman end up in heaven with seven husbands? But their assumption is all wrong; life in heaven will not be like life on earth. This answer comes out of Exodus; it leads to an implication about the resurrection even though it's not a specific resurrection text. The point seems to be, if God has made certain promises for the patriarchs and they are dead, then those promises are not realized to the patriarchs, but if God has made these promises and they are going to receive the benefits of those promises, then they are going to be resurrected one day in order to receive these benefits. God is not a God of the dead; he is a God of the living. Jesus thus answers both a theological question and also a political question.

Another test comes this time from the Pharisees asking which of the commandments are the greatest. Jesus answered, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all of your mind and the second, and love your neighbor as yourself.' All the law and the prophets depend on these two commandments. So Jesus declares the ethical center, the relational center of the Scripture by answering in this way and so he defends himself by presenting a theological comeback to the Pharisees. Note that the question about taxes was asked by the Herodian party, the question about resurrection was asked by the Sadducees and the question about the greatest commandment was asked by the Pharisees. So Jesus is working his way through all the key groups. I don't think these questions were traps as such but instead were tests, if I can make that distinction. The answers were in line with what the prophets would have recognized and the rabbinic schools would have accepted. So he has been asked a question by all three of the main parties. Now Jesus asks them a question in turn. 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he? They replied, the Son of David. How then David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet. If David then calls him Lord, how can he be his son? No one was able to answer him and from that day on, no one dared to question him any longer.' This was an important question because as the society was patriarchal and ancestral, thus your ancestor has the greater honor. So there a problem in that the father is calling his son Lord; this is not just any father, this is David and David ranks among the top as far as the kings are concerned. So David is the ancestor. How can the one at the top in terms of kingship end up calling the son, Lord? This is from Psalm 1:10 which becomes one of the most important passages from the Old Testament for the New Testament. Jesus is creating a dilemma. Jesus is not intending to communicate that the Christ is not David's son. The challenge is that David's son is not the most important description of the Christ in question. The Lord is the important description; being called Lord by the one who is responsible for the line. If the Messiah outranks David, what does that say about the Messiah?

This answers the authority question; it also makes it clear that if Jesus outranks the king who is at the top or in a category above that. It's not specified but the title Lord is a hint. This finishes up the unit in terms of authority; it suggests that the Messiah, as a position, is greater than the ancestor of the kingly line. And that Lord is the appropriate title and if this is so, then how should he be treated? How should he be responded to? Psalm 1:10 is called a rabbinic antinomy where you go to A or B and isn't so much not A but B, but not A so much as B. Lord is a more important title than simply being David's son. If he is Lord over David what does that mean for everyone else in Israel? And of course, there is an allusion of him to being at the right hand of God. This is the last controversy in Luke and it finishes up the section.

**Woes of the Scribes and Pharisees:** In Matthew 23 at this point, we get the woes to the Scribes and the Pharisees. This is similar to the section in Luke 11. Mark and Luke merely note the exchange in a very short form. Mark says, 'in his teaching, Jesus also said watch out for the experts of the Law, they walk around in long robes in the market places and take the best seats in the synagogue and places of honor at banquets. They devour widow's property and as a show make long prayers. These men will receive a more severe punishment. Whereas in Matthew, we get a very long sequence of judgements; Matthew focuses on the judgement against the leadership. The exhortation is, do not follow them and do not be like them. Jesus urges what is being taught but not what they are modeling. No hypocrisy, no exalting the human teacher, humility; they block access to heaven, even for converts. The call is rather to make genuine oaths, to avoid hypocrisy and to live with justice, mercy and faith. The Pharisees are dirty inside, like unmarked graves; the irony is they care for the prophet's graves, thinking that they are honoring them but in fact they are indorsing the fact that their fathers killed the prophets. They will slay God's new messengers as well and be accountable for all the righteous from Able to Zechariah. This is not anti-Semitic but rather purely prophetic. It is one Jew talking to a group of Jews, saying that they are being unfaithful.

Jesus laments over Jerusalem at this point in Matthew 37 only. This is equal to Luke 13:35-35. It is an exilic type of judgement that comes for a forsaken house and the language of it is from the exile and the prophet Jeremiah. But Psalm 118:26 tells you that the door is open, 'May the one who comes in the name of the Lord be blessed.' In Mark and Luke we get the widow's copper coins or two mites in contrast to all this. The gift comes out of her very life (or *bios* from Greek and the study of biology, study of life). It is a gift given in faith and that's an example to the disciples.

**The Olivet Discourse:** In a pattern prophecy that is like the day of the Lord. This discourse was brought on by a remark about the destruction of the temple that happened around AD 70 and the return of the Lord. The disciples asked when was these to happen? So Jesus starts in the middle of this and then works backwards. There is confusion here and dispensationists like to use the outline they see in Matthew in trying to decide what happens next. Reformed theologians like to use the outline they see in Luke and the two don't exactly match. The discourse in Matthew emphasizes what is coming in the future while the discourse in Luke emphasizes what is coming in the near future or present. So we have one present and the other future. Each side picks that model and imposes it on the other version. What we have in Mark is the most ambiguous form of the text. We have some mirrored events here; the short term events are like the events in the end. It is a pattern prophecy, just like the day of the Lord. The locus plague can be like the end. The version of Mark is perhaps the closest version to what Jesus said. When you pick either one of these versions and impose it as the model, you lose the ambiguity of the pattern. First in Mark, 'tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that all these things are about to take place?' Remember what Jesus predicted about one stone not be left on top of another in regards to the temple. Note that the temple mount area covered some thirty five acres, a very large public area that Herod had on. So there are two questions, when and what's the sign. Basically Luke has the same question Mark had. For Matthew, what will be the sign of your coming and the completion of the age? I think the Olivet Discourse was only taught once by Jesus as shown by the same wording. A question; how is it that the disciples can talk about Jesus' coming, if they haven't really processed his death and resurrection yet? There could have been an additional question that was added or it was an additional question that replaced the question of when. This may be referred to a coming to deliver Jerusalem at the end of the age. They obviously understand that whatever Jesus says about the destruction of the temple; they don't see a future in which the city gets abandoned by God. So they think that this has something to do with the end times and Jesus must resolve it somehow.

Another option here, it could be a classic example of the evangelist redacting or doing some editorial work. So this wording doesn't reflect so much what the disciples ask but what the implications were. So the coming is not so different than what is being discussed in the disciple's minds. The redaction is a paraphrase here of what they really ask. The disciples asked something without realizing what they were asking. This is how the Bible handles itself and you need to understand the dynamics of this handling process. Thus, the dynamics are the words that are uttered at the time, and the significance of those words that were uttered might be different. The evangelist has the choice of giving the words uttered at the time or explaining the significance of those words given. In other words, what's entailed in what is being said? The hard part to understand is Jesus' coming which would imply a second coming. It's the language of Jesus' return that is hard to understand. This isn't a creation of wording out of nothing; it is an explanation of wording that was there. So Jesus is predicting an eschatological event that has something to do with the Messiah and the program of God. They didn't understand what they were asking; so Matthew rephrases it. And Jesus answers that question and they understood it once Jesus was crucified and rose and went into heaven and of course Matthew understood as he wrote this Gospel. Some say that this discourse was written looking back but that is not necessarily true because anyone in the late 60's who sees Rome coming would understand that Rome will beat Israel and this is how they will do it. And within the context of understanding unfaithfulness; when Israel is unfaithful, what does God say will happen? It will be over taken by the nations; so covenant unfaithfulness can lead to a judgement like this. This is not allegory, it is a simple explanation of what is happening; there is Jesus and the end of the age. If you read this literally, what is being asked is what will be your sign in the second coming at the end of the age? Two things are driving a person in thinking about this: one is the nature of the detail of what is understood here and secondly, the difference between these two.

**A Hermeneutical Move Vs a Refraction Move:** Note that an allegory is a two level statement; on the surface a story is about something completely different. The story of the wicked tenants is an allegory; there's the story and then there is what each part of the story represents. But what is happening here is strictly a hermeneutical move in which you say, 'this author has edited this question in light what he sees really being asked.' Other examples: when we say certain texts in the Old Testament are millennial texts. When does the term millennial come into the Biblical language? What texts had to be written before you even talked about a millennium? That's Revelation 20; you could not have done it before then. But we have all these millennial texts in the Old Testament. So, we refract the language of Revelation 20 back unto these Old Testament passages in order to talk about the kingdom periods which we are discussing. This is perfectly legitimate hermeneutical moves. But it's a refraction move where the presence of a later passage is helping you understand the context of an earlier passage. But a pattern text shows the pattern in the short term pictures what the long term is like. But back to the passage above; the problem focuses around whether we were talking about AD 70 or at the end of the age in regards to interpretation and this forces you to choose between the two. The other question: when is God going to deal with Jerusalem? When is the temple going to be at risk? The answer to this; Jerusalem will be at risk at the end of both periods of time. Note that AD 70 actually patterns the end of time. And in the destruction of the temple in AD 70, they did not want the temple to come back. Remember that the temple has always stood, especially when we talk about God's *Shekinah* (*Shekinah* is God's presence in the world as seen by Jewish theology) residing in the temple. But the destruction of the temple means that Jesus is coming back. The destruction of the temple is a picture of the judgement of the nation for having rejected their Messiah and the nation being in covenantal unfaithfulness. But they thought that the destruction of the temple would immediately cause the Messiah to return.

**Symbols in the Church:** This is a picture of God's presence in the creation and God dwelling in the midst of his people. It is not to say that God's presence is exhausted by his presence in the *Shekinah*. That was never believed; even when Solomon had the temple and he uttered his prayer, he makes it clear that man cannot create a building that can contain and confine God. So in this sense the temple has always been assembled for God's presence. Next, when the consummation comes and Christ rules again from Israel, we are going to get the finishing up symbolism that we've had theologically. We have basically two symbols in the church today that we work with regularly, the Lord's Supper and baptism. So I think what a rebuilt temple will represent is a picture of God dwelling in the midst of his people in the end times. The judgement that came in the interim has been completely reversed. So Jesus sits down at the Last Supper and says, 'I've longed to eat this meal with you and I shall not eat of it again until all is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' He is alluding to a Passover meal in the future, which strictly speaking requires a sacrifice in the temple. First there is no doubt that Jesus' presence in the world transcends what the temple has been. Today, the Jews celebrate what represents a Passover meal without having the temple and therefore it is really not the Passover meal. Note that Jews go to the Wailing Wall and pray for the restoration of the temple, the day that God finishes what he promised. They understand that their Passover Meal is not complete. Now reformed theologians have pictured it as retrogression back to the Old Testament, but that is not what it is. It is designed to picture the completion and realization of fullness of promise with the fullness of the symbolism that comes with it. Note that strict Jews believe that they still need to repent as a nation. So is Jesus going to rule from Jerusalem in the future? Is this a symbol by which the kings functioned in Israel in the past? Yes, absolutely.

And the above remark about the Passover meal assumes that there will be sacrifices which will mean more than what they meant in the Old Testament; because now they will represent and picture the completion of God's promise. There will not be a complete reinstatement of the sacrificial system but we must understand that the Cross represents the bringing together both Jews and Gentiles and we will see certain symbolic aspects of the Old Testament reinstated because of both a Jewish identity and Gentile identity. And the banquet table will be a complete completion of everything that God has promised. The language of these passages seems to suggest these things as you see references of the Jew and Gentile being united; so we need to keep the point of view of Jew and Christians brought together as ethnicities as the people of God. Isaiah says that the world will come together and come to Jerusalem to worship God. This goes against dispensational thought as dispensationists think of the church and Israel as not being the same thing. We keep this at a structural level, not at a comprehensive level. Also for the dispensationists, there are the earthly people and the heavenly people who have been translated by the

rapture. So to summarize, when you see the destruction of the temple, you can be assured that the program of God is still online.

**The Olivet Discourse Continued:** Watch how this works in different parallel passages. Let's go with Mark first as I think he is the most neutral while the other two Gospels play off of him. In Mark 13:5; 'Jesus began to say to them, watch out that no one misleads you. Many will come in my name, saying, I am he, and they will mislead many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars do not be alarmed. These things must happen, but the end is still to come.' So the end is still future at this point. Notice how Luke words this in 21:9. 'And when you hear of wars and rebellions, do not be afraid. For these things must happen first, but the end will not come at once.' So the end is still to come. We are not to the end yet. Mark 13: 8 continues, 'nation will rise up against nation, kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places, there will be famines. These are but the beginning of birth pains.' In Luke, 'there will be great earthquakes, and famines and plagues in various places, and there will be terrifying sights and great signs from heaven.' But Luke says before this, other things are going to happen. Now watch how this makes sense. 'They will seize you and persecute you, handing you over to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will be a time for you to serve as witnesses. Therefore be resolved not to rehearse ahead of time how to make your defense. For I will give you the words along with the wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.' This was fulfilled in the Book of Acts. All of this happened in the Book of Acts. These are technical terms used within Acts. This is the future but it's running backwards and has already been covered in the New Testament. First, the Gospel must be preached to all nations. The end is not coming until the Gospel goes out to the entire world. This is what is happening when all this witnessing is going on. This happens before AD 70; it's also beyond Acts. The end is not coming until the Word has been spread.

**The Abomination of Desolation:** (Mark 13:14), 'But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains.' We have the abomination of desolation and the readers are told to understand but I'm not telling anything more. Look in Matthew 14:15 where it is much more specific. 'So when you see the abomination of desolation – spoken about by Daniel the prophet – standing in the holy place (let the reader understand). Now watch what Luke does with this. In Luke 21:20, 'but when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.' Note that we have not referred to the temple anywhere up to this point. So what does the words: 'its desolation' mean? Also the abomination of desolation in the Daniel is when Antiochus Epiphanies stood in the Holy of Holies in the temple. This led to the Maccabean War. Titus, the Roman General, did the same thing in AD 70. Jerusalem's desolation; so Luke pictures Jerusalem in trouble; Mark says that there is an abomination of desolation standing where it should not be; and Matthew says that the abomination of desolation is the one from Daniel standing in the Holy Place. There is a different focus here and those in Judea must flee, those who are pregnant have to be careful and pray that it will not come in winter or on a Sabbath. The Abomination of Desolation will be the same as above in the future. And if the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would be saved. 'Immediately after the suffering of those days (Matthew 24:29), the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken. There is no temple indicator in Luke. 'But when these things begin to happen, stand up and raise you heads, because your redemption is drawing near.' This is only in Luke. For Luke AD 70 is a picture that the program of God is moving on; he's thinking primarily short term. Matthew just presents the picture in the pattern and doesn't sort it out. Matthew has the abomination of desolation mentioned above in a second coming context. He keeps an eye on the return of the Lord and thus emphasizing more of the future aspect. There is temporal ambiguity built into this and each writer is doing their own thing with this temporal ambiguity. Luke is focused very much on the destruction of Jerusalem and its destruction in AD 70. He winds the clock back to AD 70 and then leaps all the way to the return of the Son of Man. It's another passage where some theologians tries to force us choose between the two, but the choice is both.

**Times of the Gentiles:** There is a time before the times of the gentiles are fulfilled. Luke 13:34 & 35, your house is desolate until he says blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. That is anticipating a Jewish embrace of Jesus and restoration. When Israel was destroyed, everybody had a problem with

everything saying, well, how is that going to work? There emerged alternate ways of eschatology, but this was during a period where Israel was being discussed. Long before the Balfour Declaration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 1917 and reaffirmed on May 14, 1948. As a sideline, I think what really motivated people wanted to give Israel a homeland; it would be a place to send the Jews. It wasn't only religiously motivated. It was socially motivated; this is the dark side of what this was all about. We will give them their own homeland, they will move out of Europe, they will have a place to live and we will no longer have to deal with them. So the times of the gentiles will be fulfilled when the Lord comes back. That when we get the restoration and when Israel will come back to the Lord; just as the gentiles were graphed in, so Israel will be graphed back in again.

The times of the gentiles will be fulfilled when there is a Messiah in Israel. Note that you can't talk about Israel as a nation without there being a political dimension to it and the reconciliation that Jesus brings between Jews and Gentiles makes this political dimension almost meaningless. When Jesus comes back and reconciles everyone, Israel's borders will have no meaning. This is why I think the New Testament talks so little about the land of Israel. Ultimately, the ruling Messiah will rule over the entire earth and in return national boundaries will have no meaning. The tension that Roman 9-11 introduces tells us that God will keep his promises to Israel and therefore he will keep his promises to us.

To summarize, the discourse covered the temple's destruction in AD 70, the interim period in between and the return of the Son of Man. Events in the early part of the discourse are not yet the end; the divided nations, famines, natural disasters, all must come first and are the beginnings only, according to Matthew and Mark. Luke has more temporal notes, but what follows is what is before the end. So it's going backwards in time. In the interim, there is intense persecution, but the Spirit of God is there to aid his people. The call is to believe until the end, until Jesus actually returns. There will be lawlessness and betrayal and the disciples must be prepared to meet with rejection. This will be true all the way until Jesus returns, not just to AD 70. The desolation in Matthew and Mark is long term; it's the temple desolation of the holy place. In Luke we look at the short term with the desolation of the temple and the city. If the Lord had not cut short those days, even the elect would have died. The tribulation will be like nothing seen before; this is not in Luke. Matthew and Mark show a period of false Messianic claims.



# Lecture 10: Life of Christ - Olivet Discourse

This is the 10<sup>th</sup> lecture in the online series of lectures on the Life of Christ by Dr. Darrell Bock.

Recommended Reading includes: Jesus According to Scripture: restoring the Portrait from the Gospels by Bock, Baker, 2002 and Jesus in Context by Darrel Bock and Greg Herrick, eds., Baker, 2005 and Jesus Under Fire by Mike Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, Zondervan, 1995.

*(Any slides, photos or outlines that the lecturer refers to should be down loaded separately. If they are not available, you may be able to find something similar using the Google© search engine.)*

**Introduction:** The Son of Man is coming, is it literal or symbolic? Some people say (N.T. Wright) that the return is a strictly symbolic picture. We shouldn't think about an actual physical return of Jesus to the earth. Acts 1:9-11 is against this point where it shows that Jesus accented into heaven. So the coming of the Son of Man will be literal. Two angels said the Jesus would return in the same way. This is not symbolic! The second coming involves a descent from heaven. The Son of Man coming is not AD 70; we are dealing with cosmic chaos and the return is at the time of Judgement. This is why the Son of Man comes riding the clouds. The Son of Man is the human divine eschatological judge. The angels will gather the elect because it will be the time of vindication. The closing remarks are about the fig tree; once you see the fig tree beginning to bud, you will know that the same is near. The destruction of the temple in AD 70 is the fig tree budding. It is the start of the movement toward the harvest; this is the background of the imagery. Something that starts to bud, you wait until it matures and then you harvest it. '(Matthew 24:34) This generation will not pass away until all these things take place.' There are two ways to understand this passage; first it may refer to the evil generation we live in. The word generation is not a temple term but instead, it's an ethical term. This is a way of saying that the righteous will be vindicated and the wicked will be judged. There will be a judgement and accountability. For Jesus, the end starts with him. For us, we tend to think that the end is strictly future.

**Application:** The application in Mark and Luke, both tell us to take heed and watch. In Luke the application is very concrete. Don't engage in dissipation and don't be weighted down with the cares of life. The day is a time of judgement and accountability. Matthew says that you have to be ready; the day will come suddenly, like in the times of Noah. Then Matthew follows uniquely with five parables starting in Luke 12. First, was the parable of the house holder; if he had known he would have been ready? The second was about the good and wicked servants; be ready when he comes to the door. In the ten virgins; be prepared. In regards to the parable of the talents; we are to be faithful. We are to make use of our stewardship and as in the parable of the minas; don't be caught out by the delay of the return. In the parable of the sheep and goats; there is a separation that comes through the Son of Man and the response is related to how you respond to those associated with Jesus.

This brings us to the Lord's Supper; the context is that of Jesus' teaching at the temple. The leadership wants to arrest Jesus but not during the feast. Jesus also predicts his arrest which Mark and Luke summarize while Matthew is very specific about this prediction. Matthew and Mark have Jesus anointed at Bethany. The woman stands in contrast to the next scene where Judas is announced as the betrayer. A suggestion that the waste of the perfume by the woman is what makes Judas react, but Jesus commends the woman out of respect for what she has done. Judas' betray comes next and Luke notes that Satan motivated Judas. Luke is alone in this point. Matthew deals with the thirty pieces of silver paid to Judas. In understanding the entirety of Jesus' death; in the beginning what allows Jesus to be arrested is the betrayal of the disciple. This shows that one of Jesus' disciples went to the Sanhedrin. And then the crucifixion was an act of Rome. They gave the guilty verdict. From this, the Jewish leadership is protected on both ends of these events. So there is the disciple who defects and the Romans who finish the job. The Sanhedrin could perceive a kind of insulation from all of this.

During the Lord's Supper, Jesus foretells his betrayal which Luke places later. Matthew says as part of the answer, 'you have said so,' in terms of who is responsible. Jesus has a similar answer when asked if he was the Christ, 'you have said so.' The supper is a deliverance meal reinterpreted for a new era. It's a new sacrifice for a new deliverance and Jesus is no longer hiding his identity. He is speaking directly in the first person in regards to who he is. Luke delays the discussion of the betrayal until after the meal is finished; a different structuring of the same event. Luke alone has it symposium and a fair well as a give and take around the meal which was very common in Greco-Roman society. There is a dispute over greatness, but Jesus highlights the greatness of service. The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as ransom for many. The twelve are rewarded with the kingdom and rule over Israel. Peter's defection is predicted; Jesus knows his disciples better than they know themselves, but Jesus has a restoration build in for what Peter does. After he turns, Peter is supposed to lead his sheep. There is a remark about two swords; the new reality of living with a sense of self-preservation because you are going to be persecuted. All of this takes us toward Jesus' arrest at Gethsemane, the contrast between Jesus' intense struggle and the acceptance of God's will, all involving the humanity of Jesus. In Luke 22:48 Jesus asked Judas, 'Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?' Will you betray the eschatological judge with a kiss? In Matthew, Jesus said that he could call down angels but he is accepting his arrest willingly. This brings us to the examination where I want to spend some time with. First of all, we get the realization of Peter's denial which Jesus predicted. And as it is taking place, Matthew and Mark put the denial afterwards while Luke does it before. And John does it throughout the Gospel. The time of questioning involved a series of exchanges between Jesus and the leadership throughout the evening and into the morning. Even though it wasn't an official trial, it was a long drawn out process that Jesus went through. This was a process simply to have charges presented to Pilate. This process and the charges violated the rules for a Jewish capital case.

So the Jews did not have authority to execute Jesus as ruled by the Roman leadership. As already mentioned, this was a brilliant approach because the leadership was protected on both ends and they could say to the people that they didn't make the final decision; Rome executed Jesus. What they were doing now with Jesus was more like a grand jury investigation, a gathering of evidence as opposed to an official trial which ends up with a verdict. They also have to translate what comes out of the questioning into a charge that Pilate will deal with. So in the passages, Jesus is guilty of blasphemy, but they couldn't take such a charge to Pilate. They turned this into a political charge as he claimed himself to be a king. Sometimes, the question arises that since there were no other Christians present at the time of Jesus' questioning, how can we be sure what happened? Jesus was the only one present but he would not have talked about what he went through after his resurrection. The sources could have been Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who both had access to the council. They would have known what happened. Paul, also, would have had access to that council, being a major persecutor of the church. There was also the public debate that would have gone on after the crucifixion. The Jewish leadership would have had to explain to the people why Jesus was crucified. Note that there was a three decade battle between the family of Ananias and the family of Jesus and in 62 one of Ananias' descendants was responsible for the death of James, Jesus' brother. There would have been a public debate with Judaism between Christians and Jews about who Jesus was. So there are lots of possibilities as to where the evidence would have come from. In Mark, alone, the meeting starts off with the discussion of the temple and whether or not Jesus said he would destroy the temple. But Jesus actually said, 'destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up, another one not made by hands.' He did predict the destruction of the temple and Judas would have known about that. This ended up being a false charge because they could not get an agreement from witnesses.

Next came a question as to whether Jesus was the Messiah or not. That was a natural question in the Judaism of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple era. If Jesus claimed to have authority over the temple, then the idea that he might be the Messiah might result; so Caiaphas' question is not unusual. The way this plays out is, Caiaphas asked, 'are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed one?' If you paraphrase this question, it would go something like this, are you the Christ, the Son of God? The word, 'blessed one' is a circumlocution out of respect for God, when you choose not to refer to God directly. Even today, some orthodox Jews do not write out the name for God. Interestingly, Jesus' reply does the same thing. 'I am: and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of

heaven.' Caiaphas actually heard that Jesus is claiming to be able to sit at the side of God in heaven at God's invitation, thus sharing God's glory. There are a handful of passages in Judaism where this idea is considered for certain luminaries. There is a text in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha called the Exigolgy of Ezekiel, line 68 to 82. In this passage, Moses has a dream in which he is invited to sit on the thrones of heaven, and the language 'thrones' come from Daniel 7. It is a dream. This is regarded in part as a Midrash of Exodus 7:1, which says, 'I will make you God to Pharaoh.' So they entertain the possibility that Moses might sit by the side of God. But this isn't an eschatological passage; it is simple a dream sequence designed to picture Moses authority during the plagues. When Moses spoke, God spoke and so in this, Moses shared the authority of God. It is a symbolic way of picturing it in a dream.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of 1<sup>st</sup> Enoch speaks about the Son of Man, his pre-existence and sitting beside God. So this text is a good parallel. This is probably dated 1<sup>st</sup> century AD or the last part of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. Many people will date it later but it should not be dated that way. Now in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Enoch; in giving Enoch a tour of heaven and it refers to Enoch as the little Yahweh. This is not a good thing to do. God has a conversation with him and punishes him for saying this. This was written by a group that didn't like the 'Son of Man' text. So this is debated in 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple Judaism for a symbolic way to refer to Moses and maybe a figure like the Son of Man. But they certainly wouldn't see it being true for a teacher from Galilee. So they view this as blaspheme. So how blasphemous is it? Very! In the temple in Judaism, the high priest could only go into the holy of holies once a year for the atonement. He went in and then he came out. If someone defiles the holy of holies by going into or offering inappropriate sacrifices on that site, Jews would get extremely angry and even violent. Antiochus Epiphanies (Antiochus was over one of the three divided realms after Alexander the Great died) did this which brought on the Maccabean War and the Roman General Titus did it again in AD 70. Antiochus offered a pig sacrifice in the temple. Jesus is not claiming that he can go to the holy of holies on earth in a symbolic representation of God, but what Jesus is arguing is that he is going into the very presence of God in heaven. This is how Caiaphas would have understood what Jesus said. They may have understood Jesus as being some eschatological figure but not really divine. Note that only some groups were comfortable with the 'Son of Man' texts. They interpreted the passage in Daniel as being Israel, not messianic. This is the first time that he has declared himself like this. Up until this point, it was only an Aramaic idiomatic son of a human being. When he declares it here, he was being explicit and they understood it and that's what caused them to react the way they did. So they judge that he was guilty of blaspheme. Psalm 110 vs Daniel 7, but Luke only refers to Psalm 110. Why is it that the Christ can be called Lord? Because the Lord will be sitting on the right hand of the Father, which explains why David would give him respect.

The next scene brings Jesus before Pilate, but in the meantime Judas commits suicide. He declares Jesus innocent and tries to return the money but the leaders ignore him. They are very hypercritical in following the law while acting unjustly. Matthew points this out. Before Pilate, Luke has three clear charges: 23:2-3 'we found this man subverting our nation, forbidding us to pay the tribute tax to Caesar and claiming that he himself is Christ, a king.' So it was disturbing the peace of Israel, not paying taxes and declaring Christ to be king. Note that Pilate is in Judea as a Roman Prefect and has a handful of responsibilities. He is to collect the taxes, protect Caesar's interest and once a year, he appoints a high priest. Those charges touch on all three of Pilate's main duties. Disturbing the peace is subverting the nation and not paying taxes, (which is a lie) and the claim to be King probably bothers Rome the most. This is going to come across the same way in John's Gospel. If you let him go, you will show yourself as being no friend of Caesar's. You are here to protect Caesar's interest. In this chapter of Luke, one way or another Jesus is said to be innocent about seven different times; innocent of anything that is worthy of death. Critics sometimes say that Rome is portrayed very favorably in Luke. I don't think that's true; they are just portrayed differently than the Jewish leadership. The Jewish leadership is portrayed as being out to get Jesus. The Roman leadership is being portrayed as largely being indifferent to Jesus and largely indifferent to justice as Pilate thought Jesus was innocent but still convicted him. Jesus is silent and has accepted his destiny. The injustice of Jesus' conviction is portrayed all the way through Luke. He was sent to Herod who mocked Jesus but didn't think that Jesus was guilty. Pilate again declares Jesus innocent but doesn't release him and we get Barabbas in substitution. Pilate is seen as less responsible than the Jewish leadership but he is still at fault because he did not defend justice in the way Jesus was handled.

In Matthew, politically Pilate was faced with Caiaphas who he had appointed every year he served as prefect. Thus, the leadership before him was his own handpicked people and they are saying to crucify Jesus. He doesn't see Jesus as a threat, Jesus has no army but he doesn't want to do anything to upset the leadership he had assigned. And that leadership presses the matter because if Pilate releases Jesus, their authority will be greatly diminished and Jesus will receive credibility that they don't want him to have. So, in the end, Pilate responds to those he is familiar with and gives them what they want rather than try and defend Jesus. It is also an opportunity to reaffirm Rome's authority in a situation where some like to make trouble. The Jewish people is very much responsible for Jesus' death, even Josephus tells us this. In the end, this is not a failing portrait of Pilate as he knows Jesus is innocent, yet sends him to his death. Pilate is not portrayed as having malice toward Christianity. I think Pilate should be portrayed as being politically calculating. He sees the forces around him and potential trouble and thus decides to act in a way that takes care of the problem. Pilate often aggravates the Jews by doing things that they didn't like. For example, spending temple money to help build an aqueduct to bring water into the city and printing money with Caesar's face on it. But he backed down when he put up the Roman Standards near the temple. This really upset the Jews, so much so that he was forced to take them down.

There was the dream of Pilate's wife about Jesus. Dreams are an important part of life in the Middle East as Jesus has revealed himself to many Muslims through dreams. In Luke, Pilate does all he can to release Jesus but in the end, Acts portrays him as part of the conspiracy against Jesus in Acts 4:24-26. In Matthew and Mark, the crowd is incited and in Luke the crowd is responsible, and Barabbas becomes a picture of substitution. And as already covered, Pilate finally lets the Jewish leadership have their way as well as the public. Sometimes the question is raised, 'how could Jesus who was so accepted by the populace be betrayed by the public a few days later. I actually think it was a misrepresentation of them. I think his disciples was responsible for his praise when Jesus entered his city and the rest of the city just joins in as part of the move being a pilgrim feast. There in a celebratory mood. The whole didn't embrace him as such upon entering the city. I think the public that's responding to Jesus and Barabbas is a public that is pro-leadership. It wasn't the city but instead a pro-leadership group that was out there who knew Jesus was arrested. In the passage that is probably viewed as the most anti-Semitic text in the New Testament, 'let his blood be upon us and our children,' which is in Matthew 27:25. This is a passage that has been abused by the church, especially in the medieval period. It is said that the Jews killed God, etc. and most Jews know this. They were only saying and stating that they took responsibility for taking this judgement. It is said as a matter of fact, not with any kind of malice. We are taking responsibility for this decision. The use that has been made of this passage has been anti-Semitic. In the Jewish view, Jesus was seen as a false prophet and as someone that was pushing a kind of sedition. He was proclaiming prerogatives for himself that did not belong to him (Deuteronomy 13).

Jesus was scourged in preparation for the execution. Crucifixion was one of the most horrific forms of death and generally speaking Roman citizens could not be crucified. The mocking probably included gentiles as that the nations joined in the rejection. There are a lot of things going on during this event where Jesus' crucifixion becomes a microcosm of how the world reacts to Jesus. He's got some people mourning while some are watching, and some people were mocking. Jesus is so physical exhausted that Simon of Cyrene carried the Cross. The women who mourned and there was Jesus' remark over Israel, 'if they do this to the green wood, what will happen to the dead wood? Don't mourn for me, mourn for Jerusalem. He refuses to take the wine vinegar drink because he will suffer fully. If that which is alive and honors God gets tested like this, what happens to that which is dead? He refuses the wine vinegar; he is going to suffer fully in line with Psalm 69. There is a call of forgiveness from the cross, 'they don't know what they're doing.' Stephen does the same thing later in Acts 7, modeling the attitude of Jesus when he is stoned. They cast lots for his clothes in line with Psalm 22. Jesus is portrayed as the righteous innocent. He suffers unjustly. That's what these Psalms picture, the righteous suffer. The inscription says 'Jesus, King of the Jews.' This is important as the Tiflis (ancient manuscripts) tells you the charge in which Jesus is being executed is for not being a prophet. Neither is he being executed for being exactly a revolutionary. He's being executed because he makes a regal claim of a messianic category. Jesus was mocked and others called out ironically, 'you saved others, can't you save yourself?' The actions of Jesus in his last week before death were messianic. It starts with his entry into Jerusalem which was messianic. The thrust of the narrative, there are various types of characters there, a microcosm of the world's reaction of Jesus.

The thieves of Matthew and Mark involve Jesus but in Luke one of them has a turn of heart and decides that Jesus is innocent and proclaims his innocence in front of the other thief. It is a picture of salvation about what Jesus offers. He defends Jesus in front of the other thief, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' I say to you, 'today, you will be with me in paradise.' So, in Jesus' statement, the future is brought into the present by Jesus' authority over life. Creation testifies as to what is going on, as darkness comes and the veil of the temple is torn. We have already discussed the principle that when creation talks, people are to listen. When creation becomes a witness, readers are to listen. Psalm 22:1 Jesus has his cry of abandonment, 'my God, my God why have you forsaken me?' Mark detailed that there was a second cry but he doesn't say what it was. Luke gives it as a Psalm of trust as in Psalm 31, 'into your hands, I commit my spirit.' Matthew has the earth open up her graves. The creation reacts with an abnormal event; it's also a prolepsis symbol of release from death. The centurion ends the scene by confessing that Jesus was truly the Son of God. Luke speaks only of Jesus being innocent of the charge. Luke has a mood of mourning at the end as the women from Galilee witness what is happening and remember what is taking place. Jesus is buried by Joseph of Arimathea and was buried on the day that he died which is the way all deaths are done in Judaism before sundown. But the family could not bury a criminal in a family tomb. So Jesus is given over to Joseph who buries him in his own tomb but not Jesus' family tomb. The women with the spices, a body is spiced up. They show up on the morning after the Sabbath, the soonest they could get there. Matthew shows guards had been placed in front of the sealed tomb in reaction to the third day claims.

# Lecture 11: Life of Christ - Resurrection

This is the 11<sup>th</sup> lecture in the online series of lectures on the Life of Christ by Dr. Darrell Bock. Recommended Reading includes: Jesus According to Scripture: restoring the Portrait from the Gospels by Bock, Baker, 2002 and Jesus in Context by Darrel Bock and Greg Herrick, eds., Baker, 2005 and Jesus Under Fire by Mike Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, Zondervan, 1995.

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**The Resurrection:** This is the resurrection as it was presented in the synoptic Gospels. I'll first briefly mention some of the particularities of this scene. We'll look at reasons why the resurrection wasn't just created in someone's mind and in this we will consider first the choice of the women. (This is an apologetically defense of the Resurrection of Jesus due to the liberal standing of the then, Jesus Seminar movement) Culturally, women were not regarded as worthy witnesses in most cases. If you are creating an event trying to persuade the culture of a difficult idea such as a physical resurrection, would you create an event and have your first witnesses be women? A second point, in looking at the resurrection in three days, there would have been a way to have Jesus alive without it being on the third day. Judaism believed in a resurrection for everybody. So all you would have needed was a resurrection in the end where Jesus would be in charge. You could have had a Jesus who would end up being alive and carrying out a judgement, but instead you get a resurrection in three days. So a question here, where is this mutation of the resurrection come from? So we are still in a defense mode here; why create a resurrection after three days, you would have far less problem if it had not used the tomb and the witnesses and the guards, creating more problems. If this was a made up story, it would have been much easier just to say that Jesus was in charge after he was resurrected. This is much less problematic. So there was a Christian mutation of a Jewish belief of the resurrection by having the three days.

**The Burial of Jesus:** Let's look at the details related to the burial. This is not tied to an issue that doesn't fit in creating the story. This is a case where the background matches what is happening culturally. Jesus was crucified as a criminal; so that means certain things had to happen and certain things could not have happened. For example, Jesus had to be buried as a criminal immediately, just like any other person. He would not have been left to rot. This would not have happened within the context of Judaism. A person would be buried as quickly as possible and that would have been before sunrise. Even today in the Middle East, anyone of importance that died, any newspaper report would have included both the death and the burial in the same article. This happened with Bhutto in Pakistan; he was buried immediately. And because Jesus died as a criminal, he could not be buried in a family grave, had one existed. That is why Joseph of Arimathea comes and offers a grave that is not a family grave for Jesus to be buried in; another point, this happened very late in the day and so the earliest time the women could have anointed the body with spices would have been that Sunday morning after the Sabbath. We see that the details of the burial actually fit the scene exactly. The people who took the body had possibly already anointed the body before putting it in the tomb. Interestingly, those who heard the report from the women that Jesus' body was missing couldn't believe it; this is another example of 'the criterion of embarrassment.' (This has to do with creating a story that makes the leadership look bad – thus the story is an embarrassment to the leaders because of the way they acted) We mentioned this in a previous lecture. Even though Peter and James ran to the tomb, they were very slow to understand what was happening. But they actually don't believe everything until they talk about it with Peter. In addition, there is no detailed story about Peter and James. If you were going to make up an appearance story, it would be just with Peter or with James. There simply is no such story. It was obviously not important at the time, compared to everything else that was happening. And there were no such stories in the traditions of the church either. It's an anomaly. If this was being made up, most likely there would have been an appearance to Peter or either James because they both ended up being important to the future of the church.

**The Criterion of Embarrassment:** Another example of 'the criterion of embarrassment' would be Jesus getting baptized by John; you would not create a story like this. This creates difficulties that one has to explain such as, was Jesus baptized for sin or not, etc. The point of all of these details is to confirm what really happened; you have women at the tomb, you have a resurrection in three days because that is what people experienced. You have details relating to the burial because that is what took place. You have the reaction to the women's report because that is how they reacted; they were very slow to believe it. So the resurrection is unlikely to have been a created story, it actually happened. Matthew and Luke mention that Jesus rose as promised. Mark simply declares the resurrection. Mark and Matthew tell the disciples to go to Galilee where he will appear to them. Mark has its own problem; at first, everyone runs away being afraid. So the Gospel ends with them being afraid and they didn't say anything to anybody about it. This was so much of an embarrassment; we have a possible alternate ending for the Gospel of Mark. We have a shorter alternate ending and then longer alternate ending running from verses 8 to 20. This combines basically to be a compilation of the endings of all the other Gospels. That alternative ending with the shorter and longer one indicates that something is being replaced at the end. Some people think that we lost the original end to Mark. This is possible but there is no evidence for it. I think Mark ends where it ends for literary reasons. In the middle of Mark's Gospel, there is a discussion of fear. You might call this the 'fear factor' in the Bible. This discussion of fear has to do with God acting and those who fear the situation are left with a choice to either believe or they choose to shun God. An example of this is the healing of the demonic. The people are fearful, 'leave this place.'

I think this is a clever literary ending by Mark in which he is saying to the reader, 'the resurrection has taken place, it's been announced, the women have heard about it, their initial reaction was fear because they were overwhelmed by the situation and now there is a choice. That choice included the women going and telling someone. Thus, this abrupt ending is a call for the reader to believe it. In dealing with this longer ending, in removing it, we don't lose anything in regards to Biblical teaching. There is enough manuscript evidence that show that this alternative ending was added quite early. Two things: we have to say that the ending is abrupt for the reasons given above or the piece went missing very early.

Luke shows no appearance to anyone else until later on and he has great skepticism at the women's report. Matthew has the most straight forward sequence and also has a specific set of appearances. There are interesting differences between these accounts. There are appearances of the Scribes to Mary in John which creates problems in its timing. It is very difficult to know where this fits in the resurrection sequence. In Matthew, the guards report the empty tomb and are protected in order to not reveal the truth as there is so much at stake. Because if Jesus has rose from the dead, and that tomb is empty, just think about what the Jewish leadership would have to deal with; Rome would not have a problem with this. What did Jesus say would take place when he was before the Sanhedrin? If Jesus is vindicated, what does that mean for the Sadducee leadership?

**The Emmaus Road:** Luke includes the Emmaus Road scene where we have the hopes of Jesus being the Messiah dashed and we have an Christological key laid out for the event. In Luke 24:17, 'What are these matters you are discussing so intently as you walk along?' They stood still looking sad and one then named Cleopas, 'Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have happened there in these days?' Imagine saying that to Jesus. He is right there amongst them. There seems to be some humor happening here. 'What things? The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, a man who, with his powerful deeds and words, proved to be a prophet before God and all the people; and how our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. Not only this, but it is now the third day since these things have happened. Furthermore, some women of our group amazed us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back and said they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive.'

This is a summary of what the disciples are hoping. He is the one who will redeem Israel. He's more than a prophet. Then Jesus rebukes them for being slow of heart to believe everything. Then Jesus says, 'wasn't it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things to enter into his glory? Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things written about himself in all the Scriptures.'

Later, Jesus does the same thing for the disciples in verses 44 when he appears to the group and proclaims the great commission as presented by Luke. '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. Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. Thus it stands written that the Christ would suffer and would rise from the dead on the third day and repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And look, I am sending you what my Father promised. But stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.' It's Jesus' role as the Christ that is highlighted here as the realization of the promise. Jesus stands at the center of God's delivering activity. That is what is being highlighted here. The synoptic Gospels highlight as much what as it does for the who. The promise of God comes with Jesus or what Jesus calls the kingdom of God. He's with the king and he has been vindicated, he's at the king's side and that is precisely what the Father promised. Just about every major creed in the early church talks about Jesus being at the right hand of the Father.

**Psalms 110:1 & Daniel 7:** This is why Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7 are your two most cited Old Testament passages in the New Testament. They explain where Jesus is and why he's doing what he is doing. Jesus is alive and one day we will be with him in heaven. The New Testament frames Jesus' story in terms of what it meant for him and where he ends up. That is why Luke ends and Acts begins with ascension. Note that the most important feature about Easter beyond the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, is where he ended up, at the side of the Father. This is as important as the fact he rose from the dead. Yes, Jesus is alive and there will be a resurrection one day for the rest of us. But Jesus didn't rise just to go to heaven; he rose and ascended into heaven to run things from heaven. In preaching on Easter and Christian we need to preach what Jesus is doing. There was a phrase in German used during the Medieval period called 'Christos Victor', the victorious triumphant ascended Christ, somewhat different these days from what you see in churches. Today, the basic symbol is the Cross; beyond the Cross, it should be the ascension and where Jesus is now. A Jesus at the right hand of the Father cannot be domesticated. Of course it takes the appearances in Luke and John to convince people of what is happening. And we see that Thomas' reaction was somewhat different than the twelve when they heard the women. When Thomas was shown, he replied, 'my Lord, my God.'

**Commissions:** Matthew has a commission relating to Galilee where all authority has been given to Jesus and then he sends them out to make disciples by going and baptizing and teaching them to obey all that has been commanded and this probably includes the sermon on the Mount. For Luke, it is in Jerusalem. He talks about the fulfilment of Scripture and three key elements along with the promise of the Spirit. In regards to Luke 24, we have in Greek, 'thus it stands written that the Christ would suffer, and he would be raised from the dead and repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations beginning from Jerusalem. There are three things here: suffer, raise and a message preached in his name. This would be summarized as a call for repentance. When we talk about salvation, we talk about salvation by grace with the response of faith. Repentance is a perfectly good term to summarize the Gospel and a change of direction, a change of mind. In this a person is shifting world views. And on top of this, we have said that the Gospel is fundamentally about Jesus' death and forgiveness of sins. On the other hand, it is about the gift of life through God's Spirit. At the end of Luke, we have reference to the preaching of the forgiveness of sins that should be proclaimed in his name and a call to wait to receive that which the Father promised, clothed with power from on high. Note that in Romans 1:17-19, Paul says that he is not ashamed of the Gospel because it is the power of God unto Salvation. It is not just the forgiveness of sins that is described in Romans but it is the work of the coming of the Spirit in providing sanctification for God's people. Jesus also said while he was in the Upper Room that he had to go so that the Spirit could come. This is core of what early Christian expression was about; the coming of the Spirit to power and to enable God's people to perform the mission of God. So Jesus ascends in Luke in the mists of Great Joy and Luke ends where it starts, in Jerusalem with the promise of God being carried out. This was announced to Zachariah and now completed in Jesus. And with that the Synoptic Gospels end.

**In the Beginning Was the Word and the Word was God:** We are going from the earth up and then heaven down in the Gospel of John. The prologue is the writer's framing of the Gospel and if you pull this out of the equation, the transition wouldn't be as abrupt as it is. The prologue draws and makes a point out of which there are several implications. The Prologue is from heaven down. 'In the beginning was the



Word and the Word was with god, and the Word was fully God.' And in verse 14, the Word became flesh. So what does it mean to call Jesus the Word? It obviously comes out of the Jewish background of what is called 'The Memra', another term for the Word; a term used especially in the Targum as a substitute for the Lord when an anthropomorphic expression is to be avoided. This is the creative word of God, a picture of wisdom operating in the world. It is sometimes associated in Judaism with the concept of Torah; Torah being the word, Torah being at the creation. And the things that are often said of the Torah in Judaism are said of Jesus in Christianity. If you go to the Book of Jubilees which was written before the time of the New Testament; the Law is embedded even in what is given to the patriarchs that comes earlier than Sinai. The 'Memra' is seen as the manifestation of God's presence and Jesus as the revelator of God, as the light and the message, the reality and the truth. Jesus says it later in, 'I am the truth and the light.' So to say that Jesus is the Word, is to say that he is the locus point of all reality. He is at the core of the world view of reality. He is both the revelation and revelator of God. There are passages in the Epistles that get at this. In Ephesians chapter 4:20 there is an exhortation not to live as the gentiles do. 'But you did not learn about Christ like this, if indeed you heard about him and were taught in him, just as the truth is in Jesus.' More literally, 'even as truth is in Jesus.' The picture here is that Jesus is the locus point for truth.

The truth is not merely ideas, it is not merely concepts. Truth ultimately is a person in the revelation of God through that person. It is part of what is being said here and John is saying the same thing, 'In the Beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and the Word became flesh and lived among us. The Word fellowshipped with us, but that Word was a person, someone not only made in the image of God but someone in the image of God who was also God. He showed what it was to be truly human while also being (deity) very connected to God. All of this is going on in the prologue. It is not merely to say Jesus is divine, Jesus was also the locus point, the lens through which reality is to be seen, through which truth is found, through which truth is embodied. He not only discloses and points the way; Jesus is the lens in which one can see the way. Virtually every key term in the Gospel of John is introduced in this prologue. The Word was involved in creation, he was obviously greater than Moses, he was the revealer of the Father, the one who makes him known not merely as an idea, not merely as a concept but makes him known personally through the way he entered into and participated in the creation. This is extremely profound, what John is proclaiming in the prologue.

**John the Baptist:** In the Book of John, John the Baptist primarily operates as a witness; there is no message or a specific reference to his baptism though there is an implication of the dove falling on the Messiah. We have a reference to Jews throughout John which is a way of referring primarily to the leadership. What we have in John is the idea of confessing or witnessing to the one who Jesus is. John saw Jesus coming toward him, he said, 'look, the lamp of God who takes away the sins of the world, this is the one whom I am not worthy of untie the strap of his sandal. I came baptizing with water so that he could be revealed to Israel. Then John testified: I saw the Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and it remained on him; I did not recognize him but the one who sent me to baptize with water, the one on whom you see the spirit descending and remaining; this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit. I have seen and testify that this man is the chosen one of God.' This is a very strong direct witness, a full kind of understanding of who this figure is in this presentation. The directness of this presentation raises questions on how to take this material in relationship to the synoptic Gospels. I think that John's Gospel is a reflective Gospel on who Jesus is. It doesn't take the time frame of what Jesus experienced at the time in which these events took place, as it reflects on who Jesus is in light of the events in which it took place. So I think there is a wider frame for the Gospel of John, as it is in operation in some of these passages. And that explains the clarity in which certain things are said and presented.

In chapter 1:35, 'again the next day John was standing there with two of his disciples. Gazing at Jesus as he walked by, he said, look, the Lamb of God. When John's two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Jesus turned around and saw them following and said to them, what do you want? Rabbi where are you staying? Jesus answered, come and you will see. So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. Now it was about four o'clock in the afternoon.' It goes on say that Andrew, the brother of Peter, was one of these two. Andrew told Peter that they had found the Messiah and Jesus renamed him Cephas or Peter. So this gathering of disciples is in hope that Jesus is the promised one. More of the disciples are called in the remaining of the chapter. Heaven will be opened

up with angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man. These images are designed to show that Jesus brings the revelation of God, that the Spirit of God is upon him and the angels surround the ministry of the Son of Man. All of these things are part of the way in which John is setting up the witness. The Jews in the Gospel of John are often put as a generic term but they are usually much more focused on the Jewish leadership and we will see this as we move through this Gospel. It doesn't so much mean that every Jew as such but the hostile leadership. So John presents himself in terms of Isaiah 40:3. The Gospels did this as well. He waits for the one who is greater than him coming after him. He witnesses to Jesus as the Lamb, the one on whom the Spirit descends. Two of John's disciples follow Jesus as the hoped for Messiah. The Gospel of John also portrays John as pointing to Jesus as the one who brings the Spirit. Philip and Nathanael see the promise of seeing heaven open up and angels descending on the Son of Man. In one sense, this ends up being an expanding introduction.

**The Book of Signs:** The prologue is the initial introduction and this is an introduction into what will be called the 'Book of Signs.' In this Gospel, we will see Jesus perform various signs that indicate who he is. There is an irony that has to do with this book of signs vis-à-vis the synoptic Gospels. The Jews often asked for signs from Jesus as he went around performing miracles. They were probably looking for some specific cosmic sign that signals the 'Day of the Lord.' And in one sense, John's book of signs was an answer to their question. The book will be a series of actions, the symbolism of which shows the superiority of what Jesus is bringing to what existed previously in Judaism or the completion of what existed in Judaism. This book of signs is a kind of Christian witness or testimony that Jesus is what he claims to be, namely the completion of the promises made to God long ago in the Law and the Prophets and in Moses. So we come to the Book of Signs in John 2. The miraculous work of Jesus is seen as superior to various institutions and ideas of Judaism. In this section, signs and discourses alternate. We get the alternation of word and deed.

The first sign is the wedding in Cana which pictures the symbol of Messianic joy. A wedding and its fellowship is like a picture of the messianic banquet. And Jesus compared himself to the groom who has come for his bride. There is a symbol of messianic joy running all the way through the Old Testament and the sign is what Jesus does with the wine. 'Now there were six stone jars there for Jewish ceremonial washing, each holding twenty or thirty gallons of water.' In the archaeology that exists in this part of Galilee in the Cana area, there have been all kinds of stone vessels discovered from this period. 'Jesus told the servants, fill the water jars with water and after doing so, now draw some out and take it to the head steward. He tasted it and called the bridegroom saying that everyone serves the good wine first, and then the cheaper wine when the guests are drunk. You have kept the good wine until now! Jesus did this as the first of his miraculous signs, in Cana of Galilee. In this way he revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.' Well, the steward and bridegroom were aware of this and also the disciples were aware of it. Mary would have been aware of it. This is actually a variation of something that Jesus taught. Remember in Luke and in the parallels we had the teachings that no one who likes the old wine wants the new wine. So the sign is that Jesus is a bringer of new wine and that new wine is better wine. But this is not what people are used to. They are used to getting the good wine first. Now some people like to get into a discussion of drinking wine in the ancient world but my point, the exhortation in Scripture is if you can get drunk from the wine, there is something in the wine that has alcoholic content. The issue is not the percentage; the issue is to drink it in moderation.

The next passage is the cleansing of the temple. This indicates Jesus' authority. John has a differing chronology than the synoptic Gospels. He has three Passovers, here and in 6:4 and then in 11:55. In all likelihood, 6:4 is probably a Passover. So he has an early ministry included that the synoptic Gospels don't cover. There is a discussion as to whether there is one event or two events here. Jesus' rebuke in John alludes to Zechariah 14:20-21 and this is an act of eschatological purification for the new era. The symbolism of this event is no different than the temple incident in the synoptic Gospels. Jesus acts out of his righteous zeal for his Father which points to the authority to purify the temple. The sign to come is, 'destroy this temple and in three days, it will be raised.' And of course, they think he is talking about the physical temple; he is talking about the temple of his body. This is the first of several misunderstandings in John where people take Jesus more literally than he intends. This happens early on in Jesus' ministry. There are a handful of explanations such as a possibility of being two cleansings as the chronology is laid out specific enough detail that Jesus cleanses the temple twice. There is also a principle in Judaism that

someone can perform an act where they are warned the first time but the second time action is taken against them. So it is conceivable that there are two events. However, most people see just one event. If it is one event, then we can see John moving this event forward to show what Jesus' ministry is like and how it is going to be reacted to than it is to think this took place earlier than in the synoptic Gospels.

**Eternal Life:** The conversation with Nicodemus involves the only place where there is any detail on the Kingdom of God in the Gospel of John. The major theme of Jesus' teaching in the Synoptic Gospels was the Kingdom of God. But for John, instead of talking about the kingdom of God (note that in a Hellenistic concept, the word 'kingdom' could be misunderstood), talks about eternal life. Eternal life for John is equal to the Synoptic Gospels' kingdom of God. The roots to what is said to Nicodemus from Ezekiel 34 where there is the condemnation of the shepherds of Israel for not shepherding the nation properly. So God is going to become the shepherd and he going to send the shepherd. The picture of Ezekiel 36 where the nation is going to be sprinkles and washed and restored with the imagery of New Covenant like of floating in the background. These other texts also speak about ideas of being born from above. And Jesus compares the coming of the kingdom, the coming of eternal life to the blowing of the wind and this does a word play on the Greek word, *pneuma*, which can mean wind or spirit. 'I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Notice the inseparability of experiencing the kingdom and the gift of Spirit. A person will not even know that it's there. 'Nicodemus said how can a man be born again; being old he cannot enter his mother womb and be born a second time, can he? Jesus replied, unless a person is born of water and the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God.' So the spirit is inseparably connected to the kingdom as is the image of washing as is the image of New Birth. 'What is born of flesh is flesh, what is born of spirit is Spirit. Don't be amazed when I say to you that you must be born from above; the wind blows wherever it will and you hear the sound it makes, you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit. The Spirit is inseparably linked to the kingdom in John 3. In talking about this, we often fail to talk about the agent in which the being born again happens. 'Nicodemus replied, how can these things be? Jesus answered, are you the teacher of Israel and yet you don't understand these things? I tell you the solemn truth; we are speaking about what we know and testify about what we have seen, but you people do not accept our testimony. If I have told you people about earthly things and you don't believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven – the Son of Man.'

'Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life?' The lifting up of the Son of Man is a picture of the crucifixion of Jesus which John calls Jesus' glorification, which clears the way for the work of the Spirit to come. The salvation of God fundamentally involves two things: forgiveness of sins and the new birth that is the work of the spirit, so John is no different from the synoptic Gospels here. John is both different and similar to the synoptic Gospels. There is a long discourse after this, all the way down to verse 21. But in all likelihood, John's commentary starts in verse 16. 'This is the way God loved the world, he gave his one and only Son so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God did not send his son to condemn the world but that the world should be saved through him. The one who believes in him is not condemned, but the one who does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God. This is the basics for judging, light has come into the world, but people love the darkness rather than light but their deeds are evil. For everyone who does evil deeds hates the light and doesn't come to it so that their deeds will not be exposed. But the one who practices the truth comes to the light so that it may be plainly evident that his deeds have been done in God.' So we get this contrast in the opening up of the way to the kingdom of God which comes through this new birth that is the work of the Spirit. It is the lifting up of the Son of Man in death will be the means by which people believe and come to God. John's summary probably begins from verse 16 with the contrast of darkness and light and belief and unbelief. These are the key themes running through chapter three.

**The Bride and the Bridegroom:** John the Baptist's witness continues as Jesus, himself, has a baptism ministry for a while in Judea that underscores his support of John which was not seen in the synoptic Gospels. John is seen as a friend of the bridegroom and the image of the people of God as the bride. And John the Baptist speaks of the necessity of his ministry decreasing so that the one to come may increase.

In verse 31, the evangelist starts speaking again as he comments on John's testimony which is given in verses 22-30. Notice in 27-30 is very much like what you saw in Luke where people are wondering whether John might be the Christ. 'John replied that no one can receive anything unless it is given to him from heaven. You, yourselves, can testify that I said I am not the Christ but rather I have been sent before him. The one who has the bride is the bridegroom, the friend of the bridegroom who stands by and listens to him rejoices greatly when he hears the bridegroom's voice. My role has been to prepare the bride for the arrival of the bridegroom and to prepare God's people for the arrival of their Messiah. He must become more important while I come less important. The one who comes from above is superior to all. The one who is from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks earthly things. The one who comes from heaven testifies to what he has seen and heard but no one accepts his testimony.' He comes from heaven to reveal what heaven's will is; that is part of the point of the incarnation to John. That is why Jesus is the Word; he reveals what heaven discloses.

What about the disciples of John the Baptist? After Jesus comes, John the Baptist continues to prepare Israel and then some of John's disciples may not have been convinced of Jesus, despite the fact that Jesus was the kind of Messiah they anticipated. So they continued to be John the Baptist's disciples to look for the work of God but they didn't necessarily embrace the style of ministry that Jesus ended up having which is why eventually in the synoptic Gospels, John sends meditators to ask, 'are you the one to come?' What is difficult to explain about John's disciples is they still existed in Acts, long after Jesus had returned to heaven. The reason they continued, they had a certain perception of who the Messiah would be, and Jesus did not fit that perception.

**The Samaritan Woman:** We see that in the case of the Samaritan Woman, one thing is said but more is meant. There are two cultural surprises here; first that Jesus would have a conversation with a woman in public like this and with a Samaritan. She is also quite a disreputable person. Jesus engages her by talking about living water, which is a way of talking about the Holy Spirit. This comes from the language of Ezekiel 36:25-27 and 47:9 and other texts that use this image of living water as a means of cleansing and restoration. The picture of water welling up is an image of a reference to the Spirit from Isaiah 55:1. 'Hey, all who are thirsty come to the water! You who have no money, come! Buy and eat! Come! Buy wine and milk without cost!' We have an image of coming to drink water and the image of wine. 'Why pay money for something that will not nourish you? Why spend your money on something that will not satisfy? Listen carefully to me and what is nourishing! Enjoy the food! Listen so you can live! Then I will make an unconditional covenantal promise to you, just like the reliable covenantal promises I made to David. Look, I made him a witness to nations, a ruler and commander of nations. Look, you will summon nations you did not previously know; nations that did not previously know you will run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he bestows honor on you.' We have the picture of wine, the picture of water but then I will make a covenant with all of you, my steadfast sure love for David. With the water and wine there will be the restoration of the Davidic hope to the people. The Samaritan woman understands a little of this imagery that Jesus raises. So this becomes a discussion about true worship and whether or not the worship is to take place on Mount Gerizim today or in Jerusalem. There is a discussion of whether he might be the Christ and the exhortation to the disciples and that his food is to accomplish God's work. The call is to reap the harvest. The woman recognizes that he is the Savior of the World. Jesus crosses various barriers and in the midst of this passage, he gives prophetic insight about her life. Jesus makes a point that those who worship God will worship him in Spirit and in truth. This leads to the next healing.

The second sign shows Jesus' power over life. He talks about a prophet being without honor, he anticipates a coming rejection. The story is different from the Centurion in Luke and in Matthew which resulted in terrific praise of the Centurion for his faith. It shows an effective power from a distance with regards to faith. This pictures Jesus' ability to give new life. John 4:48 is different than that of the Centurion because Jesus' response is different and says, 'unless you people see signs and wonders you will never believe! Jesus told him to go home, your son will live. The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and set off for home. His slaves met him saying that he son was going to live. The time of healing took place as Jesus declared it. 'This was the second miraculous sign as he returned from Judea to Galilee.'

So, in chapters 2 to 4, we have the new wine and the wedding at Cana, the Living Water with the

Samaritan woman and the new life given to the royal official's son. There is a Jewish context, a Samaritan context and a governmental context. There are a lot of things going on in these three chapters.

# Lecture 12: Life of Christ - Titles of Jesus

This is the 12<sup>th</sup> lecture in the online series of lectures on the Life of Christ by Dr. Darrell Bock.

Recommended Reading includes: Jesus According to Scripture: restoring the Portrait from the Gospels by Bock, Baker, 2002 and Jesus in Context by Darrel Bock and Greg Herrick, eds., Baker, 2005 and Jesus Under Fire by Mike Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, Zondervan, 1995.

*(Any slides, photos or outlines that the lecturer refers to should be down loaded separately. If they are not available, you may be able to find something similar using the Google© search engine.)*

We will look at the Christology of these remaining chapters, which involves looking from the earth upwards. We will look at the sayings, the titles and especially the acts. As I've already mentioned in other lectures, to understand what is going on with Jesus, you must understand both his words and his deeds, where his deeds reinforce what he is teaching and operate in many cases as audiovisuals, not just conceptual guides to what is going on. John's Gospel highlights what Jesus says about himself and this is a key to understanding Christology.

**Rabbi, Prophet and Son of David:** We will first look at some of the titles and then have a closer look at the points supporting those titles. We look at Jesus as Rabbi, the Jewish name for teacher. This name is used by many toward Jesus and is present in Mark and also in John. It only comes from Judas in Matthew. Luke uses the synonym teacher that comes only from observers of Jesus which Mark also uses. This is probably the most basic category of which Jesus is referred to and lacks Christological content. It is just a way to emphasize that Jesus did teach. The next title is prophet. It was the most popular view of Jesus by his observers and there is some merit to this title. Jesus, himself, compares his ministry to the prophets Elijah and Elisha; this becomes part of the portrait of Jesus. But this wording is more of a leader prophet like Moses or a greater than Jonah than just one among many prophets. But I think the populace looked at Jesus as one among many prophets. He follows John the Baptist to open up the Eschaton and he comes as a prophet, a fresh read on the Law. All of those features belong to Jesus as prophet. Then there is the title, 'Son of David.' This is the connection that begins to move in a messianic direction. It shows up in the infancy accounts but it doesn't give us insight into Jesus' own view or those who saw his active ministry. It still falls short and is a basic category like that of the Christ around which he builds his portrait. It comes from the Son of David, a declaration that comes from some of the healings as well, it appeals to the royal Psalm imagery. It is close to the messianic claim because it puts him into a regal category. It reflects the voice of the baptism at the transfiguration, 'you are my son' also in Psalm 2:7. It is often used by people in Jesus' audience; the most famous was from the blind man. The connection to healing is an interesting link.

The association of the Son of David idea came with healing and exorcism and with the portrait of Solomon in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple Jewish tradition. Note this description: 'Now the sagacity in wisdom which God had bestowed upon Solomon was so great that he exceeded the ancients so much that he was not inferior to the Egyptians who were said to be beyond all men in understanding. Indeed it is evident that their sagacity was very much inferior to that of the king. He also excelled and distinguished himself in wisdom above those among the eminence of the earth at that time for his shrewdness. He composed books of odes and songs, a thousand and five, of parables and similitudes, three thousand, and he spoke a parable of every sort of tree, from hyssop to the cedar and like minor, also about beasts and all sorts of living creatures whether upon the earth, the seas or the air, for he was not unacquainted with any of their natures and described them all like a philosopher and demonstrated his exquisite knowledge of their properties. This alludes to the various figures of speech in the Proverbs. God also enabled him to learn that skill which expelled demons which is a science useful and sanative to man. He composed such incantations also by which distempers were alleviated. He left behind him the manner of using exorcisms

by which to drive away demons so as to never return and this method of curing is a great force today. I have seen a certain man of my own country; his name is Eleazar (a known Jewish exorcist) releasing people that were demonical. The minor of the cure was like this, by putting a ring with a root mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac after which he drew out the demon by the nostrils and when the man fell down; immediately he ordered the spirit not to return to him again, making still mention of Solomon and reciting the incantations he composed. And Eleazar persuaded and demonstrated to the spectators that he had such a power.' Now the idea of being the Son of David came with the idea of being very wise and having control even over spiritual forces, but notice that in this idea we have a contemporary healer in the time of Josephus of this Eleazar who uses all the incantations that is normally associated with exorcism, things we never see Jesus use. There is both a similarity and a difference here in terms of the background. But this association may be why the blind man thinks that the Son of Man is capable of healing him. This is not the only passage that has this kind of an idea, but probably the most famous one.

**The Christ:** The entrance into Jerusalem, the pilgrims and answers to Psalm 110; these are important texts showing the Son of David, Christ linkage in the move from Son to Lord. We also have several passages in Matthew in which the Son of David is presented. In moving to the Son of David, we are moving to a more serious Christological title. This begins to be one of the more significant titles to think about. Next, we have the title of Messiah or King of the Jews. You can think about the life of Jesus rotating backwards out of what led to Jesus being crucified. It is especially frequent in the Gospels (over 55 times) where the term Christ appears and the majority of those texts are in John's Gospel. There are seven key texts of which by far, perhaps the most important is Peter's own confession in which Jesus' qualified an acceptance of Peter's confession which demonstrates that Jesus wasn't just some kind of prophetic figure, but is at the center of what God is doing in the program of God and bringing of the kingdom. Jesus accepts the title which is in contrast to the title prophet. It includes suffering as Jesus teaches about this characteristic. Note that after this confession, Jesus begins to introduce the idea of suffering which Peter has no understanding about but does by the time Jesus had left the tomb. The public usage is restricted for a time and this is because Jesus first has to define the term in a way so others will understand it. The Pharisees fail in their attempt to get the disciples to stop using the Christ title as he entered Jerusalem. It comes up in Jesus' examination by the Jews. It comes up in the examination by Pilate. In fact, kingship is the issue in both the synoptic Gospels and in John for the charges that led to Jesus' crucifixion and trial. We see this mentioned in John 4, 9, 11 and 27. It's not as prevalent as one might think, especially from Jesus himself. It is a title that he accepts but it is one that he wants to qualify. All of this reflects what we have seen.

**Suffering Servant, Holy One, Shepherd and Lord:** The next three titles are interesting and all have a bit of surprise to them. You would perhaps think that the idea of Jesus being God's servant, would be more highlighted than it is in the Gospels, especially as important as it becomes later in the church. But it is only in the narrative remarks alluded to by Jesus or present in the divine voice when God about his son. It appears in particular key points, but otherwise it isn't all that prevalent. It appears at the baptism and at the transfiguration. It is probably alluded to in Luke 4 when Jesus cites Isaiah 61. It is part of what is known as the Ransom Saying that the Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many. And there are allusions to Isaiah 53 that surround his crucifixion. For example, Jesus' own remark that he must be reckoned with the criminals. What is interesting, the citations about Isaiah 53 that we get from Jesus tend to highlight the fact that he dies as an innocent. It is just like the use of Isaiah 53 we get in Acts. The most explicit use deals with the fact that he went to his death in silence. There is enough usage of the servant material across the Gospels alone with the allusions to suggest that the entire portrait is understood when the title is appealed to.

The title of Holy One shows up only in a few passages. It shows up in Peter's equivalent confession at Caesarea, Philippi in John 6 and it shows up in the confession of demons when Jesus performs certain exorcisms. Other than that, it doesn't appear at all. Another key title that shows up in a few passages is Jesus, the Shepherd. Like the sheep without a people in Matthew 9:36 and the Good Shepherd is John 10. The roots come from Ezekiel 34, the idea that God would send a Shepherd that would really shepherd the people in contrast to the leadership. The picture of shepherd has roots going back to 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7 which is the Davidic Covenant, when David is brought into the kingship and his previous role as shepherd

pictures what the king is to do and be, so there is an allusion to shepherding the people in the mist of that covenant. So, all of these images are important to the titling of Jesus.

The next key title is the term, Lord. This is the key Christological title for the early church. 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. It is less prominent in the Gospels but it does appear. Luke uses it as narrative description of Jesus but it doesn't appear in scenes where Jesus and people are talking but it does appear in the descriptions that Luke uses to introduce Jesus in various scenes. He talks about the Lord from place to place, etc. There are some usages to the term in the Gospels that begin to push in the direction of going beyond the normal everyday use of the title, which is in respect for somebody. It is like the way we would use the word, sir. There are other passages where the use of the word, Lord, might be a little ambiguous in terms of what it means. The key texts are Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath and the appeals associated with Psalm 110:1, the discussion that comes from Jesus points to the comprehensive authority the Lord has. David, even though he is the ancestor of Jesus calls his descendant Lord and the issue that this raises about Jesus' identity. The Gospel of John is similar; it is tied especially to the resurrection and especially to the key climatic confession of Thomas in saying, 'my God and my Lord.' Its use in the Gospels is restrained, especially from text that are supposedly being updated by the early church as critics claim. You would think that you would see more of this in the discussion and dialogue if this material were being used in as undisciplined a manner as some critics suggest.

**The Son of God:** This is an ambiguous term in the original context as it can be a reference to the king or the unique Son. The Son who is uniquely related to the Father; it roots out of the Old Testament are 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7, 'I will be as a Father to him and he shall be as a Son to me.' There are also roots in Psalm 2, 'you are my son, today, I have begotten you.' This is a good bridge term. Jesus hasn't used the full title for himself but uses son without the qualification of God as he talks about God as his Father. It is the same idea for sure; it's just a different way to use it. John uses it nine times with three of those usages in the narrative descriptions of Jesus and then the rest come in narrative remarks between characters in the passages. It is tied to the idea that God is my Father in a unique sense in John. The Son is emphasized in the divine voice that comes from the heavens. It is emphasized in the language of the demons. It is closely linked to the idea of the Christ that Luke 4:41 suggests. In Mark, it is only the confessing centurion at the Cross that uses the title. It doesn't appear otherwise. It is used by Jesus in a handful of passages such as Matthew 11, Luke 10, the parable of the wicked tenants which portrays Jesus as the son who is killed by the tenants, the John 5 discourse where we get the discussion about Jesus as the son doing only that which he sees the Father doing and the picture of God as my Father and the language of the only begotten Son, the unique Son of God appears here. The Son of the Blessed one or of God also appears in the trial scene of Jesus in Mark 14:61 and Matthew 26 it is also present in the allusions associated with Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7. The question about Son of God is generated from the reply of those passages. So all this relates to the Christology of Jesus.

**The Son of Man:** The biggest title in terms of usage is Son of Man. It is used much more widely than anything else. It is Jesus' favorite self-designation. In Jesus, according to Scripture textbook, note the usage here. It has eighty two appearances in the Gospels and only John has it on someone else list. The term appears thirty times in Matthew, twenty five times in Luke and thirteen times in John. There are about fifty one different sayings involved with this number. There are usages that overlap as you are looking at similar events; it still appears in about fifty one different sayings. This is a lot of material. There are about three hundred and fifty scenes total. Fourteen of them are rooted in Mark, Ten involve teachings from Matthew and eight of these sayings are unique to Matthew with seven of them being particular to Luke and thirteen are found in John. It is found in every layer of the Gospel tradition. Matthew has several texts on its own as well as Luke. So the expression is multiply attested; the sayings have been divided up into three sub-classes. Sayings about Jesus' present ministry, the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head, talking about what Jesus is currently doing. Sayings about his suffering and apocalyptic saying that involve the Son of Man returning to judge. You can see the distribution of 17, 26 and 27 and each type is well distributed across the Gospel tradition with various emphases. Matthew has seven ministry sayings, ten suffering sayings and thirteen apocalyptic sayings so it is fairly well divided. Mark on the other hand who emphasizes Jesus' suffering has three present day ministries sayings and nine suffering sayings and three apocalyptic sayings. Luke has seven present ministry sayings, seven



suffering sayings and eleven apocalyptic sayings and then John has a different way of presenting this so it doesn't fit those classifications. There are four sayings that speak of the coming and going of the Son of Man, six sayings that treat the crucifixion and exaltation with one that names him as a judge and two that describe him as a salvation bringer. All of this helps portray the portrait of the Son of Man. Obviously the key text is Daniel 7:13-14, but it's important to remember that Jesus doesn't specifically connect this title to that passage until the Olivet Discourse in the synoptic Gospels, very late in his life. It has a wonderful mix of human and divine authority that Jesus can fill with context and that is why I think Jesus likes this title. Son of Man means a son of a human being, referring to someone who is human. But the Son of Man figure in Daniel 7 rides the clouds and that is something that points toward transcendence. In some ways this is the most important title we have seen in Jesus' ministry.

We conclude on the Son of Man, summarized as the uniquely empowered eschatological agent of God, a human saturated with divine authority and yet he is one who will give himself to the people so that he will one day vindicate in glory. A survey of the scope of the use of the Son of Man helps us to see why Jesus chose this as his favorite way to speak of himself. As George Ladd aptly said to the title, 'Jesus lay claim to a heavenly dignity and probably the preexistence itself and claimed to be one who would one day inaugurate the glorious kingdom. But in order to accomplish this, the Son of Man must be the suffering servant and submit himself to dying.

**Jesus as God and his Authority:** The last category is God which is used by the doubting Thomas, a title and a response that Jesus accepts and is a part of the portrait that he sees in dealing with himself at the end of his ministry. So this is an important category. When we think about Jesus' association with tax collectors and sinners, we really are thinking about a completely different kind of sociological emphasis that Jesus is bringing to the community that God is going to build, and it also becomes a model for the mission of the church. Both of those themes are important. The reason why it is significant is because the church goes from being made up of people who have made themselves into the righteous thus and being a gathering place of people who have experienced God's grace. These are people who have experienced what God has to offer. Jesus associates with tax collectors and sinners and he uses the picture of the great physician to talk about this. No one goes into a doctor and tells them what is wrong. It's the doctor's responsibility to take care of you and see what the problem is. Interestingly, those who are already righteous do not need to come to the physician. So this is a model for ministry. Thus, out of this, one of the problems of the church, it becomes a little hermeneutical community that a person enters into along with their family to protect them from the world and in the process the risk is that you will sever yourself from the natural relationships that you have from being in the world with your neighbors and thus cut yourself off from engaging in mission of the church. This is why we get teaching on the initiative that Jesus took to hang out with people who aren't normally associated with the righteous community. His goal was to minister to them and bring them into this new community where they can fellowship and be nurtured not to become a virtual monastery in terms of interaction with the world. So the association with tax collectors and sinners was a different model in which righteousness was seen.

The second category is connected to a picture of authority that it represents. This is an authority that only God processes. And the most famous passage in dealing with the forgiveness of sin in the New Testament is the healing of the paralytic where Jesus does that which can be seen to give evidence to the authority that he processes which cannot be seen. The third category of authority is the authority that involves the Sabbath incident and various healings associated with the Sabbath. This represents authority over an established holy time. God is the one who marked out the Sabbath who defined it as a day of rest. In fact the Sabbath is something that is marked out in the Ten Commandments as a part of what God has called his people to do and this authority over holy times, Jesus shows in healing on the Sabbath and redeeming on the Sabbath not being a violation of a prohibition of work that is associated with it. Now who has the authority to define what is proper on the Sabbath? Another category of authority is that of exorcism. This shows his authority over other powers, particularly spiritual powers. This is especially significant in the backdrop of Jewish expectation in which the kingdom of God is seen as defeating the presence of Satan and forces arrayed against humanity in the world. This is another key category of authority.

The next category is takes in the sheer scope of Jesus' miracles. We have already mentioned that there

are two primary miracle periods in the Old Testament, the period of Moses and the period of Elijah and Elisha. Moses operated during the period of the foundation of the deliverance for the nation and Elijah and Elisha was during a low spiritual period in the history of Israel in which was in a great deal of trouble. With Elijah and Elisha, we get a variety of healings, but with Moses we have the plagues which God is really doing himself and then there were the creation miracles. For Jesus, it was the scope of his authority of which he operated that was unique as far as miracles were concerned. And his authority was over a wide sphere. In Luke 8:22-56 is where we get the calming of the sea which shows Jesus authority of creation, the healing of Gerizim demoniac, we get Jesus authority over the demons and the healing of the woman with the issue of blood showing Jesus' authority of diseases and then the raising of Lazarus' daughter showing the conquering of death. This miracle cluster with its scope is kind of a mini photograph of what Jesus' life and ministry is all about and the extent of his authority. And remember that in Judaism, when we think of Moses, we have the picture in Ezekiel where when Moses performs the plagues, he is being made God to Pharaoh. We now move to purity issues.

**Purity Issues:** Where Jesus has the right to extend judgement and to assess what constitutes purity and impurity. One text that we haven't talked much about is from Matthew 7:1-23 where the dispute comes because Jesus doesn't seem to be quite as sensitive about food laws, the washing of hands as the Law might suggest, and in this passage, Jesus says that it isn't what you put into your mouth that defiles but what comes out of your mouth. He puts himself in a position of authority over purity issues. Purity is something by which a Biblically oriented Judaism is very sensitive about. We usually don't associate religion with these kinds of areas. However, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, these points were important as they were a part of authentic identity for a Jewish person. In putting this all together: the Sabbath incident and the way the Sabbath was handled, the issues of purity, to some degree, the association with tax collectors and sinners and the forgiveness of sins deals with Jesus' way of handling the Law. His authority to interpret and rule over the Law, to be the Lord of the Sabbath, to change the ideas and ways created by the Pharisees and Sadducees, etc. Jesus says, 'but I say unto you,' the anti-theses of Matthew. And what we are seeing is a person who sees himself with having that authority, not merely to discern what the Law means but to set himself above the Law in many ways. When he says that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath, he is not just issuing a rabbinic interpretation of how this is supposed to work but he is doing much more than that. So who has the right to claim authority? Putting the above altogether, Jesus in effect is claiming to be Lord of the Torah.

Jesus changed the liturgy of the nation; it is not merely writing fresh liturgy to proclaim what already is being celebrated. It is the declaration and change of the liturgy to focus now on the events being associated with him. This was what happened with the Last Supper. He takes the Passover season and Passover imagery, changes it and transferred it and now makes the key event to be associated with his death instead of the Exodus. Who has the authority to redesign liturgy, not just in wording but in reference? And what we are seeing here, are little bricks in the wall assembling Scripture one piece at a time to make it clear that Jesus is the unique authority. He stands on one side of the wall in comparison to everybody else.

The next category is temple cleansing. This is the right to exercise authority over the most sacred space in the world as far as Judaism is concerned. In fact, it's an authority, not only over the most sacred space in the world but it's an authority that touches on the very presence of God himself because of what the temple represents. That brings us to suffering and the Cross. Obviously and ultimately the claim here is an authority to be able to save and deliver as a result of what takes place on the Cross. But we are not actually told how that works. Paul is the theologian that tells us how the hanging on the Cross works and how it pays for sin, etc. What we know is that forgiveness of sins is able to be offered as a result of it. We know that there is a picture in a few passages about Jesus giving his life for a ransom for many and the association with suffering, but the detail of how it works isn't given to us. However, the fact that he is able to go to the Cross, he has authority over life and death as a result; some of which his miracles have also pictured in their variety, is part of yet another indication and level of authority that Jesus exercises. All of this pushes toward and impales compares to the last category and that is the vindication and ascension and provision along with the judgement that follows.

Jesus himself sets this up; he basically says this at his trial before the Jewish leadership, God will

demonstrate the authority I process by vindicating my unjust death. This is precisely what the confession of the centurion and each of the synoptic Gospels represent. 'Surely this one was the Son of God.' Surely this one was innocent. Surely this one processed the authority that he claimed. Surely this one is creditable in what he is teaching. All of this comes as part of the territory of the vindication that is made and the empty tomb is God's statement of who Jesus is, especially when we put around it what Jesus says it represents before it happened, and that is that God has taken Jesus to his right hand in heaven, into his very presence, at his side, now executing the distribution of blessing through him, both in terms of forgiveness of sins and in terms of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel is primarily about two things: forgiveness that leads to a relationship with God and distribution of the Spirit on the other. So vindication and resurrection and ascension and provision and judgement; you put this altogether and what you see is a figure who processes absolute unique authority that treads all over areas where God has his foot prints. So whether you talk about the Law, sin, Sabbath, demons, creation, disease, death, purity, Torah, liturgy, temple and the authority that he has over all of those areas; think about how many of these things are happening in public and people like the Jewish authorities who were watching him. Any report of him should also have included the extent of his authority. They knew that he associated with tax collectors and sinners and they complained about his authority to forgive sin. They also challenged him on the Sabbath incidents. These purity issues are being taught because of complaints outside the circle of the disciples. They are not aware of the redesign of the liturgy at the Last Supper. Of course, they are aware of the attempt to cleanse the temple, so most of these issues are realized by the public. The benefit of having some explanation about what is going on is something that only the disciples get. This is all happening in public and along with the scope and repetition of the miracles and the way that Jesus challenges them to think about how he was able to do these things on the Sabbath?

My understanding of this Christology leads me to think that the emphasis in the New Testament really ends up being the appreciation of who Jesus is, not merely what he does. And his redeeming character in one sense is only a small part but not the whole picture in thinking of him merely as a deliverer. He is about more than redemption; his role in the creation is far more than about saving. He is in charge and that's why 'Lord' ends up being a key title, that's why Christ anointed, a picture of a king is a key title. This is not about being a king of a land or country, but a king who has cosmic authority, someone who is LORD. This is not just expressed but it is being illustrated for us. Jesus' ministry illustrates the Lordship he has over all of these areas and part of the portrait reveals the inability to separate what Jesus is doing and what God is doing. This is shown when John says, I and the Father are one which is part of this portrait. Even in the synoptic Gospels, Jesus is exclusively carrying out and executing the program that God has given him and in doing so, following God's will. They are inseparable. There is a sense in which the Christology of the Gospels is what is often called functional. You see Jesus functioning in a variety of roles and you come to understand who he is as opposed to merely getting raw statements in the abstract of who he is. Jesus puts his actions with his teachings in such a way that you see who Jesus is instead of merely hearing who Jesus is. We tend to teach about Jesus in reference to what he said about himself. Jesus teaches about himself by having people to think about what he is doing.

In regards to the Pharisees and the leaders of Israel; Paul said that they were zealous with knowledge. They couldn't accept Jesus because they failed to see where the Law was leading which turned it into the absolute for them. But this is very common among those who embrace religion to make the Law their god. When you meet people who are religiously zealous, this is often the direction they go in. This happens in Judaism and in some forms of fundamentalist Christianity, in fundamentalist Islam and other religions. The human tendency is to sow, regular and control through the Law and thus that law becomes their god.

In answering a student's question about Nicodemus; he was viewed as a Jewish leader who had some sensitivity. I think he was representing some who were actually trying to assess what Jesus' ministry was providing and were at least open to it. They were driven by a model of how faith is to work which on the one hand has blinded them even as they zealous in their own minds, and faithfully pursue what that means. They were being faithful to their convictions and some aspects of that had some grounding, but with pieces missing. But that was what Jesus was challenging them about. You need to understand and appreciate how this authority model helps to understand and talk about Jesus. Putting it into a context of Judaism that did care about purity and the law and the Sabbath with these emanating as a religion from

God helps you to see that what Jesus is doing is very much a comprehensive claim to authority. I tend to think about Jesus in very abstract terms as we think about who he is.

**The Theology of Jesus:** In this last section I want to consider other aspects of Jesus' theology, especially his theology of community, the issue of Salvation, discipleship, and the issue of return and Judgement. I'm not working with the categories of systematic theology as such but to describe the theology in categories that Jesus' own ministry is presenting. It wouldn't be difficult to take this and deal with ecclesiology (theological doctrine relating to the church) here, but we need to think through these categories in the categories that Jesus gives us. Since Jesus rarely used the term church and this only appears in one Gospel at two points. I call this the entity of the new era. You might call it the 'way' to use the language of Acts. This new community in its early existence did not see itself as non-Jewish. This of course begs the question; did Jesus come to establish an entity that was distinct from Judaism? This was not what he was about. That is however the way we think of the church. We tend to think of it as being completely distinct from Judaism but in fact the church is very much rooted in Judaism. John says that salvation is of the Jews, so there is this sense in which the community of the new era is really a natural extension of where a faithful Judaism should take Jews. Another way of saying this is, if you are a good Jew you would be a Christian. Please note that this is very hard on Jewish ears, nevertheless, this is the emphasis in Acts. God made certain promises to our fathers which Jesus represents the realization of. The Spirit has come as God has promised; therefore you can know that God made me both Lord and Christ. The promises of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are fulfilled in your midst through the activity of the servant (Acts 3). We see Philip share with the Ethiopian eunuch and he shares the realization of Isaiah 53 of what God was talking about. So there is an emphasis in these messages about how Jesus is the proper completion of what Judaism had hoped for. Paul says this in Romans 10, 'Christ is the *telos* (the purpose) of the Law. If you are sensitive to the Torah and Torah observant, you should end up as a follower of Jesus Christ.

**The Church and Israel:** Note that here the lecturer answers another question from a student about messianic synagogues. As such the problem here is in regards to the separation of Jews and the gentiles; of which one of the purposes of Christ was to unite the two. Now, having said this, you must understand that the church lost this sense of connection in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries to their Jewish roots. It came as a reaction to the Judaizers, the rabbinic rejection and of the claims of the church. There were many rational reasons for it; the destruction of the temple which in turn led to the chaos in Judaism, etc. But the point here, the church should never have lost sight of those roots. You have an early church that has come to Jesus, it is clear that God has begun a new thing and yet they are still hanging out at the temple. They don't see themselves as having left Judaism; in fact I would argue that the Book of Acts is really an explanation that goes something like this: Christianity may seem like a new religion but it is actually quite old. It is rooted in the God of Abraham and it isn't that we are something new. We were forced to become something distinct because the Jewish people forced us out. We did not come with the intention of building a separate religion. We came with the intention of being the completion of what God had promised. And that is actually what we think we are. Things could have been very different. Even though it was for the Jew first, we still have gentile inclusion. Interestingly, what the church sought to make Christianity, didn't actually take place in this sense. Had Judaism responded as it should have, all Jews would be Christians. But Judaism did not respond to the message, only a very small proportion of them did. So we didn't end up with a believing Israel in the church, but instead we ended up with only a remnant in the church. That remnant is the bridge between an old, present and future era. This is the language of Romans 10; God always has a remnant, but sociologically the church is not Judaism.

And even though the church is spiritual Israel, it functions and has the role that Israel had in the old era, it is the repository where the promises now reside, it is the locus where revelation can be seen and it is the place where the preaching of God's message resides. Even though it is the spiritual Israel, it is the Israel because Israel today is split between the remnant that believes and detached branches that are still out there. The theology that we have doesn't deal with the intention, it deals with the reality. Here's the problem, the difference between a 'reformed' and a 'dispensationalist' has the reformed saying that the church is the new Israel and therefore ethnic Israel no longer matters in the program of God, generally speaking. There are a few who hold out a future for ethnic Israel and that ethnic Israel will respond and that is put within a reformed model. Whereas the dispensationalists will say, yes the church is the

institution of God today and functions like Israel does or did. But it is not all that Israel is; why, because there is in the program of God a future for this group. Note that Romans 9-11 talks about the possibility of the natural branches being grafted back in, some point in the future. Dispensationalists don't want the church or anyone else to lose sight of this. A reformed person who sees a future of ethnic Israel is very close to a dispensationalist. I can think about and perceive a future for ethnic Israel without thinking about a national Israel that will be the center of the millennium. That is where the difference comes in. The very future that God promised Israel in the Old Testament would then have been realized in a millennium. There would not be two dispensations (the method or scheme according to which God carries out his purposes towards humanity of which there are said to have been three dispensations: the Patriarchal, the Mosaic or Jewish and the Christian), one in the church and one in the millennium. The message that went into the synagogues of Jesus' day basically said that if you were a good Jew and believed God's promises you will embrace Israel's Messiah, who ended up to be Jesus Christ. That was the message.

Judaism was a religion whose calendar and worship was built around a single temple. You need to think about everything in Judaism that revolves around the temple and then take the temple away. This would require you to total reorganize your faith. This is what happened in the destruction of the temple in AD 70. If would be the same if all of the churches vanished and Christians would have to re-organize themselves without those churches. As the church was being structured, the major remnant of Judaism was being restructured further away from Christianity. And the presence of the Messiah who was divine was changing the entire shape of the faith within Judaism as it slowly reshaped itself into Christianity. What was once oriented around a single building became reoriented around a single person who put you in touch with the living God. It a radical difference and change. So Christianity in its original design and earliest preaching did not see itself as radically breaking from what Judaism of the Hebrew Scriptures was supposed to be. It did see itself breaking with what Judaism was becoming through the rabbis. Paul didn't stop going to the synagogue initially, nor did other Jewish Christians. Today, as Christians, we seem to think there was Judaism and when God came, he purposely built a whole new religion, including buildings and everything that went with that. But what happened, the new religion Christianity emerged because of the reaction of the original audience. What Acts is arguing, even though Christianity appears to be new, it is actually quite old. Now for an ancient in an ancient culture, it is not what is new that is great, it is what is old that is great, particularly in regards to religion. So again, Acts is saying that we did not go out to consciously form a church. We were forced to form a church by the reaction that we met with the original audience for whom the Gospel was originally intended. We are not anti-Jewish; we are as pro-Jewish as we can be because if you believe Moses and prophets, you will become a follower of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Nothing would have convinced the Jewish people as they had already made the judgement about Jesus. Once a religious ideological idea has taken grip of the soul, it is very difficult to change it.

Look at Islam; how can you have a religion that can be so violent? It is because the core concepts of that religious faith have taken hold of the soul of a lot of people. They don't see the world the way you do. They don't evaluate what goes on like you do. It just doesn't go through the same filter which means it doesn't fit into the same cultural standings. Christianity was built along ethnical religious lines and it is clear that God didn't want us to have a temple as we didn't need sacrifices. We went about the business of trying to live as faithful Jews without a temple. Some Jews are looking to the day that the temple comes back and there is something missing in their religion until it happens. This is why you see pictures of orthodox Jews standing at the Wailing Wall because it represents a remnant of the presence of the temple for whose reconstruction they long for. That is why when you go through the Jewish quarter in Jerusalem down to the area of the western wall, you will meet a nine armed menorah in gold that is already forged for the third temple. As for the church is concerned, it is the new communities' character and calling that are more important to Jesus than its form. Our churches today spend a lot of time wrestling with debating, discussing, separating over the form of what the church is. Jesus was much more concerned with the character of the communities that developed and how it reflected as it engaged with the world. Consider the worship services of the early church; they had hymns and liturgy and met in homes to do it. There was much more time spent on the character of what the community was supposed to look like and the calling and mission that the church was to carry out. We have managed today to reverse the emphasis; that is why people don't see the New Testament church. They see a well-organized machine that has a lot of parallels to a religious sphere and that's not taking a shot at how the church is delivering what they have to deliver. The point is that we are spending much more time on

engaging on the form of how we do church than we do on what the church should be doing. The church didn't form so that we could figure out how to do church. The church exists so that the church can do the mission of God.

Jesus' mission is to call sinners to repentance or to call people to repent for the kingdom of God is at hand. Luke 15 gives us a picture of initiative or the call of commission expressed in Luke; the repentance for the forgiveness of sin, to be preached to the entire world beginning at Jerusalem. In Luke and Acts, religiously speaking, the center of the world at its beginning was in Jerusalem but by the end of the Luke and Acts, the center of the world had gone to Rome. Paul had to get to Rome, not Antioch. Antioch sends him out but where does he end up? To get ready to preach the Gospel to Caesar in Rome and it takes a lot of effort and work to get there. What about Acts 27; why is it in Acts, the long sea voyage with all the detail with how difficult it was to get to Rome? As for the perspective of Jerusalem, Rome is at the ends of the earth and it takes one long hard trip to get there.

**Faith, Repent and Turn:** Faith, Repent and Turn are three key response terms in the Gospels and in Acts. These are three terms that work like a diagram. Anyone of them is an adequate explanation for what the response to the Gospel should be, but they emphasize different things. Repent is a word that starts out from the perspective from where you are. You have to use the words to mean a change of mind. Actually the Hebrew idea undergirding the Greek word repent is the word *shu* which itself means 'turn', so these two are very close to one another but repent basically means a change of mind or direction. To repent is to make a left or right turn or an about face; it is not to go in the same direction. To have a change of mind, you have to have a change of direction so you turn and when you turn and where you end up is with faith. You end up believing. That is why this ends up being the comprehensive term used throughout the New Testament. With repenting, you end up with faith having turned. The failure to repent leads to judgement. The call to faith is seen in several passages whether we are talking about the centurion, the paralytic, the woman with the hemorrhage, the boy with the unclean spirit, the two blind men, the gentile woman, Jairus' daughter, or the simple woman who anoints Jesus. Every one of those passages mentions faith. Interestingly, John never uses the noun 'faith', but he does use the verb, 'believe.' But the call to believe is the way John talks about this, but the word doesn't appear anywhere in John. Faith is seen as an abiding quality in John 15. Another term that comes in this list is 'receive'; 'for as many received him, he gave the right to become the children of God.' This has to do with the idea of receiving the message, welcoming it, actually, of embracing it. If I were to give this a synonym today, it would be embracing the Gospel. To receive the Gospel is to embrace the Gospel. Note that faith is not a momentary act. You don't believe in God and then you stop believing; you don't believe in the Gospel and stop believing. If I have faith in the Gospel, I believe the Gospel. We tend to talk about faith as if it is a momentary act because the beginning of faith represents transition of someone out of death into new life and brings what we call justification (an acceptable reason for doing something; the act, process, or state of being justified by God). The faith that a person begins to exercise is the faith that they are supposed to live with from that point on.

**Calling of the Disciples:** This is the formulation of the restored Israel on the one hand and the base of which the New Testament preaches with the church on the other. Jesus Christ is the cornerstone and the apostles and prophets are the foundation. What Jesus intended to do was to reconstitute Israel. We see this in Mark 1, Matthew 4 and the call with the catch of fish in Luke 5, in the discussion about who Jesus relates to in talking to Levi and Matthew and then goes to the banquet and that following him is a priority. This is supposed to be above everything else. Luke 14:24-25 deals with considering the cost of what it is to follow Christ. If the other person is stronger, then sue for peace with God. The twelve points to the intentionality of a new community for Jesus. Of the twelve, you have a zealot and a tax collector working together. Jesus' collection of friends in the twelve had a variety about them. They were the disciples and we have talked about discipleship with disciple meaning learner and the term only is shown in the Gospels, not in the epistles. It's widely used, some seventy two times in Matthew alone and it is used forty six times in Mark and thirty seven times in Luke and finally seventy eight times in John. Those who follow Jesus are learners which are one of their basic characteristics because God is in the business of changing us until he is finished with the job. This changes us and it takes time and yet the idea of change in the church is sometimes a four letter word. This is something I do not understand. We haven't yet got there yet and therefore don't ever use the ability to reflect on things, especially our lives in relation to

Jesus. Even the reformed church says, 'always reform.' Be committed to being changed and changing until God is finished with the job and that job isn't done until we are glorified. As Christians we are a long term project with God. It is a process of growth and destruction and what we see in Mark is what most of us are. This will entail sufferings and taking up the Cross in this world. If you want acceptance by the world don't sign up for Jesus because the world will not accept you and Jesus together. We are characterized by forgiveness living in a community of forgiveness and a community of love and a community of service. We have to be leaders in the church for others so that the church can be what it should be for Christ. When we think about community, there are three groups that the concern of the Gospel: the community that Jesus formed, there is Israel and there are the gentiles. Jesus ministers to and people are sent to preach for and on behalf of Israel. These passages often talk about to Israel or for Israel in one way or another, but also it is to and for the nation.

# Lecture 13: Life of Christ - Disciples

## Character

This is the 13<sup>th</sup> lecture in the online series of lectures on the Life of Christ by Dr. Darrell Bock.

Recommended Reading includes: Jesus According to Scripture: restoring the Portrait from the Gospels by Bock, Baker, 2002 and Jesus in Context by Darrel Bock and Greg Herrick, eds., Baker, 2005 and Jesus Under Fire by Mike Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, Zondervan, 1995.

*(Any slides, photos or outlines that the lecturer refers to should be down loaded separately. If they are not available, you may be able to find something similar using the Google© search engine.)*

**The Mission of the Church:** Jesus sends people to preach the Gospel into all the World. We are supposed to be bearing fruit in such a way that when people look at our work, they praise God who is in heaven. And when the future judgement comes, that is part of what will be in it. Jesus is worshiped, yet Jewish, but distinct. He was not concerned about issues of purity and preventing certain actions of mercur from taking place. He wasn't concerned about issues of hand washing that got in the way of fellowship. He gave a distinct community prayer and changed the liturgy at the Last Super, but there is no discussion anywhere by Jesus as to the form of worship. It was only the integrity that is supposed to come when one worships. If you have something against your brother as you go along the way, don't come into worship; take care of your relationship with your brother first and then show up for worship. This is the integrity of worship. It is regularly seen in acts of prayer and acts of charity to the image of the community as lost sheep in need of a shepherd. Where they need to be shepherded is to this category of integrity of worship and commitment is to the mission and commitment to carry out the call of the church. The best way to carry that out is to be engaged in mission; it is where you work, with your neighbors, not just within the four walls of the church building. Instead, think in terms of the walls of the church extending around the globe. This is my Father's world and I am called to serve the Father in it. This is done by working within the concepts of the cultural scripts of the Gospel. For example, with the Gospel and the background of purity and uncleanness should be considered in relationship to sin; uncleanness and sacrifice, those two things. To understand that dynamic, it opens up how to picture the Gospel. It is like introducing someone to a new culture and having them to think cross culturally, except now you are doing it theologically. The Jewish culture as with any culture is picturing things that are also pictured about what our relationship to God should be like. We are not talking about ritual baths but instead, pictures of cleansing. We are not talking about slaying goats and rams, but instead when sin takes place it comes with a price. It comes at a cost as does restoration. Repairing the damage from sin also comes at a price and a cost. It isn't a matter of indifference and we live in a world where many think that such choices are a matter of indifference.

**The disciple's character in the world:** Love and mercy are to be seen as a reflection of knowing, trusting and imaging God. You are a reflection of him when you live with love and mercy and forgiveness with a pursuit of righteousness. Next to love and mercy, there is a righteous integrity. There is a righteousness that is to be part of the person that comes from within. What you see is what you get and our light should be such that we shouldn't have to worry about doing things in private. We should become comfortable with the world that sees us in terms of righteousness. Righteousness has nothing to fear and nothing to hide. So, we get the anti-theses, we get the call for the disciples to be salt and light; the picture of the light, lights up the way of darkness with people seeing what we do and praise God as a result. What really defiles is not what goes into the body or whether I wash my hands but what comes out of the mouth and heart. Illustrated negatively by not having righteousness and integrity is shown by the Scribes and Sadducees in Matthew 23. If you want to take a negative spiritual formation exam, just work your way through what Jesus criticizes in those chapters. You need to be really careful on how you few possessions and how you attach yourself to the world, especially in a society as materialistic as in the western countries in which most people spend the bulk of their time figuring out how they can get what they don't have. This is not just surviving. Most people who live in western countries are rich compared to



the rest of the world. We have food, shelter and clothing while many in the world don't have that. Paul says that is all we need. Attachments to the world risk an independence from God and risks in its pursuit turning people and the things around me into things to be used. Discipleship requires an absolute commitment to dependence, but the world hates dependence, rather they exalt independence in regards to basic values.

**Suffering:** I think about preachers who preach a message that basically says, come to the church and God will take care of you. You will be happy and life will be a beach and the church is the beach head. Bring your lounge chair and come worship with us. Note that if anyone doesn't take up his cross daily is not a disciple. Suffering means to be willing to bear the cross, to bear the rejection, to lose one's life to a life to gain the soul and Jesus preached this publicly to everybody as he was talking about the coming of the kingdom of God.

**Service and Mission:** This is all through the Gospels. What does Jesus send the twelve to do? They sit and hear Jesus teach and they go out and share the message of the coming kingdom. We all need to have the word 'pastor' added to our name; perhaps that would help the church. One of the lessons of the reformation was that we were all believer priests. That is really something. We are pastors of service and missions. By the way, a great illustration of a theologically zealous group who doesn't quite have their act together shows up in Acts chapter 1, 'Lord, is this the time you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' I've got Jesus here and I'm going to figure out what is going on theologically, they think. It's not for us to know the times and seasons. And then we get Acts 1:8, 'but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the world.' The sad thing about this is that it's a memory verse that has lost its context. You may want to figure this all out; that will come in God's timing, but in the mean time you have a calling. You have received power from on high and I want you to be my witnesses, beginning in Jerusalem, then Samaria and the ends of the earth and that is what you should be concerned about.

**Vindication:** The story ends with a vindication to come. This is eschatology. There are warnings to Israel that she risks judgement if she doesn't believe and it's offered again and again and an opportunity for Israel's response comes again and again, even with miracles that mirror what Jesus did earlier after warning them that they aren't reading the signs of the times correctly. Even John the Baptist issued a warning saying, 'the axe lies at the root of the tree.' Jesus told parables that emphasized the fact that God has been coming to the vineyard but nothing has been growing for a while.

**Judgement of the World and the Son of Man:** The one part of authority that the world does not want to see. The world loves a Jesus who is only a prophet; but don't like the idea of a Jesus who is a judge. For this reason, there are numerous parables about Jesus as a judge; so much so that when Peter preaches the first sermon that we have recorded given to a gentile audience in Acts 10, he says that God has appointed one to be the judge of the quick and the dead (King James language). The quick are the living and the dead are the dead; Jesus is going to judge the quick and the dead. The performing of righteousness, Jesus says is recognizing who the Son of Man is. John says in chapter 5, 'this is the work of God.' They believe in the one who the Father has sent and the only unforgivable sin is to not embrace the one who is not just the Lord of the Sabbath or Lord of the temple, but the one who is Lord of the world. The major point of the eschatological discourse at the end of Jesus' ministry in where this point is emphasized is on the judgement that he will bring. It even comes up as Jesus' trial before the Jewish leadership. 'And you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Father coming on the clouds.' Having received the authority from the Father, he will come and judge; a total divine authority is in view, but Jesus never says when he's going to do it. We don't watch and wait; we watch and serve.

**The Final Week:** The debate from the entry into Jerusalem onward is over authority and something more than just prophetic authority. And whether we think about the humble king entering into Jerusalem or the cleansing of the temple by the Messiah or the controversies over religion and politics and even Scripture or the picture of Israel as tending a vineyard but not attending it properly or the Olivet discourse or the Last Supper or the trials, everything is about the authority of Jesus to bring the program of God. The death of Jesus is put in the frame of a claim that he will be vindicated to sit at God's right hand and to judge in the end; even though he has died as an innocent. He was not on the cross because he was a cursed figure which would be the interpretation from Judaism. For Judaism, cursed is the one who hangs

on a tree. Jesus is cursed but he is not cursed for who he is; he is cursed because of what he bears. He bears the sins of the world. He goes to the cross as an innocent bearing that sin and that is why God vindicates him within history in a death that resulted in resurrection within three days. Thus the resurrection is a divine indication of all those claims. It is God's vote in the dispute between Jesus and the Jewish leadership which then is a window on the theology of Jesus' claim. It is an endorsement of what it is that he has taught. Matthew 28:18 says 'all authority has been given to me under heaven and earth' or we think about the picture of Luke 24 where repentance is being preached for the forgiveness of sins in his name. He offers forgiveness of sins in the name of Yahweh. Or we think about the picture of Jesus being seated at the right hand where he distributes the Spirit from the side of the Father and an active executive of the kingdom of God. Or we think of Acts 10:38-42 which has the same picture and looks forward to being a judge of the living and the dead. All of this says that Jesus is the uniquely authoritative revelator of God. He is the Logos, the Logos is the truth, and truth is about a person and a world view that rotates around Jesus. It is not merely about ideas and so Jesus is the revelator of God.

**The Apostles Creed:** This is one of the oldest creeds in the church. I believe in God the Father almighty and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord who was born by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, was crucified by Pontus Pilate and was buried, the third day he rose from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father. From there he shall come to judge the quick and the dead and in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body. This is a very short, sweet, crisp explanation of what is believed. Here we see clearly the churches understanding of the events of the last week that lead Jesus to assume a position of unequal authority at God's side, the sheer and divine prerogative of judgement and salvation. Jesus is more than a teacher, more than a prophet, more than a Messiah; he is the uniquely authoritative revelator of God. He is the unique Son of God. The thrust of Jesus' teaching is that he brought the promise of a new era of the rule of God. Jesus both explained the divine program and embodied the divine presence and authority. His mission began with and focused on Israel, but his ultimate goal was to bring the presence and promise of God to the world, to bring *shalom* to his creation. The kingdom presence at the inauguration opened the way for the victory of God and the Spirit of God because forgiveness was made possible along with the hope of everlasting life. Opening up access to the grace of God, Jesus made possible a certain way of life that honored God that reflected God's character and will. Jesus' ministry started on the premise that there was a mission to a nation and a world that needed this message of hope. Jesus understood that the renunciation of focus for many in the world would not want to be part of God's people and to accept God's gift of grace to acknowledge one own need and limitation whether expressed in faith and repentance; the blessings of the kingdom comes only to those who embrace their need for life in the way God has established.

**The Story, The Study and Jesus:** The painting on the back of a book represents two men staring at Jesus. They represent the evangelist who having experienced Jesus tells us about him. Beyond the evangelist, two types of people tend to enquire about Jesus. One type searches for the meaning of Jesus, the other, having discovered where he can be found tries to appreciate the depth of his message even more. The premise of this story and the premise of this study has been that our glimpse of Jesus is far clearer when he is seen according to Scripture rather than viewed in the reconstruction of the pick and choose of the four portraits we have of Jesus. Our study has tried to show that from the earth up and from heaven down, which is from the synoptic Gospels and John. In the end the portraits are not as diverse as they might initially appear if one keeps 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish context in view and allows the portraits a degree of dialogue with each other. That an ultimate unity emerges from these portraits is a burden of the book itself. Jesus' challenge which he sets out from Scripture through his sayings and acts was that God's long promise and long kingdom rule had broken into creation through his ministry. God's promise of hope and life, the provision of the Spirit, forgiveness and vindicated rule had come with him. Jesus is a powerful figure according to Scripture who makes people think of him and his mission. A primary question of Jesus that one must face in life is because it asks of us only who Jesus is but also who we are as God's creatures. If one seeks to know oneself or to find life, one must measure oneself against the creator and his plan. Jesus never is assessed alone; it is as if his identity were historical or academic curiosity or merely a matter of private opinion. But what we think of Jesus reveals of what we think of ourselves, our capabilities and our needs, given the way that Jesus presented our need for God and Jesus' own role in that plan. Even as Jesus is the revelator of God, he is also the revelator of our hearts before God.

**Conclusion:** In Luke 2:25, this is said of Jesus as he was brought to the temple by his parents after he was born: 'Now there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon who was righteous and devout, looking for the restoration of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been promised to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before seeing the Lord's Christ. So Simeon, directed by the Spirit of God, came into the temple courts, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary according to the Law, Simeon took him in his arms and blessed God, saying, now, according to your word, sovereign Lord, permit your servant to depart in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation.' When Simeon took Jesus into his arms, when he looked at Jesus, when he saw Jesus, he saw God's salvation. 'That you have prepared in the presence of all peoples: a light,' that is where we started in the synoptic Gospels, a picture of the Messiah as the rising morning sun shining on a dark world, 'a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.' In verse 34, 'This is destined to be the cause of the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be rejected. Indeed, as a result of him the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul as well.' What we are saying as the picture of authority that comes from thinking about Jesus from the earth up or thinking about John, heaven down. In Jesus, there is the program and salvation of God and the ultimate witness test for where the heart of a person is before the creator God. That is why we are talking about God's kingdom. It is because his creation is ultimately what he has made and where he rules and every creator must deal with their relationship with the creator. Ultimately the life of Christ is not about figuring out who Christ is. Ultimately the life of Christ is about responding to the creator and the one that he sends. That is the message that we are to take to the world.