

NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY: THE CHRIST
LATER PEREAN MINISTRY

Perea—John 10:40-42

This brief note by John causes us to switch our attention to the east side of the Jordan, which was less densely populated and more of cattle country, Num. 32:1-5. Jesus relieved some of the pressure as just experienced in Jn. 10 by going there, and also placed the next three months of ministry somewhat in the land over which Herod's son, Phillip, ruled. Phillip was not as troublesome as others were, and Jesus' ministry hindered less. Hence, it was so that many followed Him, and some were willing to accept John's testimony concerning Him. John had not lived or died in vain!

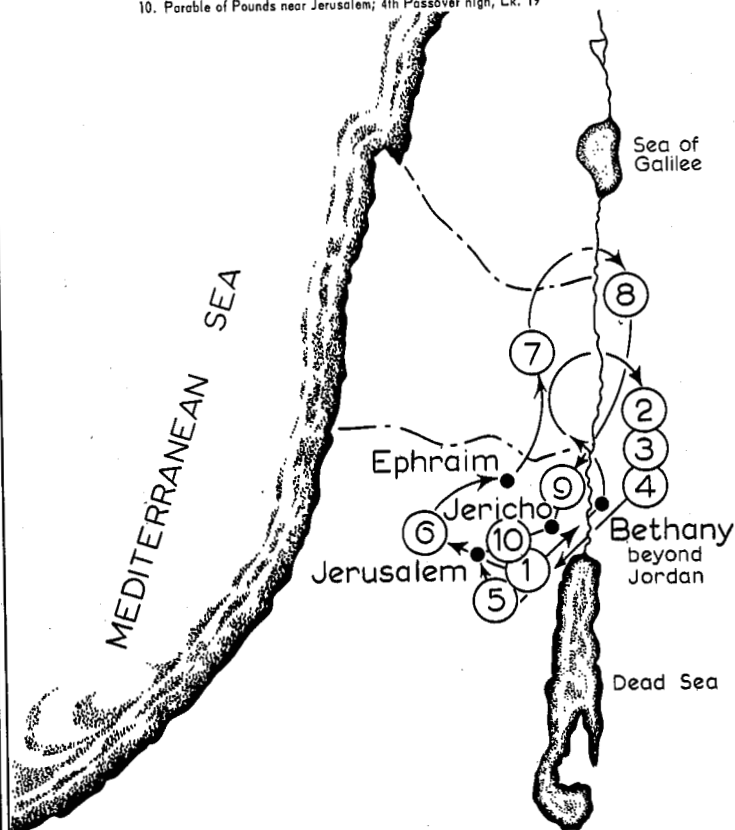
Cities and Villages in Perea—Luke 13:22-35

"Who's saved" has ever been, we suppose, a piquant subject. Doubtless many had wanted to ask Jesus this question, and Luke treats us to His answer for it. Not unusually, He allowed the auditors to draw their own conclusions. The door is too narrow, He remarked, for some who would attempt to enter it. The indifferent, unworthy, and half-hearted could not get in. No unregenerate or unsundered would make it, we venture to guess. If one desired to enter, there was no time like the present, for the door was (and is) open. But it would shut some day, and opportunity closed. Quality was important—one must agonize (it required death of self to enter then, and now) to get in. God, like the householder, had His stated requirements for those who entered. Feasting, the common Jewish concept of the kingdom, was the order of the day for all who qualified.

Those who failed—what brought about their rejection? Apparently fellowship was not enough to provide

MAP NO. 6—THIRD YEAR, LATER PEREAN MINISTRY (about 3 months)

1. Feast of Dedication, Jerusalem; attempts to kill Jesus; retires to Bethabara (place of His baptism), Jn. 10
2. Perea; journey through cities and villages; few saved, Jn. 10
3. Home of a Pharisee; rules for feasting, Lk. 14
4. Place unknown; parables of lost sheep; lost coin; lost son; Lazarus and Rich man; Lawyer's question, Lk. 15 & 16
5. Receives call to come to Bethany; raises Lazarus; Jews seek to kill both, Jn. 11
6. Retirement to Ephraim with 12 disciples, Jn. 11
7. Journey through borders of Samaria; Galilee, Perea; heals ten lepers, Lk. 17
8. Sermon on time of Kingdom; teaching on Divorce; little children; Pharisee and publican; rich young ruler; parable of laborers in vineyard; plainest prediction of crucifixion; James & John seek chief honors, Mt. 19-20, Mk. 10, Lk. 17-18
9. Jericho; two blind men healed; Zacchaeus, Lk. 19
10. Parable of Pounds near Jerusalem; 4th Passover night, Lk. 19





NEW JERUSALEM -- as rebuilt

THIRD YEAR MINISTRY

the ticket. God did not love the world enough to save it in its sinful state then or now, but demanded compliance of any or all.

Jesus apparently shared with them (and us) the idea that faithfulness was a vital quality, as He lists those who were sure to be there: Abraham and others. He also noted that some would expect to enter and would not, v. 30 (note our comments on a like expression under Matt. 19:30). For those who so thought, intense sorrow would be part and parcel of their existence subsequent to rejection. No annihilation for those refused!

Concern was manifested on the part of some Pharisees for Jesus as they brought news of Herod's design on His life. In response to their warning, Jesus gave a rather enigmatic (hard to understand) answer. He knew that Herod was treacherous and sly, caring only for himself (see ch. 23:6-12). But the following remarks about His ministry are the difficult ones. The expression "three days" had varied usages then as now. It might have meant literally three days, or an indefinite time, a long time or a short time, depending on the context in which it was used. It seemingly means a rather definitely indefinite time, known to Jesus. Therefore, He was not too concerned that Herod sought His life, as He knew the course of the future. For that matter, Herod was not the only one seeking His life. As He pointed out, somewhat in irony, but nevertheless truthfully, Jerusalem was to have the "honor" of taking His life, even as it had done to others in the past. The reference was not to be taken as accurate, but, as stated, was said in irony, for John the Baptist had perished outside of Jerusalem. The likely intent of what Jesus said is that the people, typically represented by Jerusalem (see Gal. 4:21ff. as an example), had a sad record of refusing God's messengers and bringing about their death. So it was to be in His case also, and

He knew it. And this despite the oft repeated efforts to change their hearts, not only by Him, but others. Hence, no longer would He shower His blessings exclusively on them, but would include any or all who so desired. Thus "seeing" would henceforth be dependent on "saying."

The reader might note that the synoptics do not record any such ministry by Jesus in Jerusalem as this text implies. The value of John's gospel is made clearer by such references as this. The same sort of idea was noted in the reference of Jesus to His ministry in Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum—and the same results, too! Reference point 29.

Home of a Pharisee—Luke 14:1-24

"He took our infirmities"—how often Jesus fulfilled this prophecy, Isa. 53:4 (see Matt. 8:17). The recipient of His compassion was suffering from some condition better identified by its effects than its cause. Dropsy is descriptive of a person whose body retained excess fluid because of a condition that might indicate a disease of the heart, liver, kidneys or brain. It comes from a word derived from the Greek word for water. The condition was cured by curing the cause.

"Is it lawful?" "Yes, it is!" So one more Sabbath was highlighted in the ministry of Jesus because of a miracle worked (see list of Sabbath miracles under John 5). Jesus repeated His contrast of the ox versus a human being, and gave again the answer that a man was worth more. How very often self-interest determined attitudes! It made much difference, anytime, "whose ox was gored." Could the people of Jesus' day see where their interest ought to lie by Jesus' example? Can we?

Continuing the lesson, Jesus had noted how the people who attended the meal had reckoned up (meaning of

THIRD YEAR MINISTRY

Greek term) the place they chose to recline (no one sat in chairs in that culture, but rather reclined on mats or something of like nature). Some had apparently considered themselves worthy of the best seats, because that got the emphasis from Jesus. The better thinking, He said, was to consider oneself unworthy of any but the lowest, least ostentatious mat. If then the host wished to elevate one in the "social standing" of his home, the person so honored would be glad of his initial choice. But should the reverse action take place, how chagrined one would be. Solomon must have encountered such problems in his society, too, for he wrote, in effect, that pride would precede shame and disgrace, but humbleness of mind evidenced right thinking, 11:2, 16:18. Especially was it true where God was concerned, and even as the hypothetical host, each would be rewarded according to merit, v. 10-11.

Lastly, Jesus said, the host who was really with it would invite those who could not return the favor, v. 12-14, for God would repay such a man later. Perhaps the text in Matt. 5:44-48 should be reread at this point.

The thoughts that such teaching started in motion were doubtless varied, but the statement of the man in v. 15 might give evidence that he expected to be at the banquet in the kingdom. If so, he was duly treated to an account that should have awakened him to the distinct possibility that all who thought they were going to be in the kingdom might not be.

Jesus spoke of a certain man whose banquet table was prepared. To those who had previously been informed that a feast was in the offing (such was the common oriental custom of the day) the man sent his servants to inform such that the time had arrived, come to the feast. Much to his surprise, excuses amounting to insults were proffered, and the summons refused. Rebuffed, the host

directed his servants to fill the feast with others who were willing, and the insolent erstwhile guests got ignored.

The insulted host represented God. The first guests the Jewish nation. The excuses were really that. The field and the land would have waited, and the Jewish law made a newly-married man pretty much free to accept such invitations with his wife, Deut. 24:5. Such were the caliber of reasons God was getting for His kingdom table. Once again Jesus left His auditors with a brain teaser, attempting to challenge their thinking in respect to God. Diligent efforts were to be made that God's invitation might be honored. How costly excuses might become if God were turned down!

*Before a Great Multitude, the Cost of Discipleship—
Luke 14:25-35*

In the same vein, because many had reason to evaluate themselves, Jesus issued a clear-cut description of those who would be classed as His disciples. Much was in store for those who chose to follow, but the cost was proportionate. It cost all, renouncement of life and everything in it, verses 26, 33 (as in Matt. 16:24-26; Phil. 3:1-14). No other quality of character was worth even fooling with, v. 34-35.

Essentially, discipleship involves two distinct phases, each separate and yet intertwined. There is the mandatory process of *counting the cost* of it versus the cost of anything else. Is choosing something other than discipleship worth the cost? Then, the equally important consideration in *planning to finish* what one starts, lest the initial action be a monumental catastrophe. It is not less important to finish than to start in respect to discipleship. God will be genuinely unhappy with any or all who start and become disenchanted along the way. Thus the Scrip-

THIRD YEAR MINISTRY

ture often warns, as in Luke 9:57-62; Heb. 10:37-38. For the person who so lives, he is as detestable as salt no longer NaCL, (chloride of sodium).

Place Unknown—Luke 15, 16 and 17:1-10

Sharing the success of another without some jealousy is a difficult thing for most people. Seemingly it was so in respect to Jesus and the Pharisee/scribe combinations in His day. As the Perea tour saw great numbers of people attracted to Jesus, they cast aspersions on His character by downgrading the company He kept. Such attitudes produced one of the loveliest passages in the Bible depicting the love of God for people, even those who were lost, then continuing with the only commendable thing in life, the way to avoid being "found," and a real life illustration of the ultimate end of both the righteous and unrighteous.

Luke's Chapter 15 is the section of the sermon that portrays in various ways God's love for the lost. The shepherd is God, unwilling that even one be lost, though many others are not. The woman is God, unsatisfied with less than a "clean sweep" in the attempt to find the lost. The father is God, unable to cease caring and waiting for the return of anyone lost. Many are like the younger son who felt that he had the right to do his own thing. The world has ever seen this type of individual, beginning with Adam and Eve. The attitude that God is not needed in life is the prevailing one at any given moment in history, we suppose. Yet, as with the father, the son was allowed to make his own choice. Nothing else would permit a human to remain that, since if that possibility is removed, the ability to choose for God is likewise gone. The elder son, however, is the other leading character in this part of the sermon. The younger son symbolized the publicans

(tax collectors) and sinners in whom Jesus showed interest. The older brother symbolized the Pharisees and scribes who resented any concern for anyone but "righteous" people like themselves. One recalls the remark of Jesus in Matt. 9:10-13 on another occasion similar to this one. He not only did not care about his brother, he did not care about his father either! How very much unlike his father he was. I John 4:19-21 flashes into view as we meditate on his thought process. If we do not love the lost, how are we like our heavenly Father? Why was it that the older brother refused to share in the feasting, verses 25, 32 and the joy, verses 7, 10, that surely could have been his? Do God's children today ever manifest the same sort of indifferent attitude this man did, even when another of God's children "comes to himself," and returns in body and mind in repentance to the heavenly Father?

Point two of the sermon finds Jesus relating an illustration of a certain man who had one feature Jesus expects to find in everyone. That feature was the virtue of using the present to prepare for the future, or, stated a different way, preparing in this life for eternity. The rest of the illustration was only to highlight this aspect. The unstated but obvious reference was to the publicans and sinners who actually were trying to find the way to life eternal (note here Luke 12 and Matt. 21:28-32), versus the Pharisees and scribes who were not.

In fact, the next verses, 10-18, are descriptive of these last mentioned. They were not faithful in their use of what God had given them, the "unrighteous" (the Greek term probably implies no inherent value of its own) mammon. Since this was the case, God was not going to entrust them with anything of real (the true riches) worth. Right to form, those to whom this particular point applied scoffed, which immediately revealed that He had accurately appraised them. He completed the indict-

THIRD YEAR MINISTRY

ment with the statement in verse 15. The remarks about the kingdom and divorce seemingly developed the thought that such men as these had been attempting to handle God's kingdom to suit themselves, and, as a specific illustration, had disobeyed God's will in the matter of marriage, divorcing and marrying as if God had revealed nothing along this line at all. We can not but wonder if those listening realized that Jesus had just informed them of ways to get lost: all of which could be described as disregarding the future by disregarding the present.

Conclusion: your choice in this world determines your reward in the next world. The reality of the present is only understood accurately when compared with its relationship to the future. Then Jesus finished this sermon by underscoring the following: 1) the future world is real, 2) how we live here (our environment is not the deciding issue at all) determines how we live hereafter, 3) which existence is eternal in respect to everyone, 4) the future existence is every bit as actual as this one, as consciousness in all of its facets will be ours. To state it another way, personality never ceases (which is saying that all live forever). Further remarks about this specific point are made in discussion of # 72 (6).

Note that the rich man evidently failed to heed God's will for him, and his physical death ended his chance for heaven (do you understand better the meaning of John 3:36 now?). Another lesson taught is that God expects any or all to obey His revealed will for them (note here Romans 1:31-32; 2:14-15) and will not do anything special for anyone. Some have taught through the centuries that unless God in some way activates a person, he will not want to become a Christian. That is how the devilish doctrine of the mourner's bench and "praying through" came into existence. God alone knows how many people are in hell because someone told them they

could not accept Christ until they had had an emotional experience from God, and because they never could get such, they became discouraged and turned back to sin. Abraham had his facts straight when he remarked that the brothers yet on earth had enough of God's will to make the right choice. Christ died for everyone, and left the New Testament to tell men how to accept His death. That is God's part. Our part is to accept Christ. It is just that simple. It is pertinent to remark that a resurrection does not necessarily convince anyone of anything. Note the text in John 11:45-53 and Matt. 28:11-15.

Luke 17:1-10 presents one of the most interesting texts in the Bible. Jesus taught some very basic lessons about the nature of man, relationships to others and about the faith life.

Consider the first sentence: Causes of stumbling are inevitable. This expression has meaning only against the backdrop of man's power to choose. Such characteristic, in relationship to the subject of sin, makes man a moral being, and unique of all God's creation in this respect. All else that God created acts without the moral realm, hence sin is no factor in any existence but man's. Obviously, the ability to choose (ability, power, right—all of these or any other words of similar impact stem from the basic idea of freedom to choose. In the text in John 1:12 and Matt. 28:18, the word translated power or authority basically carries the idea of freedom, thus right, power, etc.) would presuppose something to choose. The failure to so live in due respect of such responsibility results in sin. Therefore, anything God created should be considered in this light: here is something that may either be used or misused (the chance to "stumble" is present).

If such be true, then the explicit relationships of one Christian to another in the text must be considered with this in mind: If opportunities to sin are ever present, then,

THIRD YEAR MINISTRY

1) each Christian must ever be alert to forgive or ask forgiveness, as sin is likely to occur, and 2) each Christian must treat others as they wish to be treated, Matt. 7:12. Too, since one of the basic facts of the disciple's existence in relationship to others will be that one might seemingly urge the wrong rather than the right in some way, each must always allow faith to lead, and minimize any such possibility. This is so, not only because of the hinted-at punishment in verse 2, but because each knows the possible destiny of people who die in the wrong relationship with God. Each disciple must constantly avoid the sin of causing others to sin! To this extent each becomes a "brother's keeper," Gen. 4; Romans 14:1—15:13; I Cor. 8:1—11:1.

Verses 3 and 4 highlighted the duty of forgiveness. The disciples were admonished to take heed in regard to self, and also to their brother. If sin occurred in a brother's life, the consequent responsibility was to rebuke him for it. It will be worth the space to ask you, dear reader, what your idea of the word "sin" is. As Jesus used it in this context, what frame of reference did He have? Whose idea of sin did He mean: anybody's or as God defined it? Note next that if repentance was produced (which was the *object* of the rebuke, as in Matt. 18:15) then each disciple must forgive the brother who sinned when he asked for it. If they did not do so, what sort of Christian would they have been? Would they, unwilling to forgive, have become an occasion for stumbling? By the way, was sin the transgression of a command? If so, did Jesus command them to forgive? In this connection, verse 4 instructed them to the effect that they might have to forgive more than once (Jesus implied without limit in Matt. 18:21-35).

How is your faith by now? Any inclination to give up and get out? If so, what sort of occasion to stumbling

would that be? Perhaps the same reaction that was the apostle's is yours: I need more faith (than I have)! Sorry, no relief in sight. Jesus promptly taught that even a minute amount of faith could do seemingly impossible things, verses 5-6. And to keep the pressure on, He then reminded them that even if they did all that had been commanded, they were only doing what they were supposed to do, and had no ground to request something special. Such was ever the faith life.

Bethany—John 11:1-53

"Time waits for no one, it passes you by; It's just like a river, flowing out to the sea." Thus did the song writer describe what happens to all finite things. Time tests everything, and the inevitable occurs: decay, disintegration, breakage, death. Yet, so often people treat such facts as did the rich fool of Luke 12—as if they did not exist. What fools we mortals be!

The preceding paragraph was intended to do this: help each one realize that Christ in one's life changes death from a tragedy to a triumph. As evidenced in the rich man of Luke 16, death does not change character at all, nor destiny hinged on that character. What we are at death, we remain, insofar as our relationship with God is concerned. God may or may not permit the prolongation of our earthly life, but demise is yet certain. Man is appointed to death, God has decreed.

Whether anyone ever died or not in the presence of Him who was life we do not know. But at least one whom Jesus loved died. His name: Lazarus. While Jesus was yet in Perea, Lazarus became ill (whether of a disease or old age, we know not) and his sisters sent word to Jesus. He remarked, upon learning of it, that the illness was not in the direction of death, but in behalf of the

THIRD YEAR MINISTRY

glory of God, verse 4. We call this statement to your attention because of the use of the word "death" by Jesus. The reader should call to mind what that word means to him in its common usage. Having done so, pursue its meaning on the lips of Jesus, especially in this text; Luke 7; Matt. 9, Mark 5 and Luke 8; and Matt. 22, Mark 12 and Luke 20. Note, in addition, that death (Lazarus did actually die, as we understand the word) could be a means to honor God.

"Jesus loved . . . but He stayed." The ways of God are often paradoxical. Did Jesus tarry in Perea two days after the reception of the message because He had less love than the sisters thought? or because He had something better in mind?

However, He decided to go, and announced it to His disciples. They were understandably upset at this, because the intent to kill Him was well known, and rather strong, building up even from the first Passover, John 2. Responding to their question in verse 8, He remarked in verses 9-10 about one walking in the day, and the confidence possessed in the sunlight hours. This seems a bit enigmatic (the meaning is rather obscure), but we understand Jesus to be saying that He was like the man: He knew what he was doing because He was able "to see."

However, the remark in verse 11 was just as obscure, and the puzzled disciples so indicated. "Why walk all those miles just to awake Lazarus? (They were thinking: He will awaken long before we get there, so what gives?) For the reader, what use of the word "sleep" did Jesus make here? Was it equal to the meaning of the word "death" and vice versa? The disciples then were told that Lazarus was, in their language, dead. They thought the trip to Bethany was so dangerous that Lazarus would not be alone in death, but their courage was not lacking, even if their understanding was.

Pausing just a moment to remark on this section, we posit the following idea about the use of the word *sleep*, leaving the major discussion of the state of the dead until # 72 (6) and the section of Selected Studies. We believe that Jesus' use of the word means that our whole understanding of death is wrong. Man has seemingly never really understood the concept of what he himself is: a spirit being living in a mortal, fleshly container. This container, subject to the laws of all finite things, wears out, if other circumstances do not happen to shorten life. God has so ordained a plan for human beings that when such time occurs, the real being, the spirit being (the real you) goes back to God Who gave it, the body to the dust from whence it came. Hence, to God, the person never ceases to exist as personality.

For us, the description of a personality in sleep means they are very much alive, simply in a particular state of life we call sleep. Such is the real case, then, with death. To God the personality we call "dead" is not so at all. Note that Jesus addressed the widow of Nain's son, Jairus' daughter and Lazarus as if they could hear him without any problem at all, which they could and did. To God, they were not dead. We need to consider God's usage of the term "death" and its derivatives and adjust ours accordingly.

Arriving at the town of Bethany, the party learned that Lazarus had been dead four days, probably having been buried on the day of death if possible. As was the custom, the family was still in mourning, perhaps with professional mourners yet present.

Learning of the arrival of Jesus, Martha went to meet Jesus, and the ensuing conversation is both thrilling and enigmatic. Martha's expression in verse 21 is one of the last. Did she think, as did the official in John 4 and Jairus that Jesus' power ended at death? Verse 22 is much the

same. Is she dropping a hint that perhaps the prayer of Jesus would avail something for Lazarus?

When Jesus replied with a statement that could be understood at least two ways, she responded with her understanding of how it was to be in the future with Lazarus. It is pertinent to remark that the Old Testament taught but little in the way of resurrection. However, we do not know how much the people understand about the future life, nor how much they might have been taught, by others or Jesus Himself. Much is implied in John's preaching as recorded in Matt. 3:7-12, and it was a cardinal doctrine of the Pharisees, Acts 23:6-8. Jesus taught considerable about the future life, and the sisters had doubtless heard some of that.

The expression of Jesus in verses 25-26 is certainly one of the most familiar of any Bible text, and truly one of the most cheering. However, does verse 26 repeat verse 25 in slightly different form, referring exclusively to the spirit of man rather than the body as in verse 25, or are the two verses to be understood in slightly different ways? Does verse 25 teach that the cessation of life in the physical body is but for a time, while verse 26 refers to the status of the personality who trusts himself to Jesus, and receives as a reward the quality known as eternal life?

Jesus plainly taught that His relationship to life was such that He was life; that the whole idea of the resurrection was from Him insomuch that He was the resurrection. John's gospel often records similar ideas, not only that Jesus was the giver of life, as in 1:3-4; 5:21, 24-29; but that He was the water, the bread, the truth, the way, etc. Such realities are aspects of Jesus, Who is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, I Cor. 1:30.

We should not pass over the importance of the tenses Jesus used here. The values to be obtained in and through Him are contingent upon a continued life of trust, espe-

cially as is promised in verse 26. Note the same sort of conditional idea in 3:36 as both the expressions "the one who believes" and "the one disobeying," (or "believeth not" as in the King James Version) translate present participles, implying a continual state of affairs. 5:24 is another sample of the same thing, and so is 10:27 where the Greek verbs translated "hearing" and "following" carry the idea of habitual discipleship. There is no life but in the Son, I John 5:11-12, and anyone must habitually be in Christ even until the point of death, Revelation 2:10b, to procure what Jesus has to give.

Whether Martha understood all that Jesus said or not is doubtful, but she knew whatever He did would be right. Might all who read this be likeminded. Her confession in verse 27 was made under more trying circumstances than Peter's some three months earlier, and is equal to it in every way. The "coming one" was the subject of prophecy (Matthew 4:1) and she believed it had been fulfilled. The Greek expression is the same as in John 1:27 and Matthew 11:2, "the one coming."

Martha departed to bring Mary, intending to do so without others following along apparently. But when those with Mary saw her leave, they followed, and were treated to the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus.

Mary repeated Martha's expression of verse 21, and Jesus began to more fully share their sorrow as well as expressing His own feelings over the incident. All who read this ought to be aware of the fact that God can understand the deepest sorrow. Yes, He understands, and cares, doubtless even more than we do.

Whether the Greek terms of verse 34 describing the feelings of Jesus can be fully understood by us or not, they surely indicate that Christ was more than just a passive onlooker. Those who observed Him weeping rightly interpreted His tears as a sign of His concern. Some, as

others, had not forgotten another cure (John 9) some six months earlier, and so remarked about it, though sharing the common view that His power to help was ended by death.

When Jesus arrived at the tomb, He directed the stone to be rolled away in preparation for the next act: resurrecting Lazarus. From the description of the tomb and the fact that Lazarus was able to come out, we assume a tomb of such a nature as to permit movement by people inside of it, though whether the tomb was in a hillside or cave is impossible to decide. The tomb in which Jesus was buried was large enough for people to go inside of it.

Martha's faith was strong, but so was the reality of her dead brother. She did not think beyond the corpse, as her remark indicates. But Jesus was not hindered by her unbelief. In fact, the miracle did not depend on anyone except Jesus Himself, as His prayer indicates. Having audibly expressed His thankfulness to His Father, Lazarus was commanded to come out. Having obeyed, the clothes which bound him were removed (did they contain spices as the common custom was?) and Lazarus was a part of Bethany again. The fact that we have no record of his experiences while "dead" is at once remarkable and intriguing. The explanation of Paul about his experience in II Corinthians 12:2-4 is not any more helpful. The only real glimpse of the affairs in the next life, other than what can be gleaned in Revelation, is that of Luke 16:19-31.

That Jesus knew the whole affair from beginning to end is evident from verse 15. We hence conclude He also knew about the results, even the one prophesied in verses 50-51.

As remarked on Luke 16:19-31, a resurrection does not necessarily make anyone a believer, though it adds to their opportunities and also to their culpableness. Some went away believing in Jesus. Others went away planning

not only to put Lazarus to death again, 12:10-11, but also Jesus 11:46-53, Who raised him from the dead, simply because, as Pilate observed in Mark 15:10, the men were envious of Jesus.

As John wrote the remarks of the council for us to read, one can not help but note the false ideas of the kingdom they held, verse 48, nor the selfishness they manifested, such as in the ironical statement of Caiaphas, who had held his position eighteen years, about Jesus, Who would be offered that fateful year as the one real sacrifice for sin. He was critical of the council because they did not "reckon up" (meaning of the Greek term) the total picture correctly. However, Caiaphas became a prophet for God quite unknowingly, as John shows.

Ephraim—John 11:54-57

Jesus immediately departed from there because of such thinking. He apparently did not go back to Perea, at least for a little while.

The Passover being near, those coming for purification talked among themselves about the definite possibility (to them) that Jesus would not even attend the feast. How little they really understood Him.

Purification was needed for several things, such as contact with the dead, Numbers 19:11-22; leprosy, Leviticus 13, 14; birth, chs. 12, 15; contact with unclean animals, ch. 11, Deuteronomy 14; or even physical faults, or murder, as in Leviticus 21 and Deuteronomy 21.

A Trip Through Samaria, Galilee and Perea to Jerusalem—Matthew 19, 20; Mark 10; Luke 17, 18

This extended tour will bring to our attention several subjects of interest, among these leprosy, prayer, marriage and divorce. At the close of the tour, Jesus will

still have many followers, and will arrive at Jericho to begin the twenty mile walk to Jerusalem where He will be crucified.

"Unclean" "Unclean"—the cry was often heard by people of that day, because those who had any of the variety of skin diseases labeled by the general term "leprosy" were required to so notify anyone within earshot. As with Matthew 8, we will advise the reader to peruse the special study on leprosy. We would note in passing that the term used in the Bible does not mean the same thing as we use it to mean today at all. Read Leviticus 13, 14 for yourself. Even garments, 13:47ff., and houses, 14:33ff., could be afflicted with "leprosy" as the Bible uses the term.

The ten men had in some way contracted any of several surface afflictions of the skin known as leprosy. The common procedure was to isolate such a person from the community, with the person wearing a torn garment, bare head and wearing a cloth over the lower part of the face. Whether all did this or not is unknown to us. Sometimes the skin affliction was seemingly incurable, but sometimes cleared up itself. If the person became completely covered, he was pronounced clean, Leviticus 13:13. See Leviticus 14:1ff. for the cleansing ritual lepers were to follow.

"Mercy!" "Have mercy on us!" Just what the men might have meant by the term "mercy" in another context is unknown, but they knew what they meant here, and so did Jesus. As usual, He directed the men to obey the law, and show themselves to the priest. This command is all the more interesting since one of the men was not acceptable to a Jewish priest, as he was a Samaritan. As the men obeyed, and went their way, the leprosy left them. Such healing is instructive in that the men did not question the command, but in their obedience

were healed. In this sense, obedience equaled faith, as it normally does in the Bible.

Whether the men proceeded on to the temple in Jerusalem or not is unknown, but one of them, the Samaritan, returned to give thanks to Jesus. Christ knew that all ten had been healed, and makes a point of telling others about it. We can but remark that such was typical of the whole Jewish nation, and had been for centuries. They were personifications of thanklessness and ingratitude. Note the following texts, out of many, which bespeak of their general attitude: Matthew 3:7-10; 15:24; 21:33-41; Luke 11:29-32; and Romans 10:18-21.

(2) The sermon about the kingdom in Luke 17:20-37 is instructive in several ways. Jesus seemed to pass by the question asked and gave some detailed facts about His second coming. He remarked about the nature of the kingdom that it was not a revolution outwardly, but a relation inwardly. The remark about being able "to observe" signs translates a Greek term used in the medical world, in respect to watching for symptoms of a disease. The essential nature of the kingdom was internal not external. We know the church (equal to the kingdom) is like that: a relationship to Jesus that is only outward in some ways, and is essentially a spiritual kingdom, since its king and subjects are spirit personalities.

Let us consider what Jesus did say in response to the question:

1. He will not come when desired, v. 22
2. What way He will not come, v. 23
3. What way He will come, v. 24
4. What must happen first, v. 25
5. World conditions at the time, vv. 26-30
6. Correct attitudes about things of the world, vv. 31-33

THIRD YEAR MINISTRY

7. Things that will happen at the time of judgment, vv. 34-36
8. The time of His coming and judgment, v. 37

Notice the fact that God has set the time, v. 37, and nothing will change it. So the *fact* of the coming is certain, though the *time* and *circumstances* largely unknown. The major emphasis then would be about the personal reckoning at that time, and the imperative to be ready.

Two items of interest: one is that the historicity of Noah and the flood is certain, as is that of Lot and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah with the other two cities of the plain. Secondly, the Greek term translated "eagles" in most versions would be better translated "vultures" as eagles are not birds of carrion while vultures are. (Note the similar discussion in Matthew 24-25; Mark 13 and Luke 21.)

(3) The teaching on prayer and the two parables told in connection with it are perhaps more familiar to most people than the text in Luke 17. The emphasis is on the one imperative in life: faith in God. Trust that God will do the right thing at the right time. To state it a different way, trust in the total character of God is the basis for prayer, or any other facet of the believer's life.

The parable teaches that we are to be always prayerful, in the sense that we never fail to ask our heavenly Father for that which we need, and never doubt that His answer will not only be forthcoming but will also be the right one. Such an attitude of prayer will not count any supposed delay as indifference or ignorance, but rather will assume that God really cares for His own (in contrast to the judge who cared nothing for the woman, or anyone else either, v. 2, 4-5) and the "delay" is for our own good. His very character "holds Him in line"

whereas the judge had no such restraining influence. He will always do the very best for His loved ones.

Perhaps a word or two used in the parable is of interest. The word "vindicate" used in most versions in v. 3 is hard to understand. Did she mean "protect me" or "right the wrong?" It occurs in such texts as Romans 12:19; II Corinthians 10:6; Revelation 6:10 and 19:2. The idea of "always prayerful," or whatever your version uses in v. 1, is a translation of a Greek construction underscoring the idea of the vital necessity to pray. The idea of "wear out" or "weary" in v. 5b translates the same word Paul used in I Corinthians 9:27 as he described his efforts to keep control of himself.

The Pharisee and the publican are the next examples of prayer life, two clear photographs of the attitude about self in relationship to God, whereas the first parable concerned the attitude about God Himself.

Treating others as nothing is the actual end of despising them, and this sort of thinking is ungodly, as is the companion idea of self-righteousness. Neither make answered prayer a very great possibility.

The Pharisee did not exactly say so, but his underlying idea is that God would have been destitute of servants if he had not been alive. His utterance expressed thankfulness, though not for mercy (did he think he really needed any?) but rather that his life was equal to the law's demands. He reels off a list of people he is unlike, such as extortioners, Luke 3:13; unjust, Matthew 23:13-15; adulterers, Luke 7:36-50; or (climax of all iniquity!) *this tax-collector*. One can but wonder, as the prayer goes on, if he thought God owed him something! The law required only one day of fasting per year, the day of Atonement, but the Pharisees added two per week between the feasts of Passover and Pentecost, Tabernacles and Dedication. Do you see better why Jesus talked

about fasting in Matthew 6:16-18? Needless to say, his sort are sometimes noticed in the church as surely as the fact is true that grace does not produce such characters!

"Justified!" This was the verdict of God that day—however it was not a description of the Pharisee (do you remember Luke 12:1?), but of the forgiven publican. So Jesus passed the sentence on two types of lives, one to abhor and the other to mimic. The fruit of each life was glimpsed in the prayers uttered. The publican did not brag, nor preach, nor do aught except confess his need of God's grace. He got it. He stood afar off, perhaps not even in the outside edge of the men's court, but in the court of women or even farther away in the court of the Gentiles. He had eyes only for himself, and expressed the idea that he was *the* sinner, if ever there was one. His request was only for mercy, which God graciously gave. Success!

One remark about a Greek term used by the publican. It is a bit hard to translate in the verb form which is in our text, but is found in such passages as Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 9:5; I John 2:2 and 4:10 in the idea of propitiation. The idea involved is that of making the relationship between himself and God right again.

(4) The text now at hand is found in Matthew 19 and Mark 10. The opening verses of these two chapters indicate movement sometime prior to our texts of 19:3-12 and 10:2-12. The texts in Matthew 5:31-32; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:1-6; I Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4; and I Peter 3:1-7 are to be considered in relationship to this text.

Whether the Pharisees had sinister motives in their "test" question or not, Jesus gives the most elaborate answer about marriage in the Gospels. He first pointed out that He, as a part of the Godhead, had intended that from the beginning of time the marriage state was to be

the normal state of male and female adults. Anyone who wished could make himself or herself as a eunuch in behalf of the kingdom, vv. 10-12, but this was by free choice, not command. Paul notes as much in I Corinthians 9:5. Thus He does not command divorce at any time, only permitting it (and that permission was only necessary because men's hearts were obstinate to God's will in the matter, as v. 8 and Ephesians 4:17-19 show). As He notes, the only command He gave Moses was in respect to a bill (writing) of divorcement, not to promote divorce. Forgiveness is to take place in a marriage problem, rather than divorce, which is simply a means of running away from the demands of marriage rather than facing those demands. The texts in 18:21-35 and Luke 17:1-10 are important in this respect.

Hence, the question of the Pharisees really did not get to the crux of the matter. The issue really was, not is it lawful, but rather is it godly (what God would do)? The question also pointed out another age-old idea, that of divorce for any cause. Some of the Jewish rabbis taught that unchastity was the only reason for separation (such as Shammai) while others (like Hillel) taught that almost anything could be considered as an "indecent thing" (or an "uncleanness," Deuteronomy 24:1ff.), thus a reason to divorce. Had these men been more observant, they would have been aware that God had always hated divorce, Malachi 2:15-16. The Hebrew prophets had used the idea of marriage to represent the relationship of Israel to God. The unfaithfulness in this marriage relationship even as in the physical realm was a sorry mark on Israel's character throughout their whole history.

To summarize: God always intended marriage at the proper time in life, and likewise intended that such marriage be for life. He (as part of the Godhead) had not changed His plans. Hence, when divorce is considered,

THIRD YEAR MINISTRY

no way out of problems that people get into by divorce was (or is) given (except that of forgiveness) because God never intended for the problem to exist. Hence, questions are asked countless times about such, and those asked (whether preachers, teachers or whoever) have no Bible answer to give, because the Bible does not give any. Sin always creates problems. Hence, we are commanded to abstain from it, over and over again, so that we will not have such problems.

Matthew's phrase, "except for adultery," 5:32 and 19:9 provides the only reason for divorce given. We submit that Jesus did not say that divorce is to occur if such happens, only that divorce may occur (is permitted). The better part is for both parties (husband and wife) to act like Luke 17:1-10 expects them to act, forgive and/or repent, and remain married.

But the reader can easily see that such as we just stated is a matter of opinion over which differences occur. We readily agree, granting that no interpretation is of any authority except as we agree that it is the one intended by the original author. Since Jesus is not here to ask, we have to permit others to do as we want them to do for us (Matthew 7:12 again) and adhere to the best interpretation possible. Whatever we consider the right view of a passage is that to which we are bound. We are not bound to that one view forever, if someone's view, considered at a later date, is thought more correct than the one we hold. We may change our view to suit. We are thus obligated to study God's word to discern the original intent of the author, admit any difficulties or problems that make a firm decision impossible, and obey that which we believe (sometimes we use the words "feel" or "think" as synonyms for believe) is the correct interpretation. We have taken the space to write this, because good honest men have differed over this whole

subject of marriage and divorce for centuries. There is no way to get an authoritative interpretation at this junction of history (the idea of studying a text and asking God for an interpretation is productive of only one thing: making God the author of confusion).

We then can only pose questions for the remainder of the text. For the sake of clarity, we will number the characters involved as follows: husband No. 1, and wife No. 2, a man not her husband as No. 3, a woman not the wife as No. 4.

In 19:9, if No. 1 marries No. 4, is No. 1 the one who sins? Some ancient texts insert the clause that is found in Luke 16:18b. Whether it is to be in Matthew's text or not is questionable, but answer this: if No. 3 marries No. 2, is No. 3 alone guilty of sin? No. 2 is not said to be.

In respect to Marks' account, in v. 11, if No. 1 remarries, against whom does he sin, No. 2 or No. 4? (Who is the "her?"). Is the "wife" the original, or does "wife" mean anyone to whom a man is married? To restate, what is meant by the word "wife" by Jesus—is it only the original woman (the same question is pertinent to the word "husband")? If the answer be yes, then all others are not considered as "wife" or "husband." Back to verse 11, it does not say that No. 1 sins in the remarriage. Does the text in 9:9 apply to No. 1? What does "against her" mean?

To complicate the problem, no one is absolutely sure just what constitutes a marriage, or what breaks it either. Does sexual union do so? Only sexual union? If so, then, 1) the couples (some exist) who never have sexual union, though seemingly married in the culture of which they are a part, are not really married in God's sight; and 2) any sexual union with another makes a new marriage and breaks (?) the old one, if either or both of the

people are married (or is it just the first sexual union that constitutes a marriage?). How do we tell when God considers a man and woman married? If there is unchastity on the part of one, does this permit (or require?) divorce, but not permit (or require?) remarriage? Or in this regard does the "innocent" party have the right to remarriage but not the guilty party? What about the third person involved here—is this one married to the "unfaithful" partner by dint of the sex union or not? If so, why? Does the fact that either party becomes a Christian change the use of terms any? Does marriage become "unmarriage" because the state before God is changed? (Remember, any and all sin is forgiven when one becomes a Christian.) If you hold the position that sexual union, and that alone constitutes marriage, what verse proves that? Or what verse says only the first sexual union?

Turning to Matthew's account in 5:31-32, if No. 1 divorces No. 2, how does No. 1 make No. 2 an adulterous person? By putting her in the position of 1) having to remarry with any remarriage causing her to be adulterous or 2) just making No. 2 appear as if she were guilty of being unfaithful? Suppose No. 1 divorces No. 2 and marries No. 4, why can not No. 2 consider herself free to remarry? Is it because of Luke 16:18b? Does Mark 10:12 not permit No. 2 the same possibility of divorce and remarriage as is No. 1's? If not, why? Does Jesus say in Matthew 5:32 that both No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3 sin in any remarriage, assuming no reason for divorce, but not No. 4?

For a moment, reread Matthew 5:27-30. Since Jesus says that the lustful look is equal to adultery, and No. 2 knows No. 1 has lusted after No. 4, what prohibits No. 2 from divorcing No. 1? (or assume No. 2 lusts after No. 3, etc.) When is adultery adultery?

Does the text in I Corinthians 7:10-11 actually forbid divorce but not separations? Does v. 15 still not permit a woman to remarry even if No. 1 (or No. 2) leaves? Is the marriage still "on" though the couple do not live together? What does the expression "is not bound" mean? is not bound to live together? to remarry? to go through divorce proceedings? or because one is a believer, the other not, no marriage existed? (or does "husband" and "wife" imply marriage?)

By the way, have you discovered the phrase "living in adultery" yet? If not, how do men assert this idea anyway? The texts of the New Testament never use such a phrase at all. Does the fact that a No. 1 divorces No. 2 and marries No. 4, without a just reason, mean that every time the new partners engage in sexual union the sin of adultery occurs? If so, for whom? No. 1 only? No. 1 and No. 4?

Where does the Bible say that if a couple become Christian, and either partner or both have been divorced prior to this union, that the union should be dissolved and each partner is to return to the original mates (if such exist)? Suppose both (or either) have since remarried—why should they (if not Christian) break up a union to accommodate the repentant partner? What we are asking is this: does repentance demand cessation of sin in every way? Suppose that the new Christian is now sanctified in God's sight, and repentance only demands that the future be lived in obedience of God's will—how does the believer stand?

You see, there are no Bible answers to these questions, or dozens of others like them. God simply did not intend for divorce to occur, nor make provision for solving problems it causes. Marriage is for life. Jesus does not even say that marriage is for love, or that love is the basis for marriage and cessation of love the reason for

divorce. We will to love whatever we wish to love. We remain married because we will to do so, whether we love or not. If we cease loving, it is not because we can not love, or do not love, but rather because we will not to love. We can just get to willing to love our partner again. Since that is God's command, we obey.

Incidentally, Jesus makes Moses a real historical figure, and asserts his authorship of at least the portion of Deuteronomy 24 to which reference is made. We point this out because there are many who teach that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch. Jesus asserted the contrary several times, as here and John 5:45-47.

(5) Our text, Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17, highlights an event somewhat like that of Matthew 18. The advantage of parallel accounts is seen when Matthew's account is compared to Mark and Luke. The latter two explain what Matthew's account means by "to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." Mark and Luke show that is the childlike spirit that permits one to become a part of the kingdom. Perhaps willingness to be taught is a major item in that childlikeness. This text is perhaps most familiar for the oft quoted verse from the King James version, "Suffer the little children . . ." Most people do not know that "suffer" has an older meaning of "permit" or "allow" and has nothing to do with our idea of suffer. The verse certainly has been misused because people did not know this fact. For instance, the author has seen pictures and posters of little children who were starving, etc., with large letters across the top, "suffer little children."

A most familiar personage comes into view as we consider Matthew. 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-22 and Luke 18:18-23, that of the rich young ruler. The value of parallel accounts again is seen, since no one account specifically calls the young man that. Matthew notes in

v. 20 that the one coming was young, and a man. Mark notes that he was a man, while Luke states he was a ruler. All three describe him as rich, but only Mark records that Jesus loved him. The answer of Jesus indicates that life eternal was not something to be had for the asking, but was rather a test of obedience and a life-long pursuit. Note that Jesus actually gave five commands to him (while not telling him he did not have to follow the Mosaic law, which was still in force for the young man) 1) go, 2) sell, 3) give, 4) come, 5) follow. If the young man did as Jesus commanded him, he would actually be with the One Who was life, John 11:25-26; 14:6, and Who could really tell him how to keep the law of God applicable to him. Thus eternal life was not a matter of one choice in life, but rather a result of right choices all of life. (Even being loved by Jesus, 10:21, or by God, John 3:16, does not put one in the "saved" group. God does not love anyone enough to save them in their sin.)

The remark of the young man to Jesus, "good teacher" makes us ask what he meant. Did he mean others were selfish, prejudiced, or ignorant? Compare Matthew 22:16 here.

Why did Jesus respond as recorded in Luke, v. 19? Was He trying to find out what the young man meant by "good?" Was He trying to teach the young man something about Himself—such as "Do you address me as God? If so, will you do what I say?"

Matthew, v. 16 records that he ask about a good deed. Did he think that eternal life could be gained by one good deed? Or was it that he was honestly anxious as to whether he had really done what God required? or that there were things (and teachers) that did not lead to eternal life?

THIRD YEAR MINISTRY

When Jesus told him to keep the commands, we note these things: 1) life is a gift of God, but obedience to His will is only and ever the means to attain that life. 2) nor does obedience exclude faith, for faith that God will do what He promised is the motivation to do what He commanded.

Have you noticed that Jesus quoted the last six commandments, those having to do with one's relationship to one's fellow humans? Is the way one does these six a measure of how he keeps the first three?

Matthew records in verse 16 and verse 20 the two questions any and all should ask: "what must I do" (God does not need to do anything for us as He has already done all He needs to do) and "what lack I yet" (God will supply all we need to live for Him, and stands ready to do so).

Was the young man unwilling to love his neighbor as himself? Did riches have him (as was the case of the rich man in Luke 12, and Luke 16)? We might recall the question of Luke 13:23 about being saved, and Jesus' answer: "Agonize to enter!" For few are willing to hate their own life and give up all they possess, Luke 14:26-33. Have you found the "pearl of greatest price, eternal life so fair?" Are you willing to sell all you have and purchase the pearl you have found, Matthew 13:45-46?

(6) The apostle's reward spoken about in Matthew 19:23-30; Mark 10:23-31 and Luke 18:24-30 is the result of the interview with the rich ruler. Perhaps the last condition of the young man as he walked away brought to the attention of the apostles of the difficulty of being saved. Added to this possibility was the actual statement of Jesus in v. 23-24. We do not know for sure, but the disciples may have been thinking something like "If this man, rich, moral, (and whatever else they considered

about him that was advantageous) can not get into the kingdom, who then could?"

But no one starts with the balances loaded in their favor—no one automatically "has it made." But God is the God of things men can not do, and He can make anyone "stand" who so desires, Romans 14:4. Thus in answer to the astonished question of the disciples, Jesus points this fact out to them. When Peter remarks about how much they had left (no more than required, Luke 14:26ff., for anyone who could follow Christ, be he the departing young man or the apostles), Jesus outlines the reward to anticipate in such cases. The fact of reward, though, does not make the decision to serve God any less commendable. The obedient life is what God wants, and desires. We are so formed (God knows our "frame," Psalm 103:14) that all kinds of motivation are both helpful and yet unselfish. It surely is not wrong to thwart the efforts of the devil as he attempts to undo the death of Jesus on Calvary.

In conclusion, Jesus promised eternal life, to any and all who so chose to receive it, in return for placing Him and His message first throughout their life. The departing young man had come seeking just that very thing—how sad to make the exchange he was making! Jesus remarked (about some others) that with such an attitude as the young man's even that which he had would be taken away, Matthew 25:29; Luke 19:26. May we, rather than do as the young man, choose Jesus; and rest assured that "It will be worth it all, when we see Jesus."

(7) "However, it's not going to be like you think it is!" Thus do we paraphrase what we assume is the meaning of Matthew 19:30 and Mark 10:31. Jesus had spoken this little puzzler at the end of another similar lesson recorded in Luke 13:22-30. Now, upon repeating

it, He relates the parable in Matthew 20:1-16 to explain its meaning.

The market place in that day would have been bustling with activity early in the morning, for men would be coming with their tools to be hired for the day. Those in search of help would also be there. Jesus spoke about a certain man who hired men for the day, and the pay agreed upon was a denarius (regardless of what the value of such coin is in regard to our money today, it was apparently equal to a day's wage, and thus comparable to our day's wage). Phillip had reckoned that two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread to feed the multitude, John 6:7; and the ointment Mary used to anoint Jesus was worth 300 denarii, John 12:5. We give a list of different monies used in Jesus' day at Luke 21:1-4.

The owner returned about 9:00 a.m. and finding others unhired, sent them to work also, agreeing to pay them whatever was right. So also at 12, 3, and 5 p.m.

At evening time, the men came to be paid for the day's labor so that they might purchase what was needed for their families (note Deuteronomy 24:14-15). All, beginning at the last hired through those hired early in the day, received a denarius.

Though the first ones hired found fault with the man, he pointed out to them that he was not only doing exactly what he had said, what he had was his to do with as he so choose.

This is the point of the parable and illustrates the verse in 19:30. God, like the owner, keeps His promises, but He remains master. He will do what is right to do, our ideas notwithstanding. As Abraham said in Genesis "The judge of all the earth can but do right." And so God will do right, even as the owner said he would do. No one will merit heaven, and anyone who gets there will do so because God has done right, acting upon His

unchangeable principles. Any and all who accept Jesus as His Son and their savior, and remain in Him until death, will so be rewarded. Who begrudges God's grace to others?

(8) While traveling towards Jerusalem on this last swing around Palestine, Jesus once again predicts His upcoming crucifixion, Matthew 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-24; Luke 18:31-14. He predicts nine distinct things that were to happen, with prophecy being fulfilled as it took place:

1. delivered to chief priests and scribes,
 2. they condemn Him to death,
 3. delivered to the Gentiles,
 4. to be mocked,
 5. spit upon,
 6. treated shamefully,
 7. scourged,
 8. crucified,
 9. and raised from dead after (on) the third day.
- Note that John remarks in 20:9 that the disciples did not know (=comprehend) about the resurrection from the dead.

We do not know why those with Jesus were amazed or afraid, unless they shared the disciple's attitude expressed in John 11:26, or were reacting to something He said, perhaps even this prophecy. Nor do we quite fathom why they did not comprehend what He did say, as Luke reports in v. 34. Did they share Peter's view as expressed in Matt. 16:22, or have such a nationalistic spirit that such things were unacceptable to them? In respect to this last idea, consider the next event with James and John.

(9) Matt. 20:20-23 and Mark 10:35-40 record the request of James and John through their mother (see John 19:25-27 for a discussion of who this may have been) to

THIRD YEAR MINISTRY

Jesus for right and left hand seats in His kingdom. Perhaps the promise of seats in the remarks of Matt. 19:28 might have prompted this request, as Jesus had not previously mentioned such a concept (at least that is recorded). It might have been prompted also by the idea of the kingdom which had been mentioned often. Certainly such a request was not unusual or too surprising in this regard, nor were these brothers the only ones thinking of such things (consider what Jesus' implied in the immediately following verses as well as such texts as Matt. 18:1ff.; Luke 22:24-30).

The brothers and their mother apparently expected the kingdom to be soon. Perhaps they were as ready as they seemed, considering their response to Jesus' question, but the things for which they ask were not to be had by asking. Certainly the expressed promise of that which the men were to endure, whether they understood or not, is important, as it calls to mind Luke 12:49-50, and the evident reference to the events soon to immerse Jesus in the sacrifice for the world's sins.

Not willing to drop the matter, perhaps because of the reaction of the other ten disciples, Jesus details the way to greatness (was that what James and John thought the result would be of having the right and left hand seats?). He calls to their minds the false greatness of rulers of their knowledge. Using His own life as a kind of road map to follow, He teaches that the only great position in the kingdom is that of a servant, and the only acceptable quality is usefulness. Someone has well remarked that greatness has little to do with wishes and wants, but much to do with will and way. Positions are not to be had for the asking, or by demand, but rather are achieved and thus deserved. Greatness is in service—how well does Christ serve through you?

*Jericho—Matt. 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52;
Luke 18:35-43*

“Lord, my sight. (Please!!)” The problem of blindness was common twenty centuries ago, and even yet today in some cultures. The care of new-born babies was sometimes minus the concern (and/or the means) to protect little eyes. Consequently, many went through life sightless. Perhaps none who can see understand even a little of what it means to live in a sightless world. No sunsets or rainbows, or dew-drops on morning grass, sparkling in the early sun. No azure skies dotted with puffs of white clouds—or whatever you think is beautiful, or even worth seeing—can ever be theirs. Have you ever tried to describe the unseen to the unseeing?

The temple built by Herod might not have been the measure of Solomon’s a millennium earlier, but every Jew could still find much about it to gaze upon, and in which he might daily glory. The beautiful courts and porches, the Levites in their daily ritual, the priests as they served the altar or Holy Place—all were nonexistent for the men of our text, or any who were blind. Begging was the common way of life for such as Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus. For the Jew—the climax of a despairing life.

It is no marvel that the name of Jesus should produce such endeavor in a man that he would ignore the problem of going from one end of Jericho to the other to catch Jesus as He came out of the town (He stayed with Zacchaeus while in Jericho, thus giving Bartimaeus and his blind friend time to accomplish such), or pay no attention to those in the crowd who wanted to silence his attempts to get the attention of Jesus.

Faith was the contact point and Jesus was the power; hence, Bartimaeus received what few ever did or do—his physical sight (back again?). No longer dependent

on others, he rejoicingly followed Jesus on the way up to Jerusalem, there to share in the city itself, but more, the temple services were to be a part of his life as never before.

Such is ever the way when Jesus is contacted—the whole world is seen as never seen before—and those who contact Him go on the way, rejoicing!

A remark or two about the text. It has often been pointed out that this text has contradictions in it. Matthew's account has two blind men, and Mark and Luke only one. Matthew and Mark locate the incident at the exit of Jesus from Jericho, while Luke writes about the healing of a blind man as Jesus went in.

There is no particular necessity to affirm a contradiction if the events of the text in question can be accounted for, while not having to prove that the event must have happened a certain way. It is common knowledge that an account of an event may be true and yet the reader not understand just how it actually happened. Then, though we might not be able to solve the apparent discrepancy, others might already have done so, or could do so. Perhaps additional consideration of the problem will allow its resolution, as is often the case. Remember: No contradiction exists unless one text affirms that which the other text denies.

Hence, in the problem of the two men versus the one man, if there were two, quite obviously one was present. Mark and Luke simply chose to mention one of the two. There is a problem of locations which can be resolved by supposing that 1) either Jesus healed one man going into Jericho and two going out of it, thus actually healing three men (there were ten lepers at one place together, if three blind men seem to be too many), or 2) there were at least two locations called Jericho (and there is some evidence for even three different sites) which there were, an old Jericho and a more recently built Jericho

NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY: THE CHRIST

about one mile south, or 3) Luke simply reports about a healing, which started on one side of Jericho with the blind men learning about Jesus going by, and then being healed by Jesus as He went out from Jericho (the blind man having gone around and waited until Jesus came out). Any of these three possibilities, or others not mentioned, could account for the apparent problems in the text. We ought to at least assume the original text was correct, and if we have a reasonably accurate copy of such, that the Bible deserves as much effort to understand it as we give less important events of our daily lives.

Jericho, one of the oldest known Biblical cities, dating back to perhaps c. (=about) 6-8,000 B.C. Built and destroyed several times, it held a prominent place in the Old Testament history and down to the New Testament times. Some seventeen miles from Jerusalem, one traveled from about 1,000 below sea level up to Jerusalem (which was about 2,550 above sea level) along a rather difficult terrain which provided many such opportunities as recounted in Luke 10:30ff.

Historically important to our Bible in many events, such as with Joshua in Joshua 2, 6 and 7; David, II Samuel 10; Hiel the Bethelite, I Kings 16:34; Elijah and Elisha, II Kings 2; Zedekiah, II Kings 25 and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah, Neh. 3:2; the New Testament Jericho was Herod the Great's winter capital. Building beautiful buildings of Hellenistic (Greek) style, including pools, a palace, a theatre, a fortress and hippodrome, the city was also made inviting by a plenteous water supply from nearby springs, and a tropical climate that allowed groves of palm and balsam trees, (which only grew in the Jordan Valley and on the coast) that provided revenue. With streets lined by sycamore trees and gardens of roses and such things as

THIRD YEAR MINISTRY

mentioned above, it is no wonder that many of the priests and Levites as well as others made Jericho their home.

Zacchaeus—a name detested by many. The reason? He was a Jew who had hired out to the hated Romans for the despicable job of tax collecting. The common word in most Bibles for such is publican. Certainly, as with Matthew, the tax collector was low man on the Jew's totem pole, or top man on his black list, whichever way was worse.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector. The need for such in that day is made clear by archaeological finds which indicate that a heavy rate of tax was imposed on both imports and exports, and in addition, the individual merchants had to pay heavy taxes. Some evidence for a twenty per cent tax has been found.

Smallness of stature may sometimes be helpful, and Jesus was just the help Zacchaeus needed, though the text does not indicate he was necessarily doing anything more than trying to catch a glimpse of Christ.

The crowd was quite right—Jesus had gone to eat with a sinner. However, the lost became found, and doubtless those who in some way henceforth came in contact with Zacchaeus were glad it happened. Certainly his efforts at honesty, charity and restoration of wronged people bespeak the essence of godliness.

Road to Jerusalem

The road to Jerusalem would be crowded with people going "up" (notice the writers of the New Testament and their accurate descriptions of the relationships between locations of various cities, etc.) to the city of peace (Jerusalem), with some going early to enter into rites of purification (as in Jn. 11:55) from things such as Jesus mentioned in Luke 11:44 (see the discussion under # 63).

Perhaps the general attitude such a miracle would elicit in the hearts of the beholders was the impetus for spoken exclamations about the coming kingdom. At any rate, Jesus attempted to squelch any "kingdom fever" by the parable of the pounds.

Luke 19:11-27 contains a parable less well-known than the similar one of Matt. 25:14-30, but certainly not less important. Jesus draws a vivid picture of His kingdom, complete with the idea of the ruler leaving to receive kingly power and then returning to ascertain the conduct of the servants left in positions of trust.

He attempted to set the scene in the proper historical perspective, so that the root of much false thinking among the disciples (that the kingdom was near as they thought about kingdoms) could be eliminated. The effect of this would be that they would quit living in dreamland and get down to reality. It was not that the fact of the kingdom's presence was not a reality (Jesus and John had both preached about its nearness to motivate people to repent), but the nature of the kingdom and the events soon to happen in Jerusalem to its king needed to be understood. The rule of Jesus was announced at Pentecost when Peter told his hearers that Jesus was made both Lord and Messiah. Throughout the New Testament, He received the title Lord, but certainly in a new sense after Pentecost (or even after the resurrection, as Thomas might tell us, John 20:28) which we have no need to elaborate upon.

The parable outlines various responsibilities for every servant in the kingdom, and a corresponding judgment and reward. If the servant loafed, it was inexcusable. The conclusion of the parable finds the listeners so intent on the words of Jesus that they interrupt Him. The reckoning of the master with His servants tells us that we cannot be fruitless, but must be active and that be-

FINAL WEEK

cause we realize the nature of our stewardship to the Master. It may be that the reference in v. 14 is to the Jewish nation which in general expressed just such an attitude. Read the parable of the wicked tenants in Matt. 21:33-43 in this light.

LAST WEEK IN JERUSALEM AREA

Bethany—Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9;
John 12:1-8

The arrival of Jesus at Bethany begins the last week of events prior to the crucifixion. As the reader may see, the account of John is being followed as to chronological order. The accounts of Matthew and Mark are not in such order, but rather were used by those authors to illuminate the background behind the treachery of Judas.

Several facets of this event are interesting. We do not know the relationship of Simon the leper to Jesus or to Mary, Martha and Lazarus. He apparently (?) had been healed of leprosy, but the text does not state that he was present, just that it was his house. It may be that Mary, Martha and Lazarus had either bought, rented or borrowed the house for the event.

Another item that is interesting, but just as impossible to settle, is the day upon which this occurred. Six days is the time mentioned by John, but what six days? Six days inclusive of the day of anointing, or excluding it? The text does not say that the day of the feast was on the day of arrival, just that He arrived six days before Passover. John locates the feast, as mentioned, prior to the Passover, Matthew and Mark using the indefinite words "while" or "when" in their texts. But John does not specifically state upon what day. For that matter, we are not sure if the word Passover means the feast (as it often