

## Luke

**1:5.** “*priestly* division of Abijah.” 1 Chronicles 24:1-19 recounts how King David organized the priests, the sons of Aaron, into 24 divisions. The eighth division was the division or “course” of Abijah (2 Chron. 24:10). Each division was on duty twice a year for a one-week period, and also served at the three major feasts of the year: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. After the Babylonian captivity only four divisions returned (Ezra 2:36-39), but these four were divided into twenty-four divisions, given the names of the original twenty-four, and then continued on with their duties according to the traditional timing (Hendriksen). The eighth division of Abijah that Zacharias was serving would have been the last week of May, 4 B.C.

**1:6.** “before God.” This phrase is an idiom where doing something “before the Lord” means to do something in service to him, to act as his servant. This can be seen when Elijah says, “As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word” (1 Kings 17:1; cp. 18:15; 2 Kings 3:14; 5:16). Elijah is saying he stands in service to God. (For more examples see: Gen. 7:1; 17:1; 24:40; 37:10; Luke 1:6, 8, 15, 75; Acts 4:19; 8:21; 1 Tim. 5:4; Heb. 13:21).

**1:7.** The Levites could only work from 20 to 60, but the priests could work as long as they were able. There is a very good chance that both Elizabeth and Zacharias were over 60. It is almost certain that they both died before John started his ministry.

“**barren.**” In a culture in which children were considered the blessing of the Lord, and the death rate was so high that each couple had to have 5 children to keep the population number stable, being barren was considered a curse. In fact, the situation highlights the character of Zacharias, who was no doubt under pressure to divorce her. There were people who considered it a religious duty to divorce a barren wife (Edersheim, *Life and Times*, book II, p. 137).

**1:8.** “before God.” See note on 1:6.

“**in his division’s turn.**” See Luke 1:5 note on “*priestly* division of Abijah.”

**1:9.** “lot.” The priest who got the privilege of burning incense on the golden altar in the Temple was chosen by the casting of lots. The honor was so great that a person was only allowed to do it one time in his life, and after that he was called “rich” (Edersheim, *Life and Times*, book II, p. 134).

**1:10.** “of the people.” No gentiles were allowed just outside the sanctuary, in what was called the court of men and women. The use of *laos* for “people” here refers specifically to the Jews. See entry on “the people” in Luke 2:10.

**1:13.** “John.” The name means, “Yahweh is gracious.”

**1:15.** “in the sight of the Lord.” Biblical custom. The literal is “before the Lord” (ESV). This is an idiom where “before me” means “in my sight.” Just like “thou shalt have no other gods before me,” meaning I do not want to see any other gods in your life (Deut. 5:7, literally, “before my face”). For a sampling of OT examples of this custom see: Gen. 19:27; Exod. 34:23; Deut. 16:16; 25:2; 1 Sam. 2:17; 3:1; Psalm 21:6; 42:2; Lam. 1:22. For other NT examples see: Luke 1:75; Eph. 1:4.

There is so much in this little phrase: “great in the sight of the Lord.” John’s life is mostly unknown, and his ministry was short. He died in prison as a result of having made

enemies because he dared to speak the truth. So many people take pride in being great in the eyes of the world, but in the end that greatness will mean nothing. John's light is still burning, although his life ended 2,000 years ago. Every Christian should strive to be great in the sight of the Lord.

**“No wine or strong drink.”** John was to be a Nazarite, as was Samson. For the Nazarite vows and commitments, cp. Numbers 6.

“filled with holy spirit.” No article the. This holy spirit was the gift of God that He gave to some believers before Pentecost.

**1:17.** Quoted from Mal. 4:5, 6.

**“their children.”** Cp. NIV. In the text there is no word for “their,” however, the possessive is implied.

**“good sense.”** The Greek is *phronesis* (#5428 φρόνησις). This is not the Greek, *sophia*, wisdom, but rather “a word for practical intelligence” (Robertson, *Word Studies*).

**1:18.** “*sign.*” Literally, Zachariah says, “according to what will I know it?” This is to be understood as asking for a sign. As Lenski writes, “it asks for a norm or sign in accord with which the promise will be fulfilled.” This is the same phrasing that Abraham uses in Genesis 15:8. Interestingly, scripture says that “Jews ask for signs” (1 Cor. 1:22), as was the case with Abraham, Gideon, and Hezekiah when they were promised things from the Lord. The difference with Zachariah was that he asked out of unbelief—as verse 20 makes clear—while these others asked from a desire to strengthen the faith they had (See Hendriksen). One must be careful what one asks for, however, because the angel answered Zachariah's unbelieving demand for a sign—he would be mute until the child was born.

**1:20.** **“Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

**“proper time.”** *Kairos* (#2540 καιρός) can mean *time* in the sense of “proper, right, or appropriate time” (BDAG). Much like a parent might say to a fifteen year old, “you'll be ready to date when it time,” or “when it's time, we'll know.” In these cases “time” means, the *right time*, the *appropriate time*. The Greek word for “time” was also used in this sense.

**1:26.** The reason Luke says “a city named” Nazareth, is because the town was such that few people would have heard of it. No other extra-biblical work such as the Talmud mentions Nazareth. When Luke mentions well-known cities he just says the name—“Damascus” (Acts 9:19), “Iconium” (Acts 14:1)—rather than indicate the region and say “a city called.”

**1:28.** “Greetings.” The Greek is *chairō* (#5463 χαίρω) and in this context was a standard greeting of the Greeks just as we today say “Hi!” “Hail” persists in some versions, but is outdated, not being used as a greeting today, so “Greetings” as we have makes the meaning clear.

The KJV adds to this verse, “blessed art thou among women.” However, this phrase was not in the original text (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*).

**“Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

**1:33.** This verse is a good example that just because something in scripture is said to last forever, doesn't mean it starts immediately. Likewise, even though we have eternal life (John 3:15-16, 36), it does not mean it comes into effect immediately; because if the Lord

tarries we will still die and need to be resurrected into that eternal life: “Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:40, NIV).

**1:36. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**1:37.** Zachariah and Elizabeth are being paralleled with Abraham and Sarah. Here we have a direct allusion to Gen. 18:14, “Is anything impossible for the LORD? At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she [Sarah] will have a son” (HCSB). Earlier in the chapter we saw how Zachariah employed the same question as Abraham (see entry on “sign” in Luke 1:18), and now this phrase originally regarding Sarah is applied to Elizabeth, who is barren and past fertile years. Like Sarah, she too will miraculously have a child. In Genesis the phrase was put as a question (expecting a negative answer), “Is anything impossible with the LORD?” (μὴ ἀδυνατεῖ παρά τῷ θεῷ ῥῆμα). Here in Luke it is as though the angel replies, answering in the future tense, “Nothing will be impossible with God” (οὐκ ἀδυνατήσῃ παρά τοῦ θεοῦ πᾶν ῥῆμα). This allusion would have been a great faith booster for Mary, who was about to have a child without sexual intercourse with a man.

Only the ASV prefers the translation, “For no word from God shall be void of power.” This is grammatically possible, and perhaps implied as a double meaning. Rather than simply “word,” the Greek word *rhema* (#4487 ῥῆμα) also means “thing, object, matter, event” (BDAG). Luke uses *rhema* to mean “thing” elsewhere: Luke 1:65; 2:15; 2:19; 2:51; Acts 5:32; 10:36.

**1:38. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**1:39.** “a city of Judah.” The Greek word translated *Judah* comes from *Iouda* (#2448 Ἰουδά). A number of versions have “Judah” (NASB; ESV; HCSB; ASV; NET; NAB), and a few versions say “Judea” (NIV; YLT). But *Judea* is incorrect from the Greek, as Lenski writes, “When Luke refers to the province he writes Ἰουδαία [not Ἰουδα] (10 times in the Gospel, 12 times in the Acts).” “Judea” is the territory ruled over by Herod, while “Judah” refers to the ancient area of the tribe of Judah. Lenski also makes the point there may have been a city we know nothing about called “Juda,” which could be the case but is less likely.

**1:44. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**1:45.** “from the Lord.” The phrase “from the Lord” could also be translated “by the Lord.” In either case the preposition *para* (#3844 παρά) is to be understood in the sense of expressing source (see Appendix on Greek prepositions). These were words that originated in and were spoken *from* the Lord.

**1:46.** “My soul magnifies the Lord.” Similar to Psalm 34:2a.

**1:48.** “For he has looked upon the low estate of his handmaid.” God does look upon the lowly and humble (Ps. 138:6).

**“Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**1:49.** Almost 1000 years earlier, King David had noted the same thing, that God has done great things (Ps. 71:19).

**“holy is his name.”** The Psalmist says, “holy and awesome is his name” (Ps. 111:9).

**1:50.** God refers to his love and mercy extending for generations in Exod. 20:6 and Ps. 103:17.

**1:52.** “mighty.” The word for “mighty” is *dunastes* (#1413 δυνάστης). It denotes “rulers, officials, or potentates” (cp. Acts 8:27; 1 Tim. 6:15).

**1:53.** “the hungry.” Similar to Ps. 107:9.

**1:54.** “took hold of Israel his servant to help them.” “The middle voice of *antilambano* means to take hold of something or somebody and in that way to help, and, like the verbs of touch, it is constructed in the genitive.” (Lanski).

**“to remember mercy.”** Figure of speech, Metonymy (cp. Bullinger; Figures of Speech). “Mercy” is put for the act of mercy, being merciful. God “took hold of Israel his servant to help them,” in order to remember to be merciful to Abraham and his seed. In other words, God helped Israel in order to fulfill the promise He made to Abraham and his seed, a promise that they did not deserve, which is the point of saying that God remembered “mercy.”

**1:68.** “praise the Lord.” This phrase is often translated as “blessed *be* the Lord.” However, the sense is best captured by “praise the Lord.” It is a verbal adjective; as Lenski writes, “Thus ‘blessed’ means: ‘let all men bless God,’ i.e., speak well of him.” Translating it, “praise the Lord” carries this sense of the command: “let all men bless God.” On the other hand, to say “blessed *be* the Lord,” just states the simple fact that the Lord is well spoken of.

**“visited.”** *Episkeptomai* (#1980 ἐπισκέπτομαι) has the sense of “looking favorably upon with an intent to help.” Cp. NET translation, “he has come to help.” The rest of the verse explains the help provided by the Lord, He has “brought about redemption for his people.”

**1:70.** “from ancient times.” For this translation compare NJB and HCSB. The literal reading is “from of ages.” Hence, “from of old” would be a good alternative translation.

**1:72.** “our fathers.” These are the “fathers” of Israel, namely, the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—who worked so hard but did not see the promises fulfilled. It is not speaking of the immediate biological fathers, as the next verse makes clear by referring to “Abraham.”

**1:75.** “before him.” Biblical custom. See commentary entry on Luke 1:15, “in the sight of the Lord.”

**1:76.** “prepare the way for him.” The Greek for “way” is *hodos* (#3598 ὁδός) in the plural, and the Greek is *etoimazo hodous outou* (ἐτοιμάζω ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ) literally, “prepare his roads.” *Hodos* refers to a road, a path, or a way something is done. This verse refers to a well-know biblical custom. Inside the city of Rome, or other large cities, and on some major thoroughfares such as the “Appian Way” (Appian Road), the road was paved and maintained by slaves, road crews, and the army. However, for most of the Roman Empire, and certainly for most of the ancient Middle East, road were just dirt roads, and frankly, most often, dirt paths. They did not belong to anyone (except for the government or the landowner whose property the path went through), and no one kept them repaired. Over time they became filled with ruts and holes (that were often just mudholes), washed out, and overhung by any nearby trees. Furthermore, since no one really owned the path, nearby farmers would throw stones from their fields onto them, so a road with lots of

stones was not uncommon. After a while, the “roads” of the Middle East became very difficult to travel. When royalty, or a powerful dignitary, was going to travel to a certain place, the call would go out to “prepare the roads.” The ruler would usually send someone out to make sure that work was being done. This is the custom that is referred to in this verse. John the Baptist was sent to “prepare the roads” that Jesus Christ would travel on spiritually. He preached the Good News, confronted sinners, offered baptism for repentance, and raised everyone’s expectation for the Messiah, the lace of whose sandals he was unworthy to unloose.

**1:77.** “by the forgiveness....” The versions differ, some having “by” (KJV, NASB, RSV, Rotherham, etc.) some “through,” some “in,” and Lenski has “in connection with.” The point is that, in having their sins forgiven, people really have a sense of their salvation, especially before the Church Age. Christ knew this, and often told people their sins were forgiven.

**1:78.** “Rising Sun.” This is a title of the Lord Jesus Christ. It comes from the word *anatole* (#395 ἀνατολή), which is used to describe the dawn, “a change in darkness to light” (BDAG). This leads naturally into verse 79, where Christ is said to “give light to those who sit in darkness.” The verb form of *anatole* occurs in the LXX translation of Malachi 4:2, describing the rise of the Sun of Righteousness. Here, the Rising Sun is said to visit us “from on high,” the same Greek phrase found in 1 Samuel 22:17, Psalm 18:16, 102:19, 144:7, and Luke 24:49. These passages in 1 Samuel and Psalms show that *rescue from one’s enemies* is said to come “from on high”—this theme comes up in Zechariah’s prophecy, especially verses 71 and 74.

“**visit.**” See entry on “visited” in Luke 1:68.

**1:79.** “into.” Rather than solely expressing motion “into,” the preposition *eis* (#1519 εἰς) can also have the sense of “in” (See Appendix on Greek prepositions). Here it includes both the meanings of guiding us “into” the way of peace and also the notion of guiding along, “in,” the road while actually on the path. Christ leads us both ‘into’ and ‘in’ the road of peace.

**2:1.** “decree.” The Greek is *dogma* (#1378 δόγμα), see note on Acts 16:4.

“**habitable world.**” In the time of the first century the Roman Empire was the entire known “world.”

**2:5.** “was betrothed.” Matthew 1:20, 24 make it clear that by this time Mary was already Joseph’s wife. Why then does the text emphasize the betrothal here and not the marriage? The answer is because the couple’s union had not yet been consummated; they had not as yet had sexual intercourse (Matt. 1:24-25) (Hendriksen).

This verse highlights a biblical custom that is hard to see in English. The Greek verb *mnesteuō* (#3423 μνηστεύω) is in the perfect (past) tense, passive voice. In the ancient Near East, betrothal, the promise of marriage, usually was a contract between the parents of the groom and the parents of the bride. Marriages were arranged, and often many years before the couple was of marriageable age. The perfect tense, passive voice verb shows that the betrothal, the engagement, was something that *happened to Mary*, not something she did. She did not “get engaged,” her engagement happened to her. This is a much different picture than modern western courtship. The problem with the English translation “had been betrothed” (or “had been engaged”) is that is what we say when someone “had been” betrothed, but no is longer; the engagement was broken off. Thus it is very hard to produce the truth that is in the Greek text into English without giving the

wrong idea. On balance, we decided that communicating that Joseph and Mary were betrothed at the time was more important than trying to produce the custom that the engagement had happened to Mary in the past but risk people thinking they were not still engaged.

**“was pregnant.”** From the word *egkuos* (#1471 ἔγκυος), literally, “to have in the womb” (Louw-Nida).

**2:7.** “no space for them in the guestroom.” The Greek is: διότι οὐκ ἦν αὐτοῖς τόπος ἐν τῷ καταλύματι. [διότι (because) οὐκ (not) ἦν (there was) αὐτοῖς (for them) τόπος (a place) ἐν (in) τῷ (the) καταλύματι (guest room)]. Young’s Literal Translation, which is similar to our own, reads, “there was not for them a place in the guest-chamber.”

The traditional story of the birth of Christ has Joseph and Mary arriving in Bethlehem late in the day or perhaps even at night, desperately seeking lodging, only to find there are no vacancies in the inn. Upon receiving no help from the people of Bethlehem they retire to a stable (some tradition says a cave), where Mary gives birth and Jesus is placed in the manger from which the animals eat. However, this understanding of the nativity stems largely from extra biblical works and tradition imported into the gospels, rather than study of the biblical record itself. Much misinformation about the birth of Christ came from a document that was widely circulated in Christian circles in the early centuries of the Christian era. It is referred to by scholars as the *Protevangelium of James*, and it is likely from the third century AD, although it is possible, but not likely, that it dates as early as 150 AD.<sup>7</sup> This is the first document scholars are aware of that refers to Jesus being born close to Mary’s arrival in Bethlehem, although in the *Protevangelium*, Jesus is born in a cave before Joseph and Mary even reach Bethlehem.

The Bible, however, makes it clear that they were in Bethlehem for some number of days before Mary gave birth. Luke 2:6 (KJV) says: “And so it was, that, **while they were there**, the **days** were accomplished that she should be delivered.” R. C. H. Lenski writes: “This was not the day of Joseph’s and Mary’s arrival, several days had already passed (“while they were there”).<sup>8</sup> If that is the situation, why was it that “there was no room for them in the inn”? Surely Mary and Joseph could have found a suitable place to give birth to the Messiah in their days in Bethlehem—and they did.

Before we look at the mistranslations of “room” and “inn,” however, let us look at some reasons Joseph and Mary could have found a place to stay.<sup>9</sup> First, Joseph was returning to his town of origin. Historical memories are long in the Middle East, and family support is very strong. For example, Paul knew he was a descendant of Benjamin, who was the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, but Benjamin had lived more than 1500 years earlier. Once Joseph announced that both he and Mary were descendants of families from Bethlehem, many homes would be open to them.

Second, both Joseph and Mary were “royals,” from the royal line of David. David is so famous in Bethlehem that it is called, “the city of David” (Luke 2:4). Being from that famous family would have meant that most homes would open their doors to him.

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<sup>7</sup> Wilhelm Schneemelcher, editor, *New Testament Apocrypha* (The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1963), The Protevangelium of James, pp. 370-388.

<sup>8</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke’s Gospel*, (Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, MN, 1946), p. 126

<sup>9</sup> These reasons are enumerated in, Kenneth Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, (IVP Academic, Downers Grove, IL, 2008), p. 25, 26

Third, in every culture women about to give birth are given special help. As Kenneth Bailey puts it: “Was there no sense of honor in Bethlehem: Surely the community would have sensed its responsibility to help Joseph find adequate shelter for Mary and provide the care she needed. To turn away a descendent of David in the city of David would be an unspeakable shame to the entire village.”<sup>10</sup>

Joseph and Mary were not rejected by a local hotel that had its “no vacancy” sign turned on. The phrase “no room in the inn” is a mistranslation that continues to support a very serious misunderstanding about the birth of Christ. Two words we must understand to properly interpret the biblical account are *topos* (#5117 τόπος) and *kataluma* (#2646 κατάλυμα), usually translated as “room” and “inn,” respectively. The word *topos* occurs more than ninety times in the New Testament, and does not refer to “a room,” but simply a place, or space in a given area, and in this case there was no space available for Joseph and Mary in the *kataluma*. What is the *kataluma*? It does not refer to a commercial lodge, or inn, but simply means a “lodging place” or “guestroom.” Bauer’s Greek-English Lexicon says of *kataluma*: “lodging *place*. The sense *inn* is possible in Lk 2:7, but in 10:34 Luke uses *pandocheion*, the more specific term for *inn*. *Kataluma* is therefore best understood here as lodging or guest-room.”

To properly understand the birth narrative of Jesus Christ, it is vital that we understand that the normal Greek word for “inn” is *pandocheion* (#3829 πανδοχείον), and it refers to a public house for the reception of strangers (caravansary, khan, inn). *Pandocheion* was not only used by the Greeks, but was used as a loan-word for “inn” or a commercial lodging place in Hebrew, Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, and Turkish. *Pandocheion* is the word Luke uses in the parable of the Good Samaritan when he wanted to refer to a public inn (Luke 10:34).

In contrast to the public inn, both Mark and Luke use *kataluma* in their Gospels as “guest room” (Mark 14:14; Luke 22:11). When finding a place to eat the Last Supper with his disciples, Jesus tells them to say to the owner of the house, “The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room [*kataluma*], where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?” (Luke 22:11). So in both Mark and Luke, the *kataluma* is a room in a man’s house. Luke also uses the verb form of *kataluma*, which is *kataluo* (#2647 καταλύω), and means “to find rest or lodging.” In the record of Jesus and Zacchaeus, Jesus goes “to be the guest” at Zacchaeus’ house, not at a public inn (Luke 19:7). So Luke also uses the verb such that “to stay in the *kataluma*” indicates lodging at someone’s house.

There are a couple features of common houses in the Middle East that we must understand to understand the birth of Jesus. The first is that it was very common for houses in the Middle East to have a guest room where guests, and even strangers, could stay. Showing hospitality to strangers has always been a huge part of Eastern life, and shows up in the Bible as well as the modern Moslem culture, where one of the five pillars of the Moslem faith it to be quick to entertain strangers. Several Biblical records show strangers being given hospitality, such as Lot taking in two strangers (Gen. 19:1-4) or the man in Gibeah taking in strangers (Judges 19:19-21). Giving hospitality is a command for Christian leaders (1 Tim. 3:2). The Shunamite woman so wanted to show hospitality to Elisha that she had a guest room built on her roof just for him (2 Kings 4:10).

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<sup>10</sup> Kenneth Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, (IVP Academic, Downers Grove, IL, 2008), p. 26

The second thing we must understand is that it was common for people to bring their animals into their houses at night. They did this to keep them from being stolen, and to protect them from harm. Usually, the floor of the family dwelling was raised up somewhat, and the animals were in an area that was a little lower.<sup>11</sup> John Nolland writes: "...it is best to think of an overcrowded Palestinian peasant home: a single-roomed home with an animal stall under the same roof (frequently to be distinguished from the family living quarters by the raised platform floor of the latter).<sup>12</sup>

When Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem they were taken into one of the local homes, most likely of a relative. However, there was no space available for them in the *kataluma*, the guest chamber. Therefore, the family made room for Joseph and Mary in their own living quarters, and the baby Jesus was placed in a manger in the home, which would have been filled with clean hay or straw and would have been the perfect size for him.

Understanding the birth narrative in this way highlights another important aspect of Eastern hospitality. In the East, guests were given special treatment of all kinds, including behavior that seems very extreme to us. For example, in the record of Lot and the two strangers, Lot would have handed over his own daughters to the mob before surrendering his guests (Gen. 19:8). The people whom Joseph and Mary stayed with would not displace their guests from the guest room, but instead inconvenienced themselves, because no male would be allowed in the house as Mary was giving birth. The husband and any sons would have left their own house to give Mary the privacy she needed during the birth of Jesus.

Thus, the birth narrative of Jesus is considerably different than what is commonly taught. It is not that Bethlehem was full of cold-hearted townspeople who would not take special care of a family about to give birth. Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem some days before she gave birth. The guest room of the people who gave them lodging was full, so the family opened their own home to them and took them into their living quarters. When Mary gave birth, in the late evening or the night some days later, the men left their own home to accommodate her and give her privacy, and no doubt baby Jesus was born in quite usual circumstances, most likely with the village midwife and no doubt helped by the women of the family. Shortly after, the new baby Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes, dedicated to God, and placed in a perfect spot, the manger in the home. That same night the angels announced to shepherds in nearby fields that the Christ had been born, and they came and saw the baby, and announced his birth to the whole village.

**2:9.** "frightened with great fear." Figure of speech polyptoten (Cp. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*).

**2:10. "Look!"** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 ("Look!").

**"the people."** Often the Greek word *laos* (#2992 λαός) is used to designate specifically the Jewish people. This is the case here; *laos* is to be understood to mean the people of Israel (Cp. Lenski). If God had wanted to refer to the Gentiles and everyone he could have used the plural, "the peoples" (e.g. Luke 2:31; Rom. 15:11), or "all nations"

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<sup>11</sup> Fred Wight, *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1953), p. 34; Kenneth Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, (IVP Academic, Downers Grove, IL, 2008), p. 28-33;

<sup>12</sup> John Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nelson Reference and Electronic, Colombia, 1989), p. 105

(*panta ta ethne*: Matt. 28:19). For scriptures where “the people” clearly refers to the Jews, see: Matt. 13:15; Mark 7:6; Luke 1:68; 2:10; John 11:50; 18:14; Acts 3:23; 7:17; 13:17; 13:24; 13:31; 21:28; 7:11; 7:27; 9:7; 9:19; 11:25.

Here in Luke 2:10, by extension this announcement is good news to all people everywhere (2:31-32), and the future “will be” is prophetic to this effect, but here the angel is speaking to the shepherds in a way they would understand, of Israel’s long awaited messiah (cp. Luke 1:68).

**2:11.** “today.” The Jewish day began at sunset; hence the angel was telling them what had happened sometime after sunset that evening. [show how they went immediately into the town and people were still awake to be spoken to, perhaps to party for Jesus’ birth; quote Martin about stars showing he was born at 7:30].

**“the savior.”** We have translated this with “the,” although the Greek lacks the definite article. As Lenski says, “The relative clause [“who”] makes “Savior” definite.”

**“Christ and Lord.”** These words function like adjectives in the Greek, describing the Savior (Cp. Lenski). These adjectives are descriptive of the baby, showing that he has both the properties of being Christ and Lord. To translate the phrase as, “who is Christ the Lord,” misses this point.

**2:12.** “the sign.” It was not “a” sign, as though there were many signs, but “the” particular sign given the shepherds by the angel. In verse 16, this finds its fulfillment when the shepherds find the baby in “the” manger. Cp. Lenski.

**2:13.** “army.” The Greek is *stratia* (#4756 στρατιά). Robertson (*Word Pictures*) writes: A military term for a band of soldiers common in the ancient Greek.

**2:14.** “highest.” The Greek is *hupsistos* (#5310 ὑψιστος), and it is an adjective describing the highest place, or the highest rank. Here the grammar would naturally refer to the highest place, heaven. Thus “glory to God in the highest heaven” would refer to the glory to God that is given by the exalted spiritual beings who dwell in the highest heaven, or rather in the highest part of heaven. The “highest heaven” in this phrase is contrasted with the earth, a lower place, in the next phrase. Thus, in heaven, glory, and on earth, peace.... The birth of the savior was a cause for the spiritual beings of the highest heavens to glorify God, because the savior is not only the redeemer of mankind, but of the very universe itself, which is under bondage and decaying (Rom. 8:20-23). This same phrase, “in *the highest heaven*,” is also used in Luke 19:38.

**2:15.** “thing.” From the Greek *rhema* (#4487 ῥῆμα), which can mean, “a word or message,” or “the event that the word describes, a thing or event” (BDAG). Here in verses 15, 17, and 19 it refers not to the words themselves but the whole event surrounding the message. The shepherds wanted to go see the event the angel’s message described, not go see the words. Likewise, in verse 17 the shepherds speak “about” (Gk: *peri* #4012 περί) the *rhema*, which shows that they were not just making known the message’s content, but “told the whole story” (Lenski), they made known “about” the message, i.e., all about the angels, the sign, and having found the child. Lastly, in verse 19 Mary does not just store up the angel’s words about the child in her heart, but pondered the entire event.

**2:17.** “it.” Literally, this verse reads “having seen, they made known.” Some versions supply “it” (ESV; KJV) or “this” (NRSV; NASB), while other versions supply “him” (NIV; NET) or “them” (HCSB). The difference in translation effects whether they saw the fulfillment of the sign of the child lying in the manger (“it” or “this”), or they simply

saw the child and his parents (“him” or “them”). It is clear from the context that “it,” meaning the fulfillment of the sign, is what the shepherds saw and this made them go and make it known. For verse 16 employs the definite article “the,” indicating that they found “the” manger, namely, the one just foretold by the angel in verse 12, having seen *it* they went and made the event known.

**“about.”** For the significance of *peri*, see entry on “thing” in Luke 2:15.

**“message.”** From the Greek *rhema* (#4487 ῥῆμα), see entry on “thing” in Luke 2:15.

**2:19.** “things.” From the Greek *rhema* (#4487 ῥῆμα), see entry on “thing” in Luke 2:15.

**2:21.** “eight days.” The eight days required by Genesis 17:12. The child had to be circumcised on the eighth day, which is precisely the day when the clotting factor prothrombin is the highest in a newborn baby. Until the eighth day Vitamin K levels, which produces prothrombin, are insufficient and any surgery before this could produce hemorrhaging. Out of love, our God ordered that the circumcision rite be done precisely on the eighth day, the only time in a baby’s life when prothrombin levels are above 100%.

We should commend the many hundreds of workers who labored at great expense over a number of years to discover that the safest day to perform circumcision is the eighth. Yet, as we congratulate medical science for this recent finding, we can almost hear the leaves of the Bible rustling. They would like to remind us that four thousand years ago, when God initiated circumcision with Abraham..., Abraham did not pick the eighth day after many centuries of trial-and-error experiments. Neither he nor any of his company from the ancient city of Ur in the Chaldees ever had been circumcised. It was a day picked by the Creator of vitamin K.<sup>13</sup>

**2:23.** This command to consecrate the firstborn male was from the Mosaic Law. Quoted from Exod. 13:2.

**2:24.** Quoted from Lev. 12:8. This verse contains important information concerning the timing of the events of the birth of Jesus. According to Leviticus 12:8, a woman was only allowed to bring a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons as a sacrifice after childbirth if she could not afford a lamb. Mary’s cleansing and the presentation of Jesus in the Temple would have been 40 days after the birth of Jesus (Lev. 12:2-4). Mary and Joseph would have made the 7 mile walk with Jesus from Bethlehem to the Temple in Jerusalem to present Jesus only because Bethlehem was so close to the Temple. Women were not expected to travel far after childbirth. After presenting Jesus and making the sacrifices, they went back to Bethlehem, where Joseph had no doubt found work. The Magi would arrive on the scene almost two years later. Had they already come and been with the shepherds at the manger, as tradition teaches, then the gold, frankincense, and myrrh, that they brought would have made Joseph and Mary far too wealthy for her sacrifice of the doves or pigeons to be accepted by God. The idea that Joseph and Mary would not have brought a lamb because Jesus was the lamb cannot be substantiated. They, of all people, would have kept the Levitical Law.

**2:25. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

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<sup>13</sup> Dr. S.I. McMillen, *None of These Diseases* (Old Tappan: Revell Publishing, 1984), p. 93.

**“deeply religious.”** The Greek is *eulabes* (#2126 εὐλαβής); see discussion on “godly man” in Acts 10:2.

**“comforting.”** Cp. Young’s literal translation. *Paraklesis* (#3874 παράκλησις) has a large semantic range including “encouragement, exhortation, appeal, and comfort.” Most translations go with “consolation.” In this situation, however, “comforting” seems to get more at the heart of it. In the harsh reality of Roman control, Simeon was waiting for all that the Messiah would bring: plenty of food, peace, protection from enemies, etc. This would come as great comfort to a hurting nation.

**2:26.** “divinely instructed.” See entry on Matthew 2:12.

**“holy spirit.”** The context shows that this refers to the gift of holy spirit rather than the Father who is the Giver. For in the verses before and after, “holy spirit” is clearly referring to the gift. Further, although the Greek has the articles “‘the’ spirit ‘the’ holy” there are instances where having both articles can refer to the gift (Mark 12:36; Luke 3:22; 10:21; John 14:26; Acts 2:33; 5:32; 10:44; 10:47; 11:15; 15:8; 19:6).

**“Messiah.”** The Greek word is *christos*, which is usually translated as “Christ” but also can mean “anointed one” or “messiah.” Here we translated it “messiah” because Simeon was a Jew looking forward to the comforting of Israel, which would mean, in part, that he was looking forward to the coming Jewish messiah and messianic age.

**2:29.** “according to your word.” The word spoken of in v. 26, that he would not see death until he had seen the messiah.

**2:32.** Quoted from Isaiah 42:6.

**2:34. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

**“appointed.”** The Greek is *keimai* (#2749 κείμεναι), which has a number of meanings, including, to be set in place, thus to lie, or be set; to be placed on something; to exist or have a place; to occur, appear, or be found; to be appointed or destined. Although some translations go with “destined,” we did not feel that was the correct meaning, and is very close to “predestined.” Jesus was human, and as a human could have failed in his mission. God “appointed” him as Messiah, but Jesus had to rise to the occasion, and walk out his appointment and calling. So does each Christian.

**“to cause.”** The *eis* (#1519 εἰς) in this verse has a causal meaning. Compare NIV and HCSB translations.

**“falling and rising.”** These are translated from the Greek words *ptosis* (#4431 πτώσις) and *anastasis* (#386 ἀνάστασις). Louw-Nida translates *ptosis*—usually rendered “falling”—as “to suffer destruction or ruin, with the implication of having formerly held a position of eminence.” *Anastasis* is used everywhere else in the New Testament, 39 times, to indicate “resurrection.” We were sorely tempted to translate it thus here as well, but did not because the word can also mean “rising,” and is used that way in the LXX, and because the *anastasis* here seems to include a broader sense of “rising” than just resurrection; although we are quick to add that resurrection is clearly implied here by Simeon. Hence, a narrower translation would be “for the *destruction* and *resurrection* of many in Israel.”

The Greek is ambivalent to whether it is the rise of some and the fall of some, or whether everybody falls and then rises. The greater scope of scripture points to the former. However, due to the ambiguity of the Greek, there is the implication that many

will fall before they rise, as is the case with the Apostle Paul who first stumbled because of the Lord, then rose up to seize eternal life.

**“that will be continually opposed.”** “Will be” is supplied because it is a prophecy regarding the future. “Continually” (cp. Williams) comes from the present tense of the verb, in this case a durative present indicating continual action (See note on 1 John 1:7 for more on this usage of the present). The Greek is *antilegō* (#483 ἀντιλέγω). It has two distinct meanings: to be spoken against, or to be opposed. Both fit here, and thus the Greek gives a fuller sense than can be given in English. Christ will be spoken against, but more than that, he will be opposed in general in every way. Jesus is, and always has been, opposed and spoken against by those who will not submit to God’s rule and rules. Robertson (Word Pictures) writes: “Spoken against (*antilegomenon*). Present passive participle, continuous action. It is going on today. Nietzsche [the German philosopher who was known for the phrase, “God is dead”] regarded Jesus Christ as the curse of the race because he spared the weak.”

There is certainly a sense in which the entire life of Christ was a sign. Jesus Christ himself is a sign that is continually opposed. The sign also can refer to the resurrection of Christ. As Christ told the Pharisees who were asking him for a sign:

Matthew 12:39-40

An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The sign of Jonah was to be the sign for that generation, and this sign was opposed by the Jews (e.g., Matt. 16:21-22; 27:62-64); it makes sense then that the resurrection of Christ was partly what Simeon was referring to.

If the resurrection was the sign, then this verse indicates Christ was “appointed” beforehand for this, which is why God could not take “this cup” from him in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42). Having been appointed for this, Christ was the “Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world” (Rev. 13:8 NIV). “opposed.”

**2:35.** “sword.” An unusual word for “sword,” occurring only here and in the book of Revelation (Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; 6:8; 19:15, 21). The Greek is *rhomphaia* (#4501 ῥομφαία). It has several meanings. It was a large sword, usually two edged, that was used by non-Greek-speaking peoples, especially the Thracians. Also, *rhomphaia* was used of a long Thracian javelin, and also a kind of long sword usually worn on the right shoulder. The word appears very often in the Septuagint, and was the word used for the sword of Goliath. This long, broad, two-edged sword would pass through Mary’s soul as the life of her son developed. The fact that it can refer to a Thracian spear also points to one of the final acts of violence towards her son when the Roman soldier pierced Christ’s side with a spear (cp. Thayer; BDAG).

**2:36.** “Anna.” It is an amazing demonstration of the love God has for His people that He would reveal to both Simeon and Anna that the Christ was in the Temple. The Temple was very segregated, with courts for the men, and courts for the women. The only way to get the word effectively to both groups was for God to tell both a respected man and a respected woman that the Christ was there.

**“from when she was a virgin.”** Stating it this way emphasizes the purity of Anna’s life, and simultaneously shows that this was her first husband. She lived with man seven years, until he died and she became a widow; she did not take another husband, but remained a widow until she was 84 here at the temple scene. See entry on 2:37 for controversy regarding Anna’s age.

**2:37.** “as a widow until the age of eighty-four.” There are differences among commentators and translators as to whether Anna was eighty-four years old, or was a widow for eighty-four years on top of her seven years of marriage and the time before she was married. The Greek can be understood either way. It reads literally, “and she a widow up to eighty-four years,” which could mean she *was* a widow for eighty-four years or she lived *as* a widow up to her eighty-fourth year. On the former view, if she was married at age 14 then she would be 105 (14+7+84=105) (Hendriksen). KJV and HCSB go with the interpretation of an older Anna: e.g., “and was a widow for 84 years” (HCSB). However, we have sided with translations such as ESV and NIV, which suppose the younger age. Hendriksen provides a good summary of the arguments and sides with our translation. As he points out, verse 37 portrays Anna as being very active, daily in the temple performing the service of religious duties, praying, and fasting. This is much more likely to be the case if she were 84 rather than 105.

**2:41.** Passover is one of three feasts—Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles—that required all adult Jewish males to go to Jerusalem (Exod. 23:14-17; 34:22, 23; Deut. 16:16). The imperfect tense of “went” shows they habitually went; compare Hendriksen’s translation: “His parents were in the habit of going to Jerusalem.” Since only males “of mature age” were required to go, that Mary also attended shows us Mary and Joseph were a devote couple (See Hendriksen).

**2:42.** “according to the custom.” For explanation of customary trips to Jerusalem, see entry on 2:41.

“of the feast.” See commentary note on Luke 2:43.

**2:43.** “of the feast.” There is a question as to whether this phrase belongs in verse 42, “according to the custom of the feast,” or in verse 43, “completed the days of the feast.” The Greek could be read either way; NRSV, NASB, HCSB, KJV, and ASV go with “custom of the feast,” while NIV, ESV, and NET take it to go with verse 43. We believe it should be taken with verse 43 because if left as “custom of the feast” then there is no genitive subject to complete the genitive absolute started in verse 43. Further, it strikes us less likely that they would be said to go to Jerusalem according the “custom of the feast” when in reality it was the Mosaic Law that dictated customary visits to Jerusalem, not “festival custom” (NAB translation).

**2:44.** “diligently searching.” The Greek word is *anazeteo* (#327 ἀναζητέω), comprised of the word for seeking, *zeteo* (#2212 ζητέω), with the intensifier *ana*. Louw-Nida translates *anazeteo* as, “to try to learn the location of something by searching for it (presumably somewhat more emphatic or goal-directed than in the case of ζητέω).” We have brought out the intensified meaning of the Greek by the translation “diligently searching.” This seems especially justified here given the situation of a missing child, and Mary’s admission to being “greatly distressed” in verse 48.

**2:45.** “diligently searching.” See entry on Luke 2:44.

**2:48. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἰδοῦ), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**“astonished.”** This is a very powerful word; from the Greek *ekplesso* (#1605 ἐκπλήσσω). It designates an overwhelming astonishment: “to cause to be filled with amazement to the point of being overwhelmed” (BDAG). After days of diligently searching for their missing child, Joseph and Mary are flooded with emotions at his discovery.

**2:49.** “Why....” These are the first recorded words of Jesus.

**“must be.”** Jesus, as the Messiah, “must be” in his Father’s house, where he would learn about his Father.

**“in my Father’s house.”** This is a common Greek idiom, and does not mean “about my Father’s business” which has been popularized by the KJV. The Greek is *en tois tou patros mou* (ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου), which literally translates as “in the of Father of me,” The phrase is an idiom; it does not make sense literally, and idiomatically it means “in my Father’s house.” At 12 years old, Jesus knows he is the promised Messiah and the Son of God, and he told his parents that he “must be” in his Father’s house, the Temple. He was surprised that they would think he would be anywhere else. This verse shows a little of the workings of the mind of a 12 year old who is the sinless Son of God. As a 12 year old, he is appropriately disconnected from the pain his absence would cause his parents, but as the Son of God he already felt the mission of God working inside him and knew he must be in the Temple, and he was sitting at the feet of the great teachers there listening to them, asking them questions, and learning from them (cp. A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*).

**2:76.** “prepare the way for him.” The Greek word that is translated “way” is *hodos* (#3598 ὁδός) in the plural, and the Greek is *etoimazo hodous outou* (ἐτοιμάζω ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ), which would be more literally translated as, “prepare his roads.” *Hodos* refers to a road, a path, or a way something is done. In this context, the phrase “prepare his roads,” refers to a well-know biblical custom. Inside the city of Rome, or other large cities, and on some major thoroughfares such as the “Appian Way” (Appian Road), the road was paved and maintained by slaves, road crews, and the army. However, for most of the Roman Empire, and certainly for most of the ancient Middle East, roads were just dirt roads, and frankly, most often, not even what we would classify as a “dirt road” today—they were actually just dirt paths. These dirt roads and paths did not specifically belong to anyone unless they were main roads and government maintained or unless they belonged to a landowner if the path went through his specific piece of property. No one really was considered to “own” the roads through wilderness and woods except the kingdom in general, and thus no one kept them repaired or travelable. Over time they became filled with ruts and holes (that were often just mudholes), washed out, overgrown by brush and overhung by any nearby trees.

Furthermore, since no one really owned the path, nearby farmers would throw stones from their fields onto them, so a road with lots of stones was not uncommon. After a while, the “roads” of the Middle East became very difficult to travel. When royalty or a powerful dignitary was going to travel to a certain place, the call would go out to “prepare the roads.” The ruler would usually send someone out to make sure that work was being done. This is the custom that is referred to in this verse. John the Baptist was sent to “prepare the roads” that Jesus Christ would travel on spiritually. He preached the Good News, confronted sinners, offered baptism for repentance, and raised everyone’s expectation for the Messiah, the laces of whose sandals he was unworthy to unloose.

**3:4-6.** Quoted from Isaiah 40:3-5.

**3:8.** “come now.” For this translation compare *Anchor Bible Commentary* (Joseph Fitzmyer). NASB, HCSB, and KJV translate the *oun* (#3767 οὖν) as “therefore.” But “therefore” normally indicates the *practical application* of that which came before, which makes no sense in this context; rather, this is a continuation of narrative, a logical connection, not properly the practical application. “Come now” captures this sense best.

**3:9.** “is cut down.” The Greek is the present perfect form of the verb *ekkopto* (#1581 ἐκκόπτω), and “is cut down” is a good translation in this context, which involves “trees.” This verse can be confusing because the present tense of the verb “is cut down,” makes it seem like the cutting is being done now, when in fact the cutting is actually future, at God’s Judgment. This is clear even from the first part of the verse which notes that the cutting has not begun, but the axe has been placed down near the root of the trees in preparation for the cutting.

Translators recognize the confusion that the “is” can cause, and thus some versions actually transpose the present tense to a future tense in their translations, using “will be cut down” (HCSB; NIV; NJB; Moffatt). Although the present tense verb is used, the cutting will be done in the future. This is the idiom some scholars refer to as the “prophetic present,” and it takes an event that is future but certain to happen and coming soon, and treats it as if it is present. The present tense verb being used for an event that is future is also referred to as the *futuristic present* (Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, p. 535-36). Writing in the prophetic present typically emphasizes either the certainty and inevitability of something happening in the future, or the fact that the event will occur very soon. Other examples of the prophetic present include Matthew 3:10; 17:11; Mark 9:31; 1 Corinthians 15:26; 16:5; 2 Corinthians 13:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:9, 11. The prophetic present idiom is closely related to the prophetic perfect idiom (see note the prophetic perfect on Eph. 2:6).

“**Trees**” is the figure of speech *hypocatastasis* for people (Bullinger, *Figures*), and is often used for the powerful people in the society (Judges 9:8-15; Song of Solomon 2:3; 7:8; Isa. 56:3; Ezek. 17:22-24; Dan. 4:10, 22; Zech. 4:3-14; Rom. 11:16-24). There are times when a tree is used for a nation (Ezek. 31:2-9), but that is not the case in this context, because nations are judged by God by what happens in and to them, but only people are judged in the future Judgment. For an explanation of *hypocatastasis*, see commentary on Revelation 20:2.

**3:14.** “extort money from anyone by threats.” The Greek is *diaseiō* (#1286 διασείω). Robertson (*Word Pictures*) writes: Here only in the N.T., but in the LXX and common in ancient Greek. It means to shake (seismic disturbance, earthquake) thoroughly (*dia*) and so thoroughly to terrify, to extort money or property by intimidating (3Macc. 7:21). The Latin employs *concutere*, so. It was a process of blackmail to which Socrates refers (Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, ii. 9,1). This was a constant temptation to soldiers. Might does not make right with Jesus.

**3:18.** “exhorting.” The Greek is *parakaleō* (#3870 παρακαλέω), and can mean exhort, encourage, etc. It is a verb (participle present active nominative masculine singular) and as such should not be translated as “exhortations” in the sense of a noun. John preached the good news, and one of the ways he did so was by speaking up about many (*polus*) and various (*heteros*) subjects, just as he had done in verses 10-14. To say “many other” rather than “many” and “varied” takes some of the emphasis away from the number and

variety of subjects that John must have covered in his teaching. Bible teachers should make note of John's teaching. The Good News is not always proclaimed by teaching about the death of Jesus. We also have to tell people how to live righteously before God. For a similar translated structure to the REV, cp. Lenski.

**3:23.** "about thirty." According to the Law of Moses, no one could enter Priestly Service as a Levite until 30 years old, and then they served from 30 to 50 years old (Num. 4:3, 23, 30, etc). King David changed the age a Levite or priest could serve from thirty years to twenty years old (1 Chron. 23:24-27). However, it is important to note that the Word of God does not say that David spoke by revelation when he made the change. In fact, it is noteworthy that the Bible says that the Levites were counted from 20 years old and older "by the last words of David," as if this were a decree David made, and thus "his words," not "God's word." Jesus started his ministry when he was "about 30" (Luke 3:23), but would have turned 30 before he carried out his duties as both priest and sacrifice, dying for our sins and interceding for us before God. Jesus began his ministry when he received holy spirit when he was baptized by John (Matt. 3:13-17; John 1:32-34). In the spring of his 29<sup>th</sup> year he went to Passover at Jerusalem (John 2:23). That fall, we believe Tishri 1, he would have turned 30 (For a Tishri 1 birth, see: Wierwille, *Jesus Christ Our Promised Seed*; Earnest Martin, *The Star that Astonished the World*). The next Passover he would have been crucified, when he was 30 years old.

**"thirty."** Thirty?! What happened to the years of his childhood and adolescence, and his life as a young adult? Where are the records that fill in the gap in his life from age 12 (Luke 2:42) to adulthood? The Gospels give us little information about Jesus before he started his ministry. "We feel that the scantiness of particulars here supplied by the Gospels was intended to prevent the human interest from overshadowing the grand central Fact, to which alone attention was to be directed. For the design of the Gospels was manifestly not to furnish a biography of Jesus the Messiah, but, in organic connection with the Old Testament, to tell the history of the long-promised establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth" (Edersheim, *Life and Times*, book II, p. 145). What we do know is that Jesus was the son of a carpenter, and as the custom of the time was, was trained as a carpenter and became one himself (cp. Mark 6:3).

**3:36.** The name Cainan does not appear in any Hebrew manuscript, but appears in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew. The Septuagint added to the OT in other places, and this is very likely an addition, for no one earlier than Augustine mentions Cainan. Also, some early Greek manuscripts omit the name in Luke, while others have a different form of it. It is almost certainly an addition to the Septuagint, which then was brought into some early manuscripts of Luke.

**4:1.** "in the desert." Matthew 4:1 and Mark 1:12 clearly tell us that the spirit led, or drove, Jesus *into* the desert: Greek, *eis* (#1519 εἰς). Luke, however, emphasizes that Jesus was being led (imperfect tense) by the spirit while *in* the desert, using the Greek word *en* (#1722 ἐν) rather than *eis*. Some later texts changed the reading to *eis* to harmonize with the other gospels, and this explains the KJV's translation "into the wilderness."

**4:4.** Quoted from Deut. 8:3.

**4:5.** "inhabited world." There are different words translated "world" or "earth," and the differences in the meanings are important. Unfortunately, most versions translated both *oikoumene* and *kosmos* as "world," leaving the English reader with no way to see the differences. The Greek word in Luke 4:5 is *oikoumene* (#3625 οἰκουμένη), and it means

1. The earth as inhabited area, exclusive of the heavens above and nether regions, the inhabited earth, the world. 2. The world as administrative unit, *the Roman Empire* (in the hyperbolic diction commonly used in reference to emperors, the Roman Empire equaled the whole world. 3. All the inhabitants of the earth, then, figuratively *humankind* (cp. Acts 17:31; Luke 2:1, 4). When it means the whole world so far as living beings inhabiting it, it seems to include the realm of transcendent beings as well. The inhabited world is different from *kosmos*, the world as a creation.

The Greek world *kosmos* (#2889 κόσμος) has several different definitions (from BDAG). The basic idea is one of order or orderliness. 1. That which serves to beautify through decoration, *adornment, adorning* (1 Peter 3:3). 2. Condition of orderliness, *orderly arrangement, order*. 3. The sum total of everything here and now, *the world, the (orderly) universe* (John 17:5). 4. The sum total of all beings above the level of the animals, *the world* (1 Cor 4:9). 5. The planet earth as a place of inhabitation, *the world, the world* in contrast to heaven. 6. By metonymy: humanity in general, *the world*. 7. *The world*, and everything that belongs to it, appears as that which is hostile to God. 8. Collective aspect of an entity, *totality, sum total the tongue becomes* (or *proves to be*) *the sum total of iniquity* (James 3:6).

In Matt. 4: 8 the Slanderer showed Jesus the kingdoms of the *kosmos*, in Luke, the kingdoms of the *oikoumene*. Putting the two together shows that the Devil was offering Jesus everything in his dominion, the physical earth and the inhabitants of it.

The Greek word *ge* (#1093 γῆ), means 1. arable land; 2. the ground, the earth; 3. the mainland, opposed to sea or water; 4. the earth as a whole, the world; a. the earth as opposed to the heavens; 5. a country, land enclosed within fixed boundaries, a tract of land, territory, or region, when it is plain from the context what land is meant, as that of the Jews.

**4:6.** “glory.” The word also has the meaning of “praise,” “honor” (Cp. Acts 12:23; 2 Cor. 6:8; 8:19, 23). The world praised the Adversary. We Christians praise God. If Jesus was looking for the praise of men, he could have had it then and there.

**4:8.** Quoted from Deut. 6:13.

**4:10, 11.** Quoted from Ps. 91:11-12.

**4:12.** Quoted from Deut. 6:16.

**4:18, 19.** Quoted from Isaiah 61:1, 2.

**4:33:** “spirit of an unclean demon” is the genitive of apposition (Cp. Lenski), = a spirit “that is to say” or “namely” an unclean demon.

**4:34.** “Ha!” An exclamation that combines many elements, and is therefore hard to translate. It can include the emotions of surprise, indignation, fear, and dismay.

“What do we have in common with you.” See note, Matt. 8:29.

**4:35.** “**And Jesus subdued him, saying, “Be bound!” and “Come out of him!”**” The first half of verse 35 is worded exactly like Mark 1:25. The sentence uses vocabulary that has a technical sense. For example, in this case “subdue” is the Greek word *epitimaō* (#2008 ἐπιτιμᾶω) and it is used in this verse as it was used in Greek religion of gaining control over a spirit, a demon. See commentary on Mark 1:25.

“**Be bound.**” The Greek word was used in magic to denote binding a person with a spell. Jesus “bound” the demon with his word. See commentary on Mark 1:25.

**4:39.** “**subdued.**” The Greek word translated “subdued” is *epitimaō* (#2008 ἐπιτιμᾶω), and this is the technical sense of the word as it was used in Greek religion for taking

control over a spirit. Robert Guelich (*Word Biblical Commentary: Mark*) notes that *epitimaō* is “a commanding word uttered by God or by his spokesman, by which evil powers are brought into submission.” Jesus subdued the fever by the power of God, which was expressed in words. See commentary on Mark 1:25.

**4:41. “subduing.”** See note on verses 35 and 39, and also Mark 1:25.

**5:12. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

**5:18. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

**5:21. “defaming words.” “insults.”** The Greek noun is *blasphēmia* (#988 βλασφημία; pronounced blas-fay-me'-ah), and was used of someone speaking against another. The primary meaning of as they were used in the Greek culture was showing disrespect to a person or deity, and/or harming his, her, or its reputation. See note on Mark 2:7. (For more on *blasphēmia*, see note on Matt. 9:3).

**5:27. “Levi.”** This is the Apostle Matthew.

**5:29.** This verse makes it clear that the dinner associated with the calling of the Apostle Matthew was held at Matthew’s house. The Gospel of Matthew and Mark are not clear, and only say, “his” house (Matt. 9:10; Mark 2:15). See note on Matt. 9:10.

**5:33. “fast.”** See note on Matthew 9:14.

**5:36. “No one tears.”** See note on Matthew 9:16.

**5:37. “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins.”** See note on Matthew 9:17.

**5:35. “But the days will come.”** To be properly understood, this sentence fragment needs to be completed, finishing the thought of the previous sentence (v. 34). Thus the full thought is, “But the days will come, when the bridegroom is not with them.” This is not the figure of speech ellipsis, which is most usually the omission of a word in the middle of a sentence. Nevertheless, it is elliptical, in the sense that the reader must fill in what is missing.

**6:23. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

**6:27. “love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.”** This teaching is profoundly wonderful, the highest sense of morality was taught by our Lord. This can especially be seen when comparing this with the teachings of the Greeks at the time, who proclaimed that one ought to *harm* their enemies in order to be just. In the *Republic*, Plato’s interlocutors have the following exchange:

“Should one also give one’s enemies whatever is owned to them?”

“By all means, one should give them what is owed to them. And in my view what enemies owe to each other is appropriately and precisely—something bad.”

“...To treat friends well and enemies badly is justice?”

“I believe so” (*Republic*, 332b, d).

**7:12. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

**7:14. “bier”** The Jews carried the bodies of their dead to the grave on something that resembled a stretcher. It was flat and open. “Coffin” gives the wrong impression, because the bier had no sides, but was simply a platform on which the body was laid. In the biblical culture, people were buried the same day they died, before the body started to decay (*See Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia*).

**7:25. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἰδοῦ), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**7:27.** Quoted from Mal. 3:1.

**“Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἰδοῦ), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**7:28.** “least important *person*.” See note on Matthew 11:11.

**7:29.** “declared God just.” This seemingly difficult phrase is very powerful. The idea being portrayed is that God is on trial. Has he provided a way for mankind to repent, have forgiveness of sins, and thus have salvation? Yes, He has. The jury of the people has spoken. God is just, and has provided for mankind. However, the religious leaders rejected God’s provision (verse 30), to their own doom.

**7:34. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἰδοῦ), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**7:37. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἰδοῦ), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**8:5. The Parable of the Sower.** It is perhaps more accurately named, “The Parable of the Soil.” It is also in Mark 4:3ff. See commentary on Matthew 13:3.

**8:8. “Anyone who has ears to hear had better listen!”** This is the same Greek phrase as occurs in Mark 4:9 (see note there), and almost the same Greek phrase as occurs in Matthew 11:15. For an explanation of the exclamation, see the commentary on that Matthew 11:15. This verse is longer, reading, “Anyone who has ears to hear had better listen,” while the occurrences in Matthew read, “Anyone who has ears had better listen!”

**8:10.** Quoted from Isaiah 6:9.

**“so that...”** For this quotation from Isaiah and the purpose of parables, see commentary on Matthew 13:13. The “so that” is a *hina* + subjunctive purpose-result clause: see entry on Matt. 2:15, “resulting in...what was spoken being fulfilled.” To fully understand this passage, we must see how Matthew’s record portrays the human side of the events, John’s the spiritual side, and Mark and Luke’s records combine the two into one.

**8:24. “subdued.”** The Greek word translated “subdued” is *epitimaō* (#2008 ἐπιτιμῶ), and this is the technical sense of the word as it was used in Greek religion for taking control over a spirit. Robert Guelich (*Word Biblical Commentary: Mark*) notes that *epitimaō* is “a commanding word uttered by God or by his spokesman, by which evil powers are brought into submission.” Jesus subdued the storm, which was no doubt caused by a demon, by the power of God that he wielded, which was expressed in words. The power came from God and was used by Jesus. Jesus did not gain control over the storm by some “magic words” or formula that he used. “It is not a magical incantation...it is powerful Word of the Son” (Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, ἐπιτιμῶ Vol. 2, p. 626). For more on *epitimaō*, see commentary on Mark 1:25.

**8:27.** “in the tombs.” Inside them, not “among” them. See note on Mark 5:3.

**8:28.** “What do I have in common with you.” See note, Matt. 8:29.

**“torture me.”** See note, Matt. 8:29.

**8:40.** “returned.” The Greek word is *hupostrepho* (#5290 ὑποστρεφω) and it means, to return, to turn back. In this case, the parallel record in Mark 5:21ff makes it clear Jesus “returned” to a city back across the Sea of Galilee, most likely to Capernaum. The main reason there can be confusion about this word “return” and whether it refers to returning

back to Capernaum or returning again to where the demon possessed men were, is that Luke 8:37 says that Jesus, “got into a boat and returned (to Capernaum). However, a careful reading of the context reveals that is a summary statement, not strictly in chronological order, because verse 38 shows the man who had been delivered still talking with Jesus, so Jesus had not in fact left yet. He actually left in verse 40. The reason this is important is that verse 40 says the people welcomed Christ, and were expecting him. That was certainly true of Capernaum. Capernaum was Jesus’ home (see note on Mark 2:1), and where he lived, so the people expected him to come home periodically. In contrast, there is no indication Jesus said he would return to the area where the demon-afflicted man lived.

**8:41. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**8:55.** “spirit.” The Greek word is *pneuma* (#4151 πνεῦμα). Here it refers to the natural life of the body. See note on Luke 23:46.

**9:7.** “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from amongst those who were dead.”

**9:28.** For an explanation of the Transfiguration, see Matthew 17:2.

**9:30. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**9:38. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**9:39. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**9:42. “subdued.”** See commentary on Mark 1:25. It is possible that the demon threw the boy to the ground, as some translations say. But there are other translations that say the demon tore the boy, and that seems to be in accord with the Greek which seems to be much stronger than simply throw on the ground. The word we translate as “tore” is *regnumi*, and means “To cause to come apart or be in pieces by means of internal or external force, tear in pieces, break, burst (burst the wine-skins: Mk 2:22; cp. Mt 9:17; Luke 5:37). Passive = be torn, burst. Of ferocious animals tear in pieces w. their teeth” (from BDAG). If a demon has to leave someone, because of its evil and hateful nature, it will do everything it can to hurt the person by tearing flesh, nerves, or anything else it can as it leaves. In this case, the demon saw Jesus coming, and was going to hurt the boy as much as possible before he left, tearing the boy and convulsing him. (Cp. the record in Mark 9:20).

**9:45.** “so they did not perceive it.” This is a result clause in Greek. It was *not* hidden from them in order that, for the purpose of, the disciples not perceiving Christ’s meaning. Rather, the disciples own preconceived notion of the Messiah and his role concealed this meaning from their understanding, “so they did not perceive it.” It does not make sense to say Jesus concealed it because he precedes the saying with, “let this sink into your hearing.” Nor does it make sense that God would be at odds against Christ, causing them to be blinded to it, when the Lord desired the disciples to understand.

**10:3. “Pay attention.”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!). Evangelism is a serious work, difficult in itself due to the fallen nature of man and mankind’s general resistance to godliness. Adding to that difficulty, however, is the spiritual battle that always rages

around any outreach work. Thus it is understandable that the Lord would start instructing us about it with, “Pay attention.”

**10:18.** This verse is a vivid testimony to the problems that believers can cause in the Adversary’s kingdom when they teach the truth, heal the sick, and cast out demons. The Devil spends much of his time in heaven, where he constantly makes accusations against God’s people (Job 1:6, 7, 12; 2:1, 2, 7; Rev. 12:10). However, he comes to the earth when he needs to, as he did when he appeared to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3), or when he personally tempted Jesus Christ in the desert (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). The book of Revelation shows us that in the future the Devil will be cast out of heaven and no longer allowed access to God (Rev. 12:10).

In Luke chapter 10 Jesus sent out the 72 (or 70; the Greek texts are divided) with the authority to heal and cast out demons. They were very effective in helping God’s people, because they came back to Jesus amazed at the deliverance they were able to accomplish through the power of God. They said, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.” This was great news for God’s people, but terrible news for the Devil and his kingdom. Before Christ’s time, no one had effectively delivered people from demonic power. Now Jesus, the Twelve, and the 72, were casting demons out of people and destroying the oppressive system the Devil had carefully built.

The Devil could not just stand by and watch this happen. He came to earth to personally intercede, and try to minimize the damage that the disciples were doing, as well as try to cause them problems in any way he could. Thus, just as he left heaven to tempt Adam and Eve (Gen. 3), and to tempt Jesus (Matt. 4; Luke 4), he quickly left heaven to support his demonic army on earth. God showed Jesus the Devil’s rapid descent from heaven in a revelation vision. Thus, when the disciples joyfully exclaimed that even demons were subject to them in Christ’s name, Jesus supported their faith by telling them that they had such a powerful and damaging effect on Satan’s kingdom that Satan had quickly, like lightning, come down from heaven.

The Greek word translated “fall” in Luke 10:18 is *pipto*, (#4098 πίπτω) and is a general term for all types of falling or downward motion, including falling off of things, throwing oneself down before dignitaries, falling down dead, lightning falling from the sky, being ruined personally (“falling” from grace), and even the heat of the sun “falling” upon people. Thus, the exact meaning of *pipto* has to be taken from the context, and the context of Luke 10:18 is the disciples causing a disturbance in the Devil’s kingdom, so he “fell” (traveled quickly downward) from heaven to correct it.

Some Christians teach that when Jesus said he saw Satan fall from heaven, he was saying that he existed in the beginning and saw when Satan and his demons rebelled against God and were cast out of heaven. That interpretation does not fit the context of the verse. What difference would it make in the context of Luke 10 that Jesus had seen Satan’s rebellion and fall? Such a statement would not have supported the 72, and in fact would have confused them. Furthermore, it is not the kind of statement that Jesus would make, because it would be pointing to something he had done ages before that was completely removed from the situation he was in. It would almost seem like bragging. The Trinitarian explanation of this verse is incorrect, and takes away the powerful meaning of the verse, which is the damage we disciples can do to Satan’s kingdom if we walk in the power that God has given us.

**“Falling.”** The Greek is *pipōo* (#4098 πίπτω), and it means to fall, or “to move with relative rapidity in a downward direction” (BDAG). It is not that Satan “fell,” as if he tripped and fell, or that he was thrown down, so he fell. He moved with great rapidity, light lightning, traveling in a downward direction from heaven to earth.

**10:19. “Take notice!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**10:22.** This verse is very similar to Matthew 11:27, see commentary there.

**10:27.** Quoted from Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18.

**10:25. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**10:31.** The man who was mugged was an Israelite. So why would the priest and Levite not help him? It is not that they were “bad people.” They had their priorities wrong. The man was half dead, and could have died at any time. If the priest or Levite was helping the man, and he died, then they would have been unclean for 7 days (Num. 19:11-16) and would not have been able to “spiritually minister” to others. Thus, these men put their “spiritual duties” above helping their fellow-man. They should have known from the law that God desires mercy, not sacrifice (Matt. 12:7; Hos. 6:6; Micah 6:6-8). This happens far too often in Christianity. Our families get ignored while we do “spiritual things” for the Body of Christ. Or we ignore the cries of other humans while we take care of spiritual responsibilities. The lesson that the Lord is teaching us from the parable of the Good Samaritan is that we are to love our neighbor, and when we do, it is spiritual service.

**11:9.** “keep asking.” This verb is in the continuous present tense. See commentary on John 16:24, “keep asking.”

**11:11.** This verse has several textual variants. The one in the REV reflects the Nestle-Aland 27 Greek text (cp. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*)

**11:14:** Since the textual evidence favors the omission of “and it was,” and since the word “mute” is an adjective, it makes sense to say “mute demon,” i.e., a demon that causes muteness.

**11:18.** “And also.” Similar structure to the New Jerusalem Bible.

**11:19.** “sons.” Not the literal sons, but the disciples of the religious leaders. See note on Matthew 12:27.

**11:21.** “in peace.” Other versions read, “safe.” Christ, who spoke Hebrew, would have used the word for peace, “shalom,” which indicates a state of well being. But shalom would have been translated into the Greek *eirene*, which is the Greek word for peace, although it lacks the full sense of the Hebrew shalom. This is an excellent example of how meaning can be lost in translation going from Aramaic to Greek to English.

**11:31. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**11:32. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**11:34.** “lamp.” The eye is the “lamp” of the body. The eye is not the light, but the lamp that allows the light to shine. A poorly cared for lamp (the lamps of the time were oil lamps, usually made of clay) would not allow the light to shine well. Similarly, if ones “eye” was impure, the light of God would not shine well, or shine at all, in the body.

**“pure.”** The Greek is *haplous* (#573 ἀπλοῦς), and means “simple, single” (in which there is nothing complicated or confused; “without folds” when used of cloth;

“whole, good,” fulfilling its office. In this case, one can tell from the context that it is used in a moral sense and contrasted with “wicked.” Thus the eye is “pure.” Trench (Synonyms of the New Testament) say it refers to a mind “alien to cunning, fraud, pretense, deceit, evil, and the desire to harm others.

**11:41. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἰδοῦ), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**12:5.** Gehenna: see note on Matt. 5:22. For information on annihilation in the lake of fire, see commentary on Revelation 20:10.

**12:6.** “assaria.” 1/16<sup>th</sup> of a denarius, which was a day’s wage for a laborer. If we were to use the time value of money based on today’s work day, it would be worth one-half hour of work, but in biblical times a laborer’s work day was often from shortly after sunup to sundown. See commentary on Matthew 10:29.

“**forgotten.**” See commentary on Matt 10:29.

**12:10.** “defames.” See commentary on Mark 3:28.

**12:58.** “For example.” See Lenski.

**13:6.** “And he spoke this parable.” If we are going to understand the parable, we have to understand its context, and the context is that people must repent of their sin and live godly lifestyles before God. Life can end shortly, and waiting for one reason or another before turning to God is foolish. Like the unfruitful tree in the parable, they may have a few more years (or maybe not), but that time will come to an end, because everyone dies eventually.

**13:7. “Look,”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἰδοῦ), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

“**use up.**” the Greek word *katargeō* (#2673 καταργῶ) means to use up, to waste, so it is unclear whether the landowner in the parable thought the unfruitful tree was actually depleting the soil or just taking up space that could have been used more productively. The phrase “use up” covers both possibilities, and points to the fact that the landowner would have realized that the tree required precious moisture from the ground that could have helped other plants to be fruitful. The parable makes a very powerful point: “unfruitful” people are just not unfruitful themselves, but they use up resources that keep others from being fruitful. Nevertheless, the vinedresser had a heart for this unfruitful tree and wanted to save it. This too, is like life. Often people take an interest in helping others who are unfruitful. But, like this compassionate vinedresser, even they must realize that if the people they try to help remain unfruitful month after month, there comes a time when they have to be let go.

**13:11. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἰδοῦ), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**13:16. “note this.”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἰδοῦ), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

“eighteen years!” We pick up the exclamation from *idou*, (“note this”). Jesus was talking with great force and passion, and “woke up” the minds of his audience, which is why those who suggested that this woman not be healed after eighteen years of torment were put to shame.

**13:17.** “put to shame.” See commentary note on Rom. 9:33.

**13:22.** “through.” The Greek is *kata*, used in the distributive sense (cp. Lenski; Hendricksen). Lenski translates this as: “city by city and village by village.”

**13:24.** “Succeed” see Lenski.

**13:30. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 □δο□), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**13:32.** “fox.” This is the figure of speech, *hypocatastasis*. A study of the word “fox” in the biblical culture reveals that Jesus was calling Herod a destructive nuisance. The meaning of the word “fox” when used in figures of comparison has changed over time. In the United States today it usually refers to a beautiful woman, whereas fifty years ago it usually referred to someone who was sly and/or sneaky. In biblical times “fox” referred to a destructive nuisance, something that could be dangerous, but not as dangerous as a wolf, bear, or lion. For an explanation of *hypocatastasis*, see commentary on Revelation 20:2.

**“Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 □δο□), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**13:35.** Quoted from Ps. 118:26.

**“Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 □δο□), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**14:2. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 □δο□), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**14:35. “Anyone who has ears to hear had better listen!”** This is the same Greek phrase as occurs in Mark 4:9 (see note there), and almost the same Greek phrase as occurs in Matthew 11:15. For an explanation of the exclamation, see the commentary on that Matthew 11:15. This verse is longer, reading, “Anyone who has ears to hear had better listen,” while the occurrences in Matthew read, “Anyone who has ears had better listen!” Jesus has just taught about the cost of being a disciple, and he gives this stern warning and exhortation to people so they will not take it lightly.

**15:1.** “kept drawing near.” The Greek is *eggizō* (#1448 ἐγγίζω), to come near or close, but the real meaning here is expressed by the fact that it is a present participle active. The action was going on and on. The sinners did not just “come,” they “kept coming.” This makes a sharp contrast with the religious leaders in verse two who do not just grumble, they keep grumbling.

**15:2.** “kept grumbling.” The Greek is *diagogguzō* (#1234 διαγογγύζω), and it means to murmur. It is “always used of many indignantly complaining” (Strong’s). Here it occurs in the indicative imperfect active, meaning that the action was ongoing. The sinners kept coming, and the religious leaders kept grumbling.

**15:18.** “in your opinion.” The Greek is *enōpion* (#1799 ἐνώπιον). The word has several meanings, and thus the meaning must be determined from context. Its primary meaning is literal, as it pertains to a position in front of an entity, before someone or something. It also pertains to being present or in view, in the sight of, in the presence of, among. It also pertains to value judgment, thus, “in the opinion/judgment of,” and that is the case in this verse.

**15:29. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 □δο□), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**16:9.** “make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth.” The answer to this difficult verse lies in understanding that only God and Christ can receive anyone into “the tents in the Age,” i.e., the dwellings in the Millennial Kingdom and beyond. How does the believer “make friends” with wealth? By using it to help and bless others. Matt. 25:40

notes that what we do for the least of the believers we do for Christ himself. When we use our wealth properly, we make friends of God and Christ, who then help us, just as the unrighteous house-manager made friends who later helped him when he was in need. For “mammon” see note on Matthew 6:24.

**16:11.** This verse contains the figure of speech Hyperbaton (Bullinger; Figures of Speech) and more literally reads, ““If, then, you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, the true *riches*—who will entrust them to you?”

**16:13.** See note on Matthew 6:24.

**16:19–31.** This record of the rich man and Lazarus is a parable, not a literal portrayal of events that were actually occurring. Jesus spoke the parable to the Pharisees who believed that every person had a soul that lived on after the person died, and the souls of evil people were tormented, while the souls of good people were not. By wording the parable the way he did, Christ was “becoming a Pharisee to win the Pharisees,” (cp. 1 Cor. 9:19–22). The parable makes a couple of very profound points. Perhaps the most important one is the way he ended the parable, that if hardhearted and rebellious people would not believe Moses and the prophets, they would not change their mind and believe, even if someone rose from the dead (Luke 16:31). This was shown to be absolutely correct when both Lazarus and Christ rose from the dead and yet the religious leaders did not believe.

Another point of the parable was that the way a person deals with his wealth and earthly possessions will have directly affect what happens to him on Judgment Day. Luke chapter 15 has three parables that show how valuable people are and how they should be loved and cared for. Those three parables are then followed in Luke chapter 16 by two parables about how important it is for people to properly steward their material possessions. Luke 16:14 points out that the Pharisees, who were listening to Jesus, “loved money.” The parables in Luke 16 were stern warnings to these greedy Pharisees that their selfishness would have severe consequences.

In spite of the fact that the record is a parable, just as in every parable, there is some truth in it. Scholars debate exactly how much truth is in the parable. For example, some scholars believe in disembodied souls, while others do not. Of those that do, some believe those souls have fingers that can be dipped in water, while others do not. Some scholars point out that it is very unlikely that Abraham would have the authority to allow someone from Paradise to return to earth to warn the unsaved, so the rich man asking that of Abraham would not be literal. Other scholars doubt that unsaved people in torment can speak to the saved people in Paradise .

When it comes to determining what is true about things such as life after death, our only reliable source is the Bible, and particularly the entire scope of Scripture. It is not good exegesis to use a parable as a primary source of doctrine about what happens to people when they die, especially when that parable contradicts other clear verses of Scripture. We know from many other verses of Scripture that when people die their soul does not live on, but the person is dead in every way until the Rapture or one of the resurrections, which is a point we will expand upon later.

One thing that is true in the parable is that some people will not die immediately in the lake of fire, but will be in torment for a period of time as a retribution for their sins. The clear message of Scripture is that unless people get forgiveness for their sins they will be punished for the evil they have done (Ps. 62:12; Ecc. 11:9; Jer. 17:10; Ezek. 33:20; Matt. 16:27; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 2:23). Romans 2:5 says of stubborn people, “you

are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath.” Just as godly people by their good works store up treasure for the life to come, wicked people store up wrath for themselves.

It is important to realize that although many Bible teachers use this parable to teach that there is everlasting torment for the unsaved, the parable itself never says that. Nowhere in the parable is it stated or implied that the rich man's torment will go on forever. The parable simply portrays him being in torment, and a period of torment for the unsaved is expected, based upon the Scripture. However, from the scope of Scripture we learn that the unsaved in the lake of fire eventually die and are consumed, a point we will make again later.

People who assert that the record about Lazarus is factual and not a parable argue that Jesus did not say it was a parable and furthermore, no other parable contains a proper name. While it is true that Jesus did not say he was speaking a parable, it is also true that many parables start without Jesus saying he is speaking a parable. A few examples from Matthew include the parable of the Workers in the Field (20:1–16), the Two Sons (21:28–31), the Wise and Foolish Virgins (25:1–13), and the Talents (25:14–30; This is a different parable from the parable of the Minas in Luke 19:11–27 which is specifically said to be a parable).

Very solid evidence that Luke 16:19-31 is a parable comes from paying attention to the fact that this parable opens in basically the same way many other parables in Luke open. The Parable of the Good Samaritan opens with, “A certain man” (Luke 10:30, YLT). Then the Parable of the Rich Fool opens with, “Of a certain rich man” (Luke 12:16 YLT). Then the Parable of the Unfruitful Fig Tree opens with “A certain one” (Luke 13:6, YLT). Next the Parable of the Great Supper opens with “A certain man” (Luke 14:16, YLT). Then the parable of the Prodigal Son opens with, “A certain man” (Luke 15:11). Then in Luke 16, the Parable of the Shrewd Manager opens with, “A certain man was rich” (Luke 16:1, YLT). Following immediately after the Parable of the Shrewd Manager is the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man, and it opens the exact same way as the Parable of the Shrewd Manager does, but starts with the word “and,” marking the continuation of Jesus thought and teaching. It opens, “And a certain man was rich” (Luke 16:19, YLT).

We have just seen that many parables in Luke open with “a certain man.” What is just as important is that none of Jesus' other teachings, only his parables, open that way. Going through all the different teachings of Jesus in Luke shows us that when he started speaking, using the phrase, “a certain man” or “a certain one,” he was speaking a parable.

In answer to the assertion that no parable contains a proper name, we must realize that there is no rule that says a parable cannot have a proper name. Furthermore, actually, it is not true that parables do not contain proper names. For example, the parable of the Good Samaritan mentions both Jerusalem and Jericho. While these are not names of people, they are proper names. Also, it is generally acknowledged that Ezekiel 23 is an allegory or parable about Israel and it contains the proper names “Oholah” (“my tent”) and “Oholibah” (“my tent is in her”). While it is true that these are names assigned by God to Samaria (Israel) and Judah to make the point that He had been personally involved with them, it is also true that “Lazarus” (“whom God has helped”) is a name Jesus could assign to show that no one gets to Paradise without God's help. So it is not actually true that no parable in the Bible contains proper names, and many of them

contain very specific other details, such as amounts of money or goods, or times of the day.

There are many things besides the way the parable opens and its context that show this record about the rich man and Lazarus is a parable. As we have already pointed out the most major one is that the scope of Scripture reveals that once a person dies, he is dead in the ground until he is raised at one of the Judgments. No one is alive in heaven (or Paradise) or hell immediately after they die. Of course, someone reading this parable and thinking it is literal would take the position that this parable proves that theology false, but every text of Scripture must fit into the scope of the rest of Scripture. Scripture teaches via many clear verses that dead people are dead and in the grave, not alive in heaven or hell.<sup>14</sup> For example, Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, "...for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom." Yet the rich man and Lazarus had knowledge and wisdom despite the fact that they were "dead." Luke 16 and Ecclesiastes 9 cannot contradict one another, because they are both God's Word, and, as we have said, there are many other clear verses in the Bible that, like Ecclesiastes, teach that when a person dies he is dead in every way until he is raised.

What happens to dead people is that they will be raised in one of the resurrections (while dead Christians will be raised in the Rapture). Dead people who are resurrected in the "first resurrection," the "Resurrection of the Righteous" (Luke 14:14), will live forever with Jesus. Dead people who are resurrected in the second resurrection, the Resurrection of the wicked (Acts 24:15) and who are judged unworthy of everlasting life will be thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death (Rev. 20:14) and people thrown into it will die and their bodies will be totally consumed (see commentary on Mark 9:38 and Rev. 20:10).

Another reason to view this record as a parable is that it is set with four other parables, and it flows well with them. Still another reason is that the information in this parable was not the kind of factual information that Jesus could have known. How could Jesus have known about a conversation that was going on between two dead people? The traditional answer is that Jesus was God so he knew everything, or he could have known it by revelation. However, Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees, and if they thought he was recounting to them an actual incident of a man who had brothers living among them, and that somehow Jesus knew who had gone to Paradise and who had gone to Gehenna, and furthermore he knew what these dead people were saying to each other, they would have thought he was insane or had demons, and he would have had no credibility with them whatsoever. In contrast, by presenting his teaching as a parable with a valid point, he had the opportunity to make a big impact on the Pharisees, who already believed the basic premises in the parable.

Another reason to believe that the record is a parable is that it seems inconceivable that saved people could enjoy everlasting life if they were hearing the cries and pleas of people in torment. Could it really be that right now, today, people in everlasting torment are begging people in Paradise for water but are being ignored? And could it be that saved people who were merciful and loving throughout their earthly life and took care of the poor, wretched, and needy, are in their perfected state more

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<sup>14</sup> Graeser, Lynn, Schoenheit, *Is There Death After Life?* (Christian Educational Services, Indianapolis, IN), 2004.

hardhearted than they were in their sinful earthly state? While it is true that God is a God of justice, it seems hardly possible that the everlasting joy that is promised to those who are saved could include purposely ignoring tormented people crying out for help and relief, especially since according to orthodox teaching, those cries of pain go on for eternity. It fits the scope of Scripture, and makes much more sense, that this is a parable and Jesus was speaking it to the Pharisees who loved their money and believed in a destiny similar to that which Jesus portrayed in the parable.

A large number of conservative and orthodox biblical scholars believe that the record of Lazarus and the rich man is a parable. An exhaustive list is not possible, but the commentators represent many different theological backgrounds and denominations. Bibles and Study Bibles include: *The Catholic Study Bible* edited by D. Senior and J. Collins; *The Companion Bible* by E. W. Bullinger; *The ESV Study Bible* by Crossway Bibles in Wheaton Illinois; *The MacArthur Study Bible* edited by John MacArthur; *The NIV Study Bible* edited by K. Barker.

Some Bible dictionaries that recognize the record as a parable are: *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley; *Holman Bible Dictionary* edited by Trent Butler; *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible* edited by H. B. Hackett; *A Dictionary of the Bible* edited by James Hastings; and the *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible* edited by Watson Mills.

Some commentaries that recognize the record as a parable are: *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* by Norval Geldenhuys; *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* by William Hendriksen; *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments* by Jamison, Fausset, and Brown; *The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel* by R. C. H. Lenski; *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica* by John Lightfoot; *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* by Matthew Henry; *The International Critical Commentary: Luke* by Alfred Plummer; *Word Pictures in the New Testament* by A. T. Robertson.

Some of the other specialty books that recognize the record as a parable include: *The Greek Testament* by Henry Alford; *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* edited by Cross and Livingstone; *The Fire that Consumes* by Edward Fudge; *All the Parables of the Bible* by Herbert Lockyer; *The Expositor's Greek New Testament* by W. R. Nicoll; *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord* by R. C. Trench; and *The Parables of Jesus in the Light of the Old Testament* by Claus Westermann.

Many of the authors listed above believe in the everlasting torment of the unsaved, so the fact that they consider Luke 16:19-31 to be a parable is important support for its being a parable. Many unsaved people will spend time in torment in the lake of fire as a retribution for their sins. That point is well made in the parable. This wonderful parable makes many good points, not the least of which is that we need to take our lives seriously. They are a gift to us, and God holds us responsible for living in a way that brings glory to Him. If we are disobedient or rebellious, and squander the life He has given us, there will be serious consequences.

**16:31.** "out from among the dead." See Romans 4:24. Wuest: out from amongst those who are dead.

**17:2.** "hung around his neck." For information on millstones, see 17:35.

**17:3.** "Take heed to yourselves." The need for people to forgive others cannot be overstated. Unforgiveness is a sin against God (Eph. 4:32), and it also is very harmful to

one's health, both mentally and physically, as even modern medical research shows. Furthermore, Jesus taught that if we do not forgive those who sinned against us, neither would God forgive us (Matt. 6:15). Thus, this verse, speaking about forgiving others, is set in the context of taking heed to ourselves.

**17:11.** "on his way to Jerusalem." This makes it seem like Jesus is traveling south to Jerusalem, but actually he is traveling north. Between verse 10 and this verse (11), Jesus went to Bethany and healed Lazarus (John 11). While he was there, the religious leaders made plans to kill him (John 11:53), so he left and traveled north. He went to the city of Ephraim (John 11:54), which is about 13 miles NNE of Jerusalem. The Bible does not say how long he stayed in Ephraim, but it was from there he went on this final itinerary. The fact that this verse places him at the border between Samaria and Galilee means that he had already traveled north from Ephraim through Samaria. That he was already through Samaria and in Galilee, is clear in the following verses, because one of the ten lepers that was healed was a Samaritan (v. 16). If Jesus was still in Samaria, we would expect all, or most, of the lepers to be Samaritans, but the fact that only one of them was shows us that Jesus was now in Galilee. From Galilee he traveled across the Jordan River to the territory known as Perea. Both Matthew 19:1 and Mark 10:1 say that Jesus was in the area of Judea beyond the Jordan. Although Perea was not technically part of Judea, the territory ruled by Herod the Great had included both regions, and so Perea became commonly called a part of Judea. Thus for Jesus to come to Jericho (Matt. 20:29; Mark 10:46; Luke 18:35), Jesus had to cross the Jordan River again.

**"the border."** The Greek text can be confusing here if the reader does not have a knowledge of the geography of Palestine at the time of Jesus. The Greek text reads that Jesus passed through the "midst" of Galilee and Samaria. That makes it sound like Jesus walked south through both areas. However, Galilee was the area to the north, and Samaria the area to the south, and the midst of them was the border between them, sort of like in a figure 8, the place in the midst of the upper and lower circle is also the border between the two circles.

**17:20.** The Kingdom of God does not come as a spectacle, that people will sit by and watch. It is not at all a kingdom that will come in that way.

**17:21. "Look!"** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἰδοῦ), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 ("Look!").

**"take notice."** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἰδοῦ), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 ("Look!").

**17:22.** "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of man, and you will not see it." Jesus was teaching his disciples about the terrible times ahead. During those difficult times, disciples would long for even a temporary rest, even just one day from the "days of the Son of man" (i.e., one of the days in the Millennial Kingdom, not just one of the happier days when Jesus walked the earth with them), but there would not be any rest. Thus this teaching is similar to Jesus' teaching in Matt. 24:4-25. The tribulation will be a terrible time for people on earth.

**17:35.** A biblical custom. One of the ways to grind grain was with a grinding mill of a lower millstone and an upper millstone. These stone wheels were mostly 18-24 inches in diameter and 2 through 4 inches thick. A hole in the center of each stone allowed a stick to pass through them so the top one would stay on the bottom one while they turned. Then another hole was put into the top one, and a stick inserted as a handle. The women

would sit on opposite sides of the stone, each taking a grip on the handle. In this manner, the two women could put grain between the stones, then turn them to grind it, each pulling and pushing opposite the other to help each other. The big hole in the middle made carrying the stone from place to place easier, and also, a rope could be run through it and tied around things, such as a person's neck in order to drown him (cp. 17:2).

**17:36.** This verse, as it appears in some manuscripts of the Western Text, and thus got into the KJV, does not appear in the oldest and best Greek manuscripts, but was almost certainly added here to harmonize with Matthew 24:40.

**18:9.** "treat...with contempt." From *exoutheneo* (#1848 ἐξουθενέω), See commentary on 1 Thessalonians 5:20.

**18:11.** "took a stand." Robertson (Word Pictures) writes: Stood (*statheis*). First aorist passive participle of *histemi*. Struck an attitude ostentatiously where he could be seen. Standing was the common Jewish posture in prayer (Mt 6:5; Mr 11:25)." Lenski writes, "He took a stand right up front, next to the stone balustrade which divided the priest's court from that of the men."

**"went on praying these things."** The imperfect tense tells us that he, like many other Pharisees, made long prayers.

**"for himself."** The Greek is *pros eautou* (πρός ἑαυτοῦ) Lenski writes: "The phrase is to be construed with the verb (not with the participle) and means that he prayed these things "for himself," "in favor of himself," using the *pros* of direction, which may be either hostile ('against') or friendly or neutral; here it is the second." The Pharisee prayed on his own behalf, which is not wrong if that is only a part of one's prayer life and it is done with the right heart. However, the picture here is an ostentatious Pharisee who stands right up front where everyone will see him, keeps on praying on his own behalf, and even thanks God that he is not like other men, whom, instead of helping or blessing, he looks down upon.

**18:20.** Quoted from Exod. 20:12-16.

**18:28.** "See." The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 ("Look!").

**18:31.** "Look!" The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 ("Look!").

**18:34.** In spite of Jesus' clearly stating he would suffer, die, and be raised from the dead, the disciples never understood what he meant. This gives us some very important insight into the how the Jews at the time of Jesus viewed their Messiah. They never expected their Messiah to suffer and die. Peter's rebuking Jesus said he said he would suffer and die (Matt. 16:22), and verses such as Luke 18:34 and Mark 9:32 and make that plain. Even after his death and resurrection, upon seeing the empty tomb, they did not understand what had happened (John 20:9). They finally understood from both the Scriptures and from the physical evidence that he would be resurrected when he appeared to them when they were behind locked doors the Sunday after the crucifixion (Luke 24:44, 45). See note on Matthew 16:21.

**19:2.** "Look!" The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 ("Look!").

**19:8.** "Look!" The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 ("Look!").

**19:9.** Instead of speaking directly to Zacchaeus, Jesus spoke about him and his salvation to those who were present.

**19:13.** “minas.” The Greek is *mina* (#3414 μν), which we translate as “mina.” The mina was a Greek monetary unit worth 100 denarii (also 100 drachmae), and a denarius was worth one days wage for a fieldworker or soldier, or what we today would roughly call “minimum wage.” Therefore, a mina was worth about 1/3 of a year’s wage for a worker. The worth of the Hebrew’s coinage was based upon the weight of gold or silver in the coin. The shekel (about 11.424 grams/.403oz) was the basic unit of weight, from which all other coins were referenced.

- *Gerah*—1/20 shekel
- *Beka*—1/2 shekel
- *Pim*—2/3 shekel
- *Shekel*
- *Mina*—50 shekels
- *Talent*—3000 shekels

10 *minas*, therefore, would have been about 500 shekels, or 5.7kilograms/12.6 lbs (*Holman Bible Dictionary*, “Weights and Measures”).

**19:20.** “**Look!**” The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

**19:24.** This verse demonstrates clearly that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God (1 Cor. 3:19), and the world does not understand the wisdom of God. The world takes from the rich (often by excessive taxes) and gives to the poor. But the poor have demonstrated their inability to manage what they have, and despite hundreds of years of various welfare programs in different countries and different cultures (from the “grain dole” in the Roman Empire to the welfare system in the United States), the poor almost always stay poor. Furthermore, by taking away from the rich both the building power of their money and their incentive to work hard, the rich are made poorer and the poor are reduced to the point of being almost destitute. Christ demonstrates the wisdom of God and the way economies should work. The poor lose what they have but can work if they wish to survive, and the rich have plenty to use to build an economy that supplies jobs because they have full control of their own money and plenty of incentive for making more.

**19:25.** “Lord, he has ten minas.” The people in the parable, not the crowd listening to the parable, speak this. The crowds were used to listening to parables and would not have expressed such surprise by something said in a parable, even if it seemed unusual. On the other hand, Jesus knew the parable reflected the reality of what will happen on the Day of Judgment, and that some people will be very surprised at God’s justice, and thus he builds that surprise into the parable. It is both wise and just to give more things to manage to people who have demonstrated the ability to well manage what they have. There are some commentators who see this statement as part of the crowd listening to Jesus rather than the crowd in the parable, which is why some versions such as the KJV has the verse in a parenthesis.

**19:37.** “as he was drawing near.” This verse is in contrast with verse 41, which states, “when he drew near.” As Jesus left Bethany for Jerusalem, he would be going up the east slope of the Mount of Olives, from which Jerusalem could not be seen. However, “as he was drawing near *Jerusalem*,” at the start of the downward slope of the west side of the

Mount of Olives, the first glimpses of Jerusalem would be visible. The full panorama of Jerusalem, including of the City of David (south of the Temple Complex), the Temple Complex, and the city of Jerusalem, were not yet be visible (cp. v. 41), because it would have been obscured by houses and perhaps even by part of the Mount of Olives itself. Nevertheless, parts of Jerusalem did start to come into view. Upon seeing Jerusalem, the huge crowd became filled with emotion and began to shout and praise God because of all the miracles they had seen, and because their expectation was that someone who could heal the blind and raise the dead would be able to deliver them from the Romans and issue in the Messianic Kingdom.

**“Jerusalem.”** Jerusalem, and what he would accomplish there, had been the object of his travels for months now. Even before the Feast of Tabernacles the year previous, he “set his face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51). We must note that this phrase is eschatological, not geographical; it points to the end of his life and what he will accomplish. From a purely historical/geographical point of view, Jesus would go to Jerusalem one more time before he went there at Passover (when he was crucified), and that time was for the Feast of Dedication in the winter (John 10:22). As the months drew closer to his crucifixion, the Word tells us more and more he was going to Jerusalem. Luke 13:22 says Jesus traveled through the cities and villages, heading for Jerusalem. Later, as he headed for Jerusalem, he took the apostles aside and told them he would suffer and die there (Matt. 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-33). After leaving Jericho, he made the steep climb up the out of the Great Rift Valley and up the east slope of the Mount of Olives, heading for Jerusalem (Luke 19:28). Now at last he drew near the city. The verse is not simply stating that what he drew near to was the west slope of the Mount of Olives, although the Greek can be translated that way. No, he drew near Jerusalem. How near? He was already at the west slope of the Mount of Olives, on the verge of entering the city. We believe the *Expositor’s Greek New Testament* correctly notes that, “Luke is thinking of Jerusalem = when he was nearing the city. The next clause,  $\pi\rho\sigma\tau\acute{\alpha}\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\beta\alpha\sigma\epsilon\iota$ , is added to define more precisely the point reached = at the descent of the mount.”

**“the whole multitude.”** This multitude consisted of the crowds who had followed Jesus from Jericho, where Jesus had performed miracles such as healing blind Bartimaeus and his blind companion (Matt. 10:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43), and was greatly swelled by the people in Jerusalem who heard he was approaching and went out to see and welcome him (John 12:12-18; note that John 12:17 and 18 mentions two crowds).

**19:38.** Quoted from Ps. 118:26.

**19:41.** “drew near the city.” Jesus had come up from Jericho and stayed in Bethany (John 12:1-12). Bethany is on the east slope of the Mount of Olives, but houses continue up the slope and cover the top of the mountain. Thus in verse 37, as the procession reached the top of the Mount of Olives, the whole city of Jerusalem was still not in view. However, the Mount of Olives is steep, and as Jesus and the crowd descended the Mount of Olives and came closer to Jerusalem, the whole city became visible before them. Upon seeing it, Jesus became overcome with emotion and burst into tears.

**“burst into tears.”** The Greek is *klaiō* (#2799  $\kappa\lambda\alpha\iota\omega$ ; pronounced klī'-ō), and it means to weep, cry, mourn, lament. It is used of crying from pain and grief. In this verse the verb is an ingressive aorist which means the crying happened suddenly: “burst into

tears” (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures*; Hendrickson, *New Testament Commentary: Luke*; Charles Williams, *The New Testament*). Lenski writes, “burst into sobs.” Robertson notes that Jesus probably cried audibly, while Vincent (Word Studies) asserts Jesus did weep out loud. H. A. W. Meyer writes, “Observe, further, the audible weeping of Jesus at the view of Jerusalem, not the silent δακρῶν, as at the grave of Lazarus (John 11:35)” (*Meyer’s Commentary*). It is a normal human emotion that when we are faced with difficult circumstances such as a death, or separation that we can control our emotions much of the time, but are sometimes overcome with a wave of grief or sadness that causes us to burst into tears. That is what happened to Jesus. He knew the Jews in Jerusalem rejected him, and he knew that most of the people in the crowd that surrounded him, although they were saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord,” that in their hearts they did not really want the Messiah that he was. They wanted political deliverance; they wanted the peace of the Messianic Kingdom; they wanted an easy life; they did not want to repent and change themselves. That is why, when Jesus was arrested and did not give the people what they wanted, they quickly changed what they were shouting, and shouted, “Crucify him!” (Mark 15:11-14). Jesus knew all this already, and had been dealing with it emotionally. However, upon getting a clear view of Jerusalem he was overcome by a wave of emotion and burst into tears, crying over the wasted lives, the pride and selfishness, the unbelief, and the untapped potential of the people, as well as over the destruction he foresaw of the people and city that he loved.

**19:46.** Quoted from Isaiah 56:7 and Jer. 7:11.

**20:7.** “they did not know where *it was* from.” The religious leaders lied to Jesus. They were convinced, wrongly, that John’s baptism was from men, but they lied about it to protect themselves. They would not tell where they thought it was from, so Jesus said he would not tell them where he got his authority.

**20:16.** “God forbid.” Literally in the Greek, “May it not be.” This is an idiom that reflects revulsion at the thought. Perhaps, “Perish the thought” would be good. “God forbid,” which is employed in many versions, is not bad, and carries the sense, but it is so different from the Greek text that it is better in this case to translate the idiom more literally.

**20:17.** Quoted from Ps. 118:22.

**20:27.** See record in Matthew 22:23.

**20:28.** Quoted from Deut. 25:5.

**20:35.** “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among those who are dead.” This verse refers to the first resurrection, the resurrection of the Just, which is at the start of the Millennial Kingdom, Christ’s 1000 year reign (Rev. 20:4). The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unjust (Acts 24:15; Rev. 20:5, 11-14).

**20:37.** Quoted from Exod. 3:6.

**“But that the dead are raised.”** The Greek verb, *egeirō* (#1453 ἐγείρω), is in the present tense, not to say that they are being raised as they die (the dead bodies were obviously in the ground), but rather as a contrast to the Sadducees claim that the dead do not rise.

**20:38.** “for all live for him.” This verse makes the point that God created people to live for him (cp. Eph. 2:10), and it will not do to have His beloved be dead in the ground. His purposes, as accepted by those who believe in Him, will be fulfilled, they will live for him. The key to understanding the phrase, “for all live for him,” lies in knowing that the

Sadducees said there was no resurrection, while Jesus said there was a resurrection (cp. Luke 14:14; 20:35, 36). Neither the Sadducees nor Jesus was espousing that the dead were actually alive. Rather, the issue was, did people die and then stay dead, or did they die and then later, at the resurrection, get raised back to life? Since the Sadducees only accepted the Torah (the Five Books of Moses) as the Word of God, and considered the rest of Scripture to not have divine authority, Jesus, to help them understand, quoted from the Torah. Other Scriptures perhaps more clearly prove the resurrection, such as Peter used (Acts 2:25-36), or Paul (Acts 13:33-35), and there are other verses such as some in Isa. 53 that are not quoted in Scripture, but clearly refer to the resurrection of Christ. Translating the Greek as “for to him everyone is alive,” as the NIV does, misses the point and clouds the issue. Not everyone is alive, and God knows this, which is why He fights for His people to stay alive. All through the Bible He rescued His people from death. Dead people cannot praise God (Isa. 38:18).

**20:42, 43.** Quoted from Ps. 110:1.

**20:46.** “like.” The Greek is *phileō* (#5368 φιλέω). See note on John 21:15.

**21:15.** “a mouth.” Figure of speech metonymy, the mouth being put for the words that will come from it.

**21:27.** Quoted from Dan. 7:13.

**22:4.** “*Temple* commanders.” The Greek word is *strategos* (#4755 στρατηγός), and it is only used in the New Testament in the books written by Luke: the Gospel of Luke and Acts. It refers to the highest official in a Greco-Roman city (thus we have translated it “magistrate” in Acts 16:20, 22, 35, 36, 38), and it is also used of a commander of the Temple police in Jerusalem. The Temple was a huge complex, covering more than 37 acres, and was sometimes filled with tens of thousands of people. The Temple police were Jews who were empowered by the Romans and the Sanhedrin (the Jewish ruling council of 70) to maintain order, and insure that the laws of Israel were being kept. There were many specific rules and regulations concerning the Temple that needed to be enforced. These included insuring that the boundaries of the various courts (court of the Gentiles, court of the women, court of the men, etc.) were respected, the purity laws kept such that no unclean people approached the holy places, and that the many other rules were kept as well. This verse mentions the “commanders” of this police force, as does verse 52, while Acts 4:1; 5:24, 26 mention the top commander (using the word in the singular).

**22:10. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**22:20.** The last phrase in this verse has been translated in two different ways.

(REV) “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is being poured out for you.”

(ESV) “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

The question is, is the verse saying that it is the literal cup of wine that is being poured out, or is it saying that Jesus’ blood is being poured out. This has to be a reference to Jesus’ blood being poured out. His sacrifice had begun. He was at the Last Supper and Judas had already left to betray him (22:4). Lenski writes: “Jesus means that this pouring out of his sacrificial blood has now begun. And he has, indeed, truly entered upon his sacrifice.” Jesus was beginning the sacrifice of his life for the salvation of mankind, hence the present participle, “being poured out.” To make the verse say that the cup of

wine was being poured out is only to state the obvious, and misses the point that the pouring out of Jesus' life had started in a very real and powerful way.

**22:34.** “the rooster will not crow this day, until you have denied three times that you know me.” This was revelation, and convicted Peter when the rooster crowed. There is a teaching in some Christian circles that Jesus was not referring to a rooster, but rather to the priest who opened the Temple doors first thing in the morning. According to the Jewish writings, at first light the priest who opened the Temple doors would cry three times, “All the priests prepare to sacrifice. All the Levites to their stations. All the Israelites come to worship.” Because of his crying out at dawn, this priest was referred to as the “rooster.” The idea that Jesus is referring to the “rooster” priest, and not a real rooster, is supposedly bolstered by the fact that because of their habit of getting into places where they are not wanted, and because the priests did not want them getting into the Temple, roosters were not allowed inside the walled city of Jerusalem. However, a careful study of the Bible and roosters will show that the “rooster” mentioned by Jesus was a real rooster. The rooster that crowed after Peter had denied Jesus did not crow first thing in the morning. It crowed after Jesus had only been at the High Priest's house for no more than a couple hours (Luke 22:57-60). This alone rules out the possibility that the rooster was the priest who opened the Temple gates. Anyone who owns roosters will tell you that the common belief that roosters crow only at dawn is simply not true. Roosters crow throughout the day and even the night. Furthermore, in the cold night air of the Passover season, their crows can be clearly heard for more than a mile across the hills of Judea. The city of Jerusalem in Christ's time was only about a square mile, so it would not be impossible that a rooster on the Mount of Olives could be heard by most of Jerusalem, for example. And from what we know of the layout of the Jerusalem in Jesus' time, the High Priest's house was next to, or at least close to, the wall of the city. Therefore, a rooster outside the city could be heard very clearly in his courtyard. Besides this evidence, there is the extra evidence that Peter did not deny Jesus three times, as tradition teaches, but six times. After the first three times a rooster crowed, and after the second three times a rooster crowed again (for these six denials, see the note on Mark 14:30).

**22:21. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**22:31. “take notice!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**22:37.** Quoted from Isaiah 53:12.

**“is being fulfilled.”** “Is being” is the translation of *echō* (#2192 ἔχω), “to have” or “hold,” in the present tense. Literally it reads, “has fulfillment.” But in English we would say “is being fulfilled,” not “it has its fulfillment,” which could give the false impression of past tense. The present tense shows that the fulfillment is going on; the prophecy is presently being fulfilled.

**22:38. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**22:43, 44.** These verses, though ancient, were most likely not part of the biblical text, but rather an insertion from an early tradition about the passion of Jesus. See Metzger, Textual Commentary, and Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*.

**22:47. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**22:52. “commanders.”** The Greek word is *strategos* (#4755 στρατηγός), and it refers to the commanders of the Temple police. See note on Luke 22:4.

**22:58. “someone else.”** In verses 56 through 60, Peter is accused of being associated with Jesus three times by three different people, and three times here he denies the Lord. We know the first accuser is female, because it specifically says she was a “servant girl” in verse 56, and Peter replies with the appellation, “woman” in verse 57. The second two accusers were males, which we can tell from the Greek words *heteros* and *allos*, and the fact Peter changes his address to “man,” in verses 58 and 60.

After the servant girl accuses Peter, the Greek says “another” saw him and addressed him, using the word *heteros* (#2087 ἕτερος). This word means, “another of a different kind.” In this case, the first “kind” was a female, then by using *heteros* in the masculine, Luke is telling us the second questioner was a male. Hence Peter changes his appellation to “man” here in verse 58. Then in verse 59 we are told still “another” addressed Peter, but this time the Greek is *allos* (#243 ἄλλος), meaning “another of the same kind”—since the last questioner was male, another of the same kind would also be a male, hence Peter also uses the appellation “man” in verse 60. This record is an excellent example of how the words *heteros* (“another of a different kind”) and *allos* (“another of the same kind”) can help to understand a passage.

Reading this record in the KJV can be confusing, because *heteros* and *allos* are both simply translated “another.” It says a “maid” first talks to Peter, then “another,” then “another,” leaving the impression it is another maid—but Peter switches his replies from “woman” to “man.” To avoid this confusion and bring out the full meaning of the Greek, we translated *heteros* as “someone else” in verse 58.

**22:65. “insulting him.”** The Greek verb *blasphēmeō* (#987 βλασφημῶ) is transliterated (not translated) from the Greek into English as “blasphemy.” In English, “blasphemy” is only used in reference to God. However, in Greek, *blasphēmeō* and *blasphēmia* (the noun) did not have to refer to God or a god, although they could, but were common words that were used of someone speaking against another. The primary meanings were showing disrespect to a person or deity, and/or harming his, her, or its reputation. In this case, the people at the trial of Jesus were insulting and defaming him. (For more on *blasphēmeō*, see commentary on Matt. 9:3).

**22:70. “You say *correctly* that I am.”** See Matthew 27:11 note on “*It is as you say.*”

**23:3. “*It is as you say.*”** See Matthew 27:11 note on “*It is as you say.*”

**23:9. “questioned him at some length.”** The Greek reads, “was questioning him with many words,” but the phrase means “questioned him at some length,” just as many translations have. Herod questioned Jesus at some length, but there is no evidence of a trial. Herod wanted to have his curiosity satisfied, and did not really care whether or not Jesus got justice in his court.

**23:11. “treat...with contempt.”** From *exoutheneo* (#1848 ἐξουθενέω), See commentary on 1 Thessalonians 5:20.

**“mocked.”** The Greek word translated “mocked” is *empaizō* (#1702 ἐμπαίζω), and means “mock,” “make fun of,” “ridicule.” See note on Matthew 27:29.

**23:14. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**23:15. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**23:17.** This verse is an addition to some Greek texts, from whence it was translated into some versions. It was apparently added, based on Mt 27.15 and Mk 15.6. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*.

**23:27.** “smote themselves on the chest.” The Greek is *koptō* (#2875 κόπτω), and it means 1) to cut, strike, smite 2) to cut from, cut off 3) to beat one’s breast for grief.

**23:29. “take notice!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**23:34.** This verse is omitted in some early manuscripts, and therefore scholars have debated long and loud about whether it was or was not original. We believe it was original (Cp. Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus*; Alford; *The Greek Testament*). If it was original, it would have been removed by those who were so biased against the Jews that any thought of them being forgiven by Jesus was repugnant (and had they believed it, they would have had to markedly change their attitudes towards the Jews). On the other hand, that Jesus would utter a prayer of forgiveness from the cross after some 40 hours of inhuman and merciless torture is so astounding and such an amazing act of grace that we dare say no human would have thought to add it. We believe any addition of that kind would have been immediately rejected by peers as absurd, and the saying would have never made it into the textual tradition.

**23:39.** “hanged.” The Greek is *kremannumi* (#2910 κρεμάννυμι), and it means, to hang, to hang up, to suspend, and it was also used of hanging or suspending someone on a cross, just as we used the word “hang” in reference to the cross, and say, “Jesus hung on the cross.”

**“kept insulting.”** The Greek verb *blasphēmeō* (#987 βλασφημῶ) means showing disrespect to a person or deity, and/or harming his, her, or its reputation. (For more on *blasphēmeō*, see commentary on Matt. 9:3).

**23:43.** “I say to you today, you shall be with me...” The comma goes after “today.” The person is not in Paradise, which is the kingdom of God on earth.

**23:46.** Quoted from Ps. 31:5.

**“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”** Jesus, speaking to his Father, God, committed the ultimate act of trust by giving up his life. The word “spirit” is translated from the Greek word *pneuma* (#4151 πνεῦμα), which has many meanings, and refers to things that are invisible and immaterial, yet often exert a force or influence that can be seen. Thus, one use of *pneuma* is “wind,” which, while invisible, exerts a discernable force (John 3:8). *Pneuma* is also translated “spirit,” and we need to be aware that “spirit” itself has many meanings, including God (John 4:24); Jesus (2 Cor. 3:17; Rev. 2:7); angels (Heb. 1:14); demons (Matt. 10:1), “attitude” (Matt. 5:3; 26:41; Mark 14:38; Acts 18:25), and the natural life of the body, which is immaterial and thus in the realm of “spirit” (Luke 8:55; Acts 7:59; James 2:26). The natural life of the body (sometimes referred to as “soul”) is by nature “spirit,” and therefore is sometimes referred to as “spirit.” Examples include Luke 23:46, Matthew 27:50, Luke 8:55; and James 2:26. Here in Luke 23:46, Jesus committed his “life” to his Father, God, trusting that God would give him life again by raising him from the dead. (For more on the uses of *pneuma* (spirit) in the Bible, see, Graeser, Lynn, Schoenheit, *The Gift of Holy Spirit*:

*The Power to be like Christ* (Christian Educational Services, Indianapolis, IN, 2006), Appendix B, “Usages of ‘spirit’ in the New Testament”).

**23:50. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 □δο□), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

**24:4. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 □δο□), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

**24:6.** “has been raised.” The Greek is *egeirō* (#1453 ἐγείρω), and it is in the passive voice, so it is not “he is risen,” or “he has risen,” but rather “he was raised,” or “he has been raised.”

**24:13. “Look!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 □δο□), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

**24:21.** Jesus died on the day of the week we call Wednesday (the Jews would simply say the fourth day of the week), and that the “first day of the week” in Luke 24:1 is what we call Sunday, this verse seems to present a contradiction by saying, “this is the third day since [*apo*] these things were done.” The answer lies in the Greek preposition *apo*, which means “away from.” It was not the third day, since that would be Saturday, but it was the fourth day, Sunday, but the third day “since” Jesus died. There are versions of the Bible that are sensitive to that, cp. “...but he is dead, and that is three days ago” (James Moffatt, *The Bible: A New Translation*, Rev. ed., New York, Harper & Row, 1935); “...Moreover, three days have already passed since all those things occurred” (Gerritt Verkuyl, ed. and trans., *The Holy Bible: The New Berkeley Version in Modern English*, Rev. ed., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969); “...and lo, three days have passed since all these things have occurred” (James Murdock, trans., *The Syriac New Testament Translated into English from the Peshitto Version*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., Boston: Hastings & Sons, 1915). The point is that, by Sunday, three whole days (Thursday, Friday, Saturday) had passed since Jesus had died late Wednesday.

**24:35.** “related.” The Greek is *exegeomai* (#1834 ἐξηγέομαι) and means in secular Greek, to lead out, be the leader, or go before. In the Bible it is used as to lead out or unfold a narrative, to relate or set forth in detail. Thus it means unfold, relate or set forth in detail, expound, describe, recount.

**24:46.** “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among those who are dead.”

**24:49. “take notice!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 □δο□), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

**“are clothed with power from on high.”** Jesus is here referring to the gift of holy spirit that will be poured out on the Day of Pentecost, which will begin the Christian Church. The Apostles already had the gift of holy spirit that was available in the Old Testament, and had been on people such as Moses, Miriam, David, and Deborah (Judges 4). The holy spirit that was poured out on the Day of Pentecost did not exist before that day (John 7:39), but it was “promised” (Joel 2:28; John 16:13; Eph. 1:13). Although the Christian Church was a Sacred Secret, it was known that the holy spirit would be poured out in the Millennial Kingdom, and by this time after his resurrection Jesus knew it would be given before then (*The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be Like Christ*).

**24:52.** “having paid homage to him.” See note on Matthew 2:2. It should be noted that this phrase is omitted in many excellent Greek texts, however, it is possible that it was accidentally dropped from those rather than being added by a later scribe. Textual critics

are divided over the issue. Whether the phrase is original or not, it seems likely that it would have been cultural for the disciples to pay some kind of homage to Jesus in these end moments, so we felt the phrase was best left in this verse.