Luke

Chapter 1

1:1. “compile an orderly account.” For why there are four Gospels, see commentary on Mark 1:1, “gospel.”

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 Zechariah 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. “they both were advanced in their days.” 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 Zechariah 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 Zechariah, 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).


“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.


1:15. “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:

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.

“wine or beer.” John was to be a Nazarite, as was Samson. For the Nazarite vows and commitments, cp. Numbers 6. The Greek word translated “beer” is sikera (#4608 σίκερα). It was not a distilled beverage, like our whisky, rum, vodka, etc., today. Distilled liquor was unknown in the ancient world. It was a fermented drink, hence our translation as “beer.” The Akkadian word was sikaru, barley beer, from whence the Hebrew word shekhar almost certainly came, and the Greek word is obviously related.

Because “beer” does not occur in most translations of the Bible (although that is changing in some of the more modern versions; cp. HCSB, NET), it is worth saying something about it. Biblical Archaeological Review (Sept./Oct. 2010, Vo. 36, no. 5), has a very informative article by Michael Homan, titled, “Did the Ancient Israelites Drink Beer?” Homan writes:

In ancient Near Eastern cultures, beer was in many ways a super-food. By producing and drinking beer, one could dramatically multiply the calories in harvested grains while consuming needed vitamins; that alcohol was also effective at killing bacteria found in tainted water supplies. Given the difficulty of producing food in the ancient world, beer gave you a lot of nutritional bang for your buck.

…Nobody disputes the importance of beer in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, where it was the national drink. Beer was used to pay laborers and the fathers of brides. It was used medicinally for stomach ailments, coughs, constipation; an ancient Egyptian prescription calls for a beer enema. Hammurabi’s Law Code regulates the price and strength of beer. Many ancient temples had their own brewers. …Moreover, beer did not keep well, so it was made for immediate consumption.

The article goes on to discuss how beer was not made like we do it today with hops or carbonation, and that was often made from a mixture of things, including mixed grains instead of just one grain, and it could be sweetened with many different things, such as grapes, figs, honey, and fruit, and also spices may be added.

The Greek word refers to a fermented drink that was almost certainly some kind of beer, whether barley beer, date beer, mixed-ingredients beer, etc. In contrast, it does not refer to distilled liquor, which is what the English “strong drink” implies, so we did not use that term in the REV.

“filled with holy spirit.” No article “the”. This holy spirit was the gift of God that He gave to some believers before Pentecost. [For more information on the uses of “Holy Spirit”, see Appendix 6: “Usages of ‘Spirit’”.

1:17. Quoted from Malachi 4:6. The reference to the “spirit and power of Elijah” is a clear indicator that when Malachi 4:5 says that “Elijah” will be sent, it is the figure
antonomasia, “name change,” where the name “Elijah” is put for someone who has many of the same characteristics as Elijah, in this case, John the Baptist. For example, in Revelation 11:8, the city of Jerusalem is called “Sodom” to make the point that it is full of ungodliness and immorality.

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

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

1:18. “sign.” Literally, Zechariah 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 Zechariah 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 Zechariah’s unbelieving demand for a sign—he would be mute until the child was born.

1:20. “Look!” The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἰδού), 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 is 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. “a city of Galilee named Nazareth.” 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 *chaírō* (#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*).

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

“conceive in your womb.” The translation is correct, even though the Greek phrase *sullēmpse en gastri* (συλλήμψε ἐν γαστρὶ) can also be understood as an idiom and translated “become pregnant in your womb.” Genuine conception did occur in Mary. We know from many verses of Scripture that Mary had to contribute the egg and God fertilized the egg. There is no indication in Scripture that when Jesus was said to be of the line of David, that that just meant he was adopted into that line. To fulfill the prophecies he had to be born as a true descendant of David. Mary was not a surrogate mother, she was a real mother who made a real genetic contribution to Jesus Christ.
The prophecies were that Jesus was going to be a true lineal descendant of David. He was known as the “Son of David,” a title he recognized of himself, because he was a true descendant of David. Also, Psalm 132:11 says, “Yahweh swore an oath to David, a sure oath he will not revoke: “One of the fruit of your body I will place on your throne.” To fulfill that prophecy Jesus Christ had to be a genuine descendant of David, and he was not David’s descendant if he was God. Jesus Christ is the Son of his father, God, and his mother, Mary. Romans 1:3 is one of the many New Testament verses that speaks of Jesus being of the line of David. Most commentators ignore this clear truth in the Bible in order to maintain the tradition of the Trinity.

1:33. “he will reign over the house of Jacob forever.” 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).

1:35. “The Holy Spirit.” “The Holy Spirit” (capital “H,” capital “S”) is a name used for God when His power is in operation. In a very Hebraic way, this verse equates the Holy Spirit with “the power of the Most High.” The angel was speaking to Mary, a young Hebrew woman, in terms she could understand. It was common in the Hebrew language to say something and then repeat it in different words so the meaning would be clear. This occurs throughout the Hebrew Old Testament, and can especially be seen in books such as Proverbs in which something is stated and then restated using different words.

Since Mary told the angel she was not having sexual relations with human men, and knew she would then have to be impregnated by God, she would naturally understand “the Holy Spirit” to be the name of God which emphasized His invisible power in operation. God has many names in the Bible, and “the Holy Spirit” is one of them. It is easy to tell that in this case “the Holy Spirit” is a name of God because Jesus is called “the Son of God” and “the Son of the Father” (2 John 1:3), but he is never called “the Son of the Holy Spirit.” Mary understood that “the Holy Spirit” was another name for God, and thus she told her cousin Elizabeth that she rejoiced in God, and that “the Mighty One” (another name for God) had done great things for her (Luke 1:47-49). [For more information on the uses of “Holy Spirit”, see Appendix 6: “Usages of ‘Spirit’”]

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

1:37. “For nothing will be impossible with God.” Zechariah and Elizabeth are being paralleled with Abraham and Sarah. Here we have a direct allusion to Genesis 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 Zechariah 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 ἀδύνατεῖ παρὰ τὸ θεόν ρῆμα). Here in Luke it is as though the angel replies, answering in the future tense, “Nothing will be impossible with God” (οὐχ ἀδύνατεῖ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ πᾶν ρῆμα). 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 (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. “Lo!” The Greek word is idou (ἰδού), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”). Although most usually translated “Look!” in the REV, in this context that made it seem like Mary may have been rude to the angel, which was certainly not the case. We went with “Lo,” like Rotherham and Young’s Literal Translation.

1:39. “a city of Judah.” The Greek word translated Judah comes from Iouda (Ἰούδα). 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 Ιουδαία [not Ιουδα] (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 “Judea,” which could be the case but is less likely.

1:41. “filled with holy spirit.” There is no definite article. This holy spirit is the gift of God. (cp. Matt 3:10). [For more information on the uses of “holy spirit”, see Appendix 6: “Usages of ‘Spirit’.”]

1:42. “Look!” The Greek word is idou (ἰδού), 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 (παρά) is to be understood in the sense of expressing source [see Appendix 11: “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. The “soul” here refers to the emotions, feelings, attitudes, and even thoughts. Mary is magnifying the Lord with all that is within her. [See Appendix 7: “Usages of ‘Soul’.”]

1:47. “my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.” This is a powerful verse because it shows Mary’s deep trust in God. On the surface she seemed to have many problems at this time, chief among them being that she was pregnant before having sex with her husband in a culture that was scandalized by that. Even Joseph had thought about divorcing her. Only a few people knew of her divine conception, and since no one was expecting a virgin birth she could not have convinced them of it anyway. In spite of her difficult circumstances she rejoiced in God, and thus has set a wonderful example for us and how we should rejoice even in our difficult circumstances.

There are Trinitarians who believe that, because this verse calls God “Savior,” and Jesus is also called “Savior,” that Jesus must be God in the flesh. However, that belief is not correct. There are many references to God the Father being called “Savior.” That makes perfect sense because He is the author of the plan of salvation and is also very active in our salvation. For example, God, the Father, is called “Savior” in Isaiah 43:11, 1 Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 3:4, 25. In contrast, Jesus Christ is called “Savior” because he is the agent who carried out God’s plan, and without whom it could not have come to pass.
The term “savior” is used of many people in the Bible. This is hard to see in the English versions because, when the word “savior” is used of people, the translators almost always translated it as “deliverer.” This in and of itself shows that modern translators have a Trinitarian bias. The only reason to translate a word as “Savior” when it applies to God or Christ, but as “deliverer” when it applies to men, is to make the term seem unique to God and Jesus when in fact it is not. This is a good example of how the actual meaning of Scripture can be obscured if the translators are not careful when they translate the text.

God’s gracious provision of “saviors” who help God’s people is not recognized when the same word is translated “Savior” for God and Christ but “deliverer” for others. Also lost is the testimony in Scripture that God works through people to bring His power to bear. Of course, the fact that there are other “saviors” does not take away from Jesus Christ, who is the only one who could and did save us from our sins and eternal death.

If all the great men and women who were “saviors” were openly portrayed as such in the English versions, the grace and mercy God demonstrates in saving His people by “saviors” He has raised up would be openly displayed. Furthermore, we believe no reader would confuse the true God with the people He was working through. A good example that shows God raising up “saviors” to rescue Israel through history occurs in Nehemiah in a prayer of confession and thanksgiving to God. The Israelites prayed, “But when they [Israel] were oppressed they cried out to you. From heaven you heard them, and in your great compassion you gave them deliverers [saviors], who rescued them from the hand of their enemies” (Neh. 9:27 NIV84). Some other examples of men designated as “savior” are in 2 Kings 13:5; Isaiah 19:20 Obadiah 21. It is incorrect to say that because Christ and God are both called “Savior,” they are one and the same, just as it would be incorrect to say that the “saviors” God raised up throughout history were also God in the flesh or even the same individual as Jesus Christ. For more information, see Andrews Norton, A Statement of Reasons for Not Believing the Doctrines of Trinitarians, pp. 304, 305. Also, Don Snedeker, Our Heavenly Father Has No Equals, pp. 378-380.

1:48. “because he has looked upon the low estate of his servant.” God does look upon the lowly and humble (Ps. 138:6). In this sentence, “looked upon” is used in an idiomatic or “pregnant” sense, because it means much more than just “look at,” it means to see and do something about it.

The words for “look at” or “see” (a common Hebrew word for “see” is ra’ah (#7200 רָאָה)) are sometimes used in an idiomatic or “pregnant” sense that means “to look with favor upon,” “to accept,” “to notice and do something about.” Example of this idiom occur in both the Old and New Testaments, and include: Genesis 29:32, Exodus 4:31; 1 Samuel 1:11; 9:16; 2 Samuel 16:12; Job 40:12; Psalm 9:14; 10:11; 31:7; Habakkuk 1:13; and Luke 1:48. In contrast, to “not see” something was to ignore it, to not pay attention to it, to not care about it or look at it with any favor. Thus when Joseph ran the prison in Egypt, the jailer did “not see” anything under Joseph’s authority; he paid no attention to it (Gen. 39:23).

Sometimes the idiom of “see” goes a step beyond just “look upon with favor” or “accept,” and means, “to choose for oneself” “to provide for oneself,” or “to choose” (cp. Gen. 22:8 (God will ‘see’ a lamb for Himself); 41:33; Deut. 33:21; 1 Sam. 16:1; 2 Kings 10:3; Esther 2:9 (the girls were “chosen” or “selected” to be with Esther).
The word “see” is also used the way we use it in English as “to visit” someone, to “go see them” (cp. 2 Sam. 13:5; 2 Kings 8:29; 9:16; Ps. 41:6; 2 Chron. 22:6).

It is also used as “to know” or “to understand,” and can be just a mental knowing or a knowing through experience, if the emphasis is on experience, it might even be translated “experience.” This is similar to the way we use it in English when we say, “I see what you mean,” or “I am going to see for myself,” which often mean experience it myself (cp. Ps. 16:10; 27:13; 34:13; 60:5; 71:20; 89:49 (Heb. 11:5); 90:15; Jer. 5:12; Jer. 20:12; Lam. 3:1). [For more information on the idiomatic uses of “see,” see commentary on John 1:18, and also the commentary on Romans 8:29, “foreknew”].

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

1:49. “because the Mighty One has done great things for me…” 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. “his mercy is on those who fear him.” God refers to his love and mercy extending for generations in Exodus 20:6 and Psalm 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).


1:54. “He helped his servant Israel.” “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,” (Lenski).

“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.”

1:67. “filled with holy spirit.” There is no definite article. This holy spirit is the gift of God. (cp. Matt 3:10). [For more information on the uses of “holy spirit”, see Appendix 6: “Usages of ‘Spirit’].

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.”


1:76. “prepare the way for him.” The Greek word that is translated “way” is hodos (#3598 ὁδὸς) in the plural, and the Greek is etoimazo hodos 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-known 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 mud holes), 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.

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.


1:79. “into.” Rather than solely expressing motion “into,” the preposition eis (#1519 εἰς) can also have the sense of “in” [See Appendix 11: “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.

Chapter 2


“inhabited world.” In the time of the first century the Roman Empire was the entire
known “world.”
2:5. “had been 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 is no 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.” The Greek word is egkuos (#1471 ἐγκύος), a compound word from
the preposition en, “in” and the word kuō, the womb. It literally means, “to have in the
womb” (Louw-Nida). It simply refers to being pregnant. It does not refer to how far
along the pregnancy was. The King James Version and a couple other English versions
support the traditional Christmas story by translating egkuos as “great with child.” That is
an unwarranted translation, because the Greek word simply means, “to have in the
womb,” “to be pregnant.” It shows us Mary was pregnant, but does not tell us how far
along she was. Joseph was a wise man, and wisdom would dictate that he would not
travel with her when she was on the verge of giving birth. While it is true that at that time
it was difficult to tell exactly when a woman would give birth, if she gave birth on the
road that would be exceedingly difficult for the family, so if she had started early
contractions, or Braxton-Hicks contractions, it is unlikely Joseph would have traveled
with her. Actually, since both Joseph and Mary knew the Messiah had to be born in
Bethlehem to fulfill the prophecy, and since they had relatives in Bethlehem and were
both a “royal” couple who would have been gladly received by many homes, they almost
certainly would have allowed plenty of time to be in Bethlehem.
2:6. **“while they were there.”** The Greek is more literally, “in their being there.” This is well translated as, “while they were there,” which is the translation in most English versions. Note that this verse makes it clear that they had not just arrived that day. The specific Greek phrase occurs in three other verses besides this one, and it does not refer to just arriving or just starting something—it refers to being “in” the middle of something.

In Luke 5:12 Jesus was visiting a town when a man came to him to be healed. He had not just arrived at the town, he was “in” it. In Luke 9:8 the disciples came to him “while” he was praying. He had not just started, he was in the midst of prayer. Similarly, in Luke 11:1 Jesus was “in” prayer, and when he had finished a disciple asked a question.

The point is that Joseph and Mary had not just arrived in Bethlehem, as the traditional Christmas story teaches. They had been in Bethlehem a while, but the Bible never says exactly how long.

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 (see Wilhelm Schneemelcher, editor, *New Testament Apocrypha*, The Protevangelium of James, pp. 370-388). 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”) (see R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke’s Gospel*, p. 126). 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. (These reasons are enumerated in: Kenneth Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, p. 25, 26) 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. 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.” (see Kenneth Bailey, Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes, p. 26.)

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 (τόπος) and kataluma (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 Luke 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 (πανδοχεῖον), 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 (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 Shunammite 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).

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 (see Fred Wight, Manners and Customs of Bible Lands, p. 34; Kenneth Bailey, Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes, p. 28-33). 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).” (John Nolland, Word Biblical Commentary, p. 105.)

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.

The fact that the record says there was no room for them in the guestroom does not mean that Joseph and Mary had just arrived. Lots of people would be traveling to Jerusalem for the registration, and even more if this was around the time of Rosh Hashanah and the Feast of Tabernacles, which we think it was. Many scenarios are possible. One is that the guest room had been occupied for weeks, which at that time of year would not have been out of the ordinary. Another is that when other people arrived for the registration or the feast, that Joseph and Mary moved from the guestroom into the main house because they were closer relatives or to better care for Mary. The Bible is simply letting us know that Jesus was placed in the manger in the house because the family guestroom was occupied.

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 polyptoton (Cp. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*).

2:10. “Look!” The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδοι), 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” (*panta ta ethne*: Matt. 28:19). For scriptures where “the people” clearly refers to the Jews, see: Matthew 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. “this day.” The Jewish day began at sunset; hence the angel was telling them what had happened sometime after sunset that evening.

“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.


2:14. “highest.” The Greek is *hupsitos* (#5310 ὑψὸςτος), 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” (Greek: 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, and having seen it they went and made the event known.

E. Martin, in The Star that Astonished the World, does an astronomical calculation of the time of day Jesus was born using the astronomical material in the Bible and especially in Revelation 12. If he is correct, the shepherds would be spreading the news of Jesus’ birth not too long after sundown, so most of the town would still be awake. There is nothing in the text to indicate that the shepherds had to wake the townspeople up in the middle of the night.

“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.


2:21. “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.” (Dr. S.I. McMillen, None of These Diseases, p. 93.)

2:23. “will be called holy to the Lord.” This command to consecrate the firstborn male was from the Mosaic Law. Quoted from Exodus 13:2, 12.
2:24. “A pair of turtledoves.” Quoted from Leviticus 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 ἰδού), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

“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.

“holy spirit was upon him.” There is no definite article. This holy spirit is the gift of God. [For more information on the uses of “holy spirit”, see Appendix 6: “Usages of ‘Spirit’”.]


“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). [For more information on the uses of “holy spirit”, see Appendix 6: “Usages of ‘Spirit’”.

“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. “Master.” The Greek is despotēs (#1203 δеспότης) meaning master or lord, and it refers to someone who has legal control and authority over others, such as subjects or slaves (cp. 1 Tim. 6:1; Titus 2:9). Thayer points out that it was “strictly the correlative of “slave” doulos, and hence denoted absolute ownership and uncontrolled power” (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon). It also refers to someone who controls a thing, hence, an “owner.” It is used both as a title for God (Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24), and a title for Jesus.
Christ (2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 1:4). Whereas despotēs denoted absolute power and control, kuriōs, “lord,” has a more general meaning applicable to the various relationships in life, which is why we see kuriōs used even as a term of address equivalent to our polite way of addressing strangers as “Sir” (cp. KJV Matt. 13:27; John 4:11; John 5:7; etc.).

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


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

“appointed.” The Greek is keimai (#2749 κεῖμαι), 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 ptōsis (#4431 πτῶσις) and anastasis (#386 ἀνάστασις). Louw-Nida translates ptōsis—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 commentary 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 in the New Testament) 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).

2:35. “broadsword.” 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, which was used by non-Greek-speaking peoples, especially the Thracians. We can rightly refer to it as a “broadsword.” 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).

“soul.” The Greek word often translated “soul” is psuchē (#5590 ψυχή; pronounced psoo-kay’), and it has a large number of meanings, including the physical life of a person or animal; an individual person; or attitudes, emotions, feelings, and thoughts. Here it refers to the thoughts, feelings, and emotions of Mary. With all that happened to Jesus in his life, she would feel as if she had been pierced by a sword. [For a more complete explanation of “soul,” see Appendix 7: “Usages of ‘Soul’”].

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 this 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.

2:39 “And when they had completed everything required by the law of the Lord.”
This is one of the very many places where the word “and” does not indicate that the two events connected by the “and” happened in immediate succession; the “and” simply continues the narration. Another thing that had to be completed after the offering for sin was Jesus’ trip to Egypt. When we put the events of the other Gospels together with this verse, we can see that Joseph and Mary stayed in Bethlehem after Jesus was born until they went to Egypt, and they went from there to Nazareth.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:4, 11). Joseph and his family still would have been there forty days later when they had to travel the seven miles (11.2 km) north to Jerusalem to present Jesus in the Temple and offer a sacrifice (Luke 2:21-24; Lev. 12:1-8). They were still in Bethlehem when the magi arrived eighteen months to two years later (Matt. 2:8). There is no evidence that they left Bethlehem and went back to Nazareth then went back to Bethlehem again in that time, and no reason for them to have done so. After the magi left Bethlehem, Joseph took Mary and Jesus and went to Egypt (Matt. 2:14). He stayed there until Herod was dead and then went back to Nazareth (Matt. 2:15, 23).

In summary, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and his parents stayed there for perhaps as long as two years after he was born, then they went to Egypt to escape Herod. They left Egypt when Herod was dead, and settled in Nazareth.

2:41. “the feast of the Passover.” 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 devoted couple (See Hendriksen).
2:42. “according to the custom.” For explanation of customary trips to Jerusalem, see entry on 2:41.

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.


2:48. “Look here!” The Greek word is idou (#2400 ἰδού), 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 πατρός 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).

Chapter 3
3:1. **“Pontius Pilate.”** Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea from 26 to 36 AD. [For more on Pilate, see commentary on Matt. 27:2].

3:3. **“baptism.”** See commentary on Mark 1:4.

3:4. **“Make ready the way of the Lord! Make his paths straight!”** This quotation in Luke, which comes from Isaiah 40:3-5 (and the quotation in Matthew 3:3 and Mark 1:3) is from the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament. The vast majority of scholars believe that the New Testament was written in Greek, and there are many reasons for that. A primary one is textual.

   There are simply no extant manuscripts of the NT in Hebrew, and the manuscripts in Aramaic (Syriac) do not seem to be the autographs from which the Greek texts came. Similarly, however, the Greek of the New Testament is so markedly stylistically different from book to book that it does not seem possible that there is an underlying Aramaic text. Although there are some stylistic differences in Aramaic writings, the Aramaic texts we have today would not have led to the stylistic differences that we see in the different books of the Greek New Testament.

   There is research that indicates that Hebrew was spoken in the first century more than was believed in the past, and this has led a few scholars to conclude that the original texts of the New Testament were written in Hebrew or Aramaic. The argument is that the texts were written by Jews for Jews, and thus would have not been written in Greek but in a native Jewish tongue. However, that misses the point. The focus of the New Testament documents was the Christian Church. They were not written in Israel and they were not written exclusively to the Jews.

   There were many Jews, especially in the diaspora, who spoke Greek. When Stephen addressed the Jews in Jerusalem in Acts 7 (likely less than ten years after the death of Christ), he was speaking Greek and quoting from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. Stephen’s dispute had begun with, among others, Jews from Alexandria Egypt, which is where the Septuagint was written (Acts 6:9). When he was brought before the Sanhedrin, he quoted from the Septuagint, not the Hebrew Bible. One way we know that is while the Hebrew Bible says Jacob’s family who went to Egypt was 70 people, the Septuagint text says 75, and Stephen said 75 (Acts 7:14).

   By the time much of the NT was written, God had already moved away from the Jews and was ministering to the Gentiles. It was not so much that God wanted to abandon the Jews and minister to the Gentiles, but when He began to include the Gentiles, and wanted His People to do the same, they resisted. Many Jews resisted God’s Messiah (Rom. 10:1-4), but it seems even the majority of the Jews who believed in the Messiah wanted to bring them under the Law, rather than accept that God had a new program of grace for all people and had moved away from “the yoke of bondage.” We know from the New Testament that Paul was continuously persecuted by Christian Jews.

   So the claim that the NT was written by Jews for Jews is not correct. In fact, it seems that the only book of the New Testament that was written in Israel was James. Even Peter wrote from Babylon (or Rome). By the time Paul visited Jerusalem the year he was arrested, none of the original apostles were listed as being there (Acts 21:17ff). Although we do not know the reason the original Apostles likely left Jerusalem, they may have left with the persecution of Acts 12, and not come back, perhaps in part because the Christian Jews in Jerusalem were rejecting the revelation of the New Testament.
James, who was leading the church at Jerusalem at that time, was not the Apostle James, but James the brother of Jesus. It is worth noting that James did not believe that his half-brother Jesus was the Messiah until sometime after the resurrection. He did not believe by the Feast of Tabernacles, less than a year before Jesus’ death (John 7:5), and the evidence is that he still did not believe when Jesus was dying on the cross, which is why Jesus told John to take care of Jesus’ mother Mary (John 19:27). It seems that after his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his family and convinced them he was alive, because “his brothers” were with the disciples in Acts 1:14. However, there is no mention of James until Acts 12:10, during the persecution of Herod Agrippa, when the Apostles apparently were forced to leave Jerusalem. Apparently in their absence, James took over as an elder in the church and by Acts 15 seems to be the leader of the congregation in Jerusalem.

As we can see from Acts (and Galatians), the Christian Jews in Jerusalem completely ignored the revelation that Paul got that was codified in the books of Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians (see commentary on Galatians 2:2). The fact that Paul was ministering to Jews and Gentiles living outside of Israel, is good evidence that he would have written in Greek. Similarly, by the time the Four Gospels were written the majority of the Church was centered outside of Israel, and that goes for the writing of Hebrews, Peter, Jude, and the writings of John as well. Thus it makes sense that the original texts were in Greek, and that is also perhaps why many of the New Testament quotations of the Old Testament are from the Septuagint, as we see here in Luke 3:4.

3:7. “wrath.” This is the wrath associated with the Day of the Lord (see commentary on Matthew 3:7 and Revelation 6:17).

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 well.

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 commentary 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 in the New Testament*) writes: “Here only in the N.T., but [it is] in the LXX [the Septuagint] and is 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... 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.

3:16. “in holy spirit.” There is no definite article. This holy spirit is the gift of God. [For more information on the uses of “holy spirit”, see Appendix 6: “Usages of ‘Spirit’”.] 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 others” 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.

3:22. “the holy spirit.” There is no definite article. This holy spirit is the gift of God. [For more information on the uses of “holy spirit”, see Appendix 6: “Usages of ‘Spirit’”.] 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 29th 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. Edersheim writes: “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).

All the stories about Jesus going to India and studying to become a yogi, or going to some other place to study ancient mystic ways, are erroneous assumptions. In fact, the people of his own hometown Nazareth had witnessed him growing up and quietly doing his work, learning as he went. The prophecy was that Jesus would be quiet and orderly: “He will not cry out or shout or make his voice heard in the streets” (Isa. 42:2 HCSB). He lived the way the New Testament tells us to live: “Now we...command and exhort such people to be busy working in a quiet fashion, and to eat their own bread” (2 Thess. 3:12). Jesus never flaunted his knowledge and led a quiet and obedient lifestyle, growing up in the builders’ trade of his father, which is why he is called both “the carpenter’s son” (Matt. 13:55) and “the carpenter” (Mark 6:3). Jesus’ quiet and unassuming early years is why the people of his hometown were so surprised when he suddenly showed up with great knowledge and power. According to Matthew 13:54 they exclaimed: “Where did this man get this wisdom, and these mighty works?” Had Jesus been gone for some 20 years, and studied mystic ways in some far off place, they would have not been surprised at his knowledge. In fact, Jesus had been studying all along, learning the Word, being obedient to it, and preparing his heart for his ministry.

**“the son (as it was assumed) of Joseph.”** Luke contains the genealogy of Joseph, tracing his ancestry through David via David’s son Nathan. In contrast, Matthew contains the genealogy of Mary and traces her ancestry through David via David’s son Solomon. Nathan and Solomon were full brothers, both being the sons of David and Bathsheba (1 Chron. 3:5; cp. 2 Sam. 5:14; 1 Chron. 14:4). The Gospel of Luke never mentions Mary for the simple reason that it is not her genealogy. Similarly, Matthew never mentions Joseph, the husband of Mary, because it is not his genealogy (the Joseph in Matthew 1:16 is the father of Mary, see commentary on Matthew 1:16).

Once we realize that Matthew has Mary’s genealogy and does not mention Joseph at all, and Luke has Joseph’s genealogy and does not mention Mary at all, two things happen: the genealogies makes sense (one genealogy for Mary and one for Joseph), and also many fanciful explanations for the two genealogies is eliminated. For example, some commentators have concluded that both genealogies belong to Joseph, saying that by custom Joseph had two different fathers, a real father, Jacob, and a levirate father, Heli. But that is clearly an assumption to solve a problem that does not actually exist, and it creates another and larger problem: it would mean that Joseph has two genealogies while Mary has none.

Most of the commentators who say that Matthew is Joseph’s genealogy and Luke is Mary’s genealogy realize that each parent should have a genealogy. However, they
anchor their argument in their belief that Matthew 1:16 is referring to Joseph the husband of Mary (but it is not!), and based on that they say Matthew’s genealogy has to be about Joseph and Luke’s about Mary, even though Luke does not mention Mary. They answer the objection that Luke’s genealogy does not mention Mary by saying it does not have to since Luke chapter 1 made it clear that Mary was the mother of Jesus. Our rebuttal is that both Matthew and Luke make it clear that Mary is the mother of Jesus, but in the actual genealogical list, Matthew mentions only Mary while Luke mentions only Joseph.

Defenders of the position that Luke has Mary’s genealogy point out that the Talmud says Heli was the father of Mary, not Joseph, and therefore Luke must contain Mary’s genealogy. Our rebuttal to that line of reasoning is that the Talmud was written centuries after Christ, and the animosity between the Jews and Christians had been going on for years. It is well known that in the centuries after Christ the Jews did many things to try to prove that Jesus was not the Christ. As late as when the Gospel of Matthew was written (likely 50-65 AD; more than 20 years after Jesus was crucified) the Jews were still aggressively promoting that Jesus was not the Christ, which is why Matthew says that it was “assumed” he was the son of Joseph. The Jews did not believe he was the Son of God. The Jews also promoted that Jesus’ body was stolen from the grave by his disciples (Matt. 28:15-17). They also discounted many of the Messianic prophecies so that Jesus could not be said to have fulfilled those prophecies. For the Jews, whether accidentally or on purpose, misunderstanding the genealogy in Luke would be just one more way to show the New Testament was confusing and erroneous. It should be recognized that believers such as Sextus Julius Africanus (c. 230), who predate the Talmud, wrote that Luke gave Joseph’s genealogy, and so did a number of the Church Fathers.

Despite all the rhetoric (some of it quite ungodly, even involving name-calling) about the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, the solution is quite simple. God gave us a mathematical key in Matthew that, along with the Aramaic text, makes it clear that Matthew has Mary’s genealogy, which is why Matthew mentions Mary and not Joseph. Luke, on the other hand, mentions Joseph and not Mary because it is Joseph’s genealogy.

3:36. “the son of Cainan.” 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 Old Testament 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.

Chapter 4

4:1. “full of holy spirit.” There is no definite article. This holy spirit is the gift of God. [For more information on the uses of “holy spirit”, see Appendix 6: “Usages of ‘Spirit’.”] “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.”
4:2. “the Slanderer.” “Slanderer” is the literal meaning of the Greek diabolos [#6183, διάβολος]. The Bible never gives a proper name for the Devil, although it seems clear that at one time he had one. It is fitting that God does not glorify the Devil by telling us what his original name meant. It likely contained inherent honor and blessing that he no longer has or deserves. [For more information on the characteristics inferred by the names and appellations of God’s archenemy, see Appendix 14: “Names of the Slanderer”.]

4:3. “the Slanderer.” Slanderer” is the literal meaning of the Greek diabolos [#6183, διάβολος]. The Bible never gives a proper name for the Devil, although it seems clear that at one time he had one. [See Appendix 14, “Names of the Slanderer”.

4:4. Quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3.

4:5. Showed him all the kingdoms. Matthew and Luke both record the 3 temptations that the Adversary tempted Jesus with, but worded slightly differently and in a different order. Commentators differ as to whether Matthew or Luke has the order of events as they actually happened. We believe Luke has the order correct because Luke says he recorded things “in order” (Luke 1:3). Furthermore, another reason we believe Luke has the correct order is that to the Devil, the most desirable outcome would be to have Jesus worship him, but if he could not accomplish that, to kill Jesus and be done with him. The order of temptations in Luke accomplishes that goal. The second temptation would result in Jesus worshipping the Devil, and if that failed the third temptation would have resulted in Jesus’ death.

“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 Matthew 4: 8 the Slanderer showed Jesus the kingdoms of the kosmos, in Luke, the Slanderer shows Jesus 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.
   “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.
   4:10-11. Quoted from Psalm 91:11-12.
   4:12. Quoted from Deuteronomy 6:16.
   4:18-19. Quoted from Isaiah 61:1, 2.
   4:23. Capernaum. Jesus made his home in Galilee in Capernaum. [For more information on Capernaum, see commentary on Mark 2:1].
   4:33: “spirit (that is to say an unclean demon).” This construction in Greek is the genitive of apposition (Cp. Lenski). The literal Greek, “a spirit of an unclean demon,” means, “a spirit, that is to say an unclean demon,” or “a spirit, namely, an unclean demon,” or even, “a spirit; 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 commentary, Matthew 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 ἐπιτιµάω) 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 ἐπιτιµάω), 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 commentary on verses 35 and 39, and also Mark 1:25.

Chapter 5

5:12. “Look!” The Greek word is idou (#2400 ἰδού), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).
5:18. “Look!” The Greek word is idou (#2400 ἰδού), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).
5:21. “defaming words.” The Greek noun is blasphēmia (#988 βλασφημία; pronounced blas-fay-me'-ah), and was used of someone speaking against another. The primary meaning as it was used in the Greek culture was showing disrespect to a person or deity, and/or harming his, her, or its reputation. See commentary on Mark 2:7. [For more on blasphēmia, see commentary on Matt. 9:3].
5:23. “Which is easier?” Which is easier to say and accomplish, declaring someone’s sins are forgiven, or divine healing? They are equally easy. They both require authority from God and the faith to walk out on the revelation God gives. The Pharisees did not see this simple truth. They believed in divine healing but did not believe a person could have the authority to forgive sins. But God gives authority to do both.

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

5:29. “And Levi made him a great feast in his house.” 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 commentary on Matthew 9:10.


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.


Chapter 6


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

6:27. “love your enemies.” The word “love” is the verb agapaō (#25 ἀγαπάω; the more familiar noun is agapē). In this context, to love one’s enemy does not mean to “feel good” about them, but rather to act toward them in a loving manner. To better understand what God is telling us when He says, “love your enemies,” see the commentary on John 21:15, “I am your friend.” The second phrase of the verse, “do good to those who hate you,” explains agapaō in this context.

“do good to those who hate you.” This teaching is profoundly wonderful and 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 owed 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).

6:28. “bless those who curse you.” The word “curse” is kataraōmai (#2672 καταραῶμαι), and it means to curse, to call down evil upon. A genuine curse is not just “hate language,” it has spiritual power. People can curse using the power of the Devil or
the power of God. When we curse using the power of God, it is always by revelation, as God directs us to, and it is very rare. Jesus cursed the fig tree in Mark 11:14 (Peter correctly called what Jesus did a curse in 11:21). When wicked people curse, they are using the Devil and his demons to accomplish the curse. Someone saying something bad about someone else is not a curse, but conscripting the power of the Devil to accomplish something spoken is a curse. Witches’ “spells” are curses.

This commandment requires much from the Christian, because personal attacks always hurt us emotionally. We have to understand that if we are blameless in God’s eyes, the curses of the enemy cannot hurt us. Proverbs 26:2 (NET): “Like a fluttering bird or like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause does not come to rest.” In other words, an undeserved curse will have no effect.

Christians have to be so secure in who we are in Christ and that we will be blessed by God that we can bless those people who curse us. The reason that it can be so difficult to ignore curses is that they are often very personal in nature. They often come from people whom we care about, and/or can be very personal in nature. The ancient Romans and the people of the biblical culture often called on the gods to curse and harm people, and curses can have spiritual power and cause genuine damage if one is not protected by God and godliness. One curse tablet that now is in the City Archaeological Museum of Bologna reads: “Destroy, crush, kill, strangle Porcello and his wife Maurilla. Their soul [life], heart, buttocks, liver….” A curse directed at a Roman senator reads: “Crush, kill, Fistus the senator…May Fistus dilute, languish, sink, and may all his limbs be dissolved” (Archaeology Magazine, Sept/Oct 2012; “Curses,” p. 16).

Especially in the biblical world where almost everyone believed in the power of curses to harm them, knowing about God’s protection and desiring to help the misguided person who cursed others by blessing him back, was an act of great love and faith.

Luke 6:29. “To whoever strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also.” This verse is not talking about the death penalty or any other type of civil crime or punishment for crimes, although many Christians think it does. Interestingly, people who quote this verse as if it were saying there should not be a death penalty do not seem to grasp that the verse is saying there should not be any kind of retribution at all. If this verse were applied universally to the criminal justice system, it would mean no fines, no jails and not even any community service. If applied in a criminal context, it would read something like, “If someone steals one of your cars, give him the keys to your other car. Surely even the most liberal of people do not believe that we can have a safe society if we do not enforce any laws or have any kind of penalties for breaking laws.

Why would Christ say something like “turn the other cheek?” What did he mean? In the culture of the Bible, touching or striking someone on the cheek was an insult. It was the equivalent of calling someone a dirty name today. Jesus knew that his disciples would be insulted, and that it is a waste of time and energy to try to get “satisfaction” for an insult. So he instructed people to “turn the other cheek,” i.e., ignore insults, and by showing the other cheek, show that you are firm in your beliefs and actions even if it means you will be insulted again.

There are other Bible verses that show that slapping someone on the cheek was an insult: Lamentations 3:30: “Let him offer his cheek to one who would strike him and let him be filled with disgrace.” Job 16:10: “Men open their mouths to jeer at me, they strike
my cheek in scorn.” Isaiah 50:6: “I offered my cheeks, I did not hide from mocking and spitting.”

A good example of slapping on the face as an insult occurs in 1 Kings. The Israelite king, Ahab, was trying to convince the Judean king, Jehoshaphat, to join forces with him and fight the Arameans. Ahab brought out an impressive number of prophets who all foretold success in the mission. However, there was no prophet of the true God represented in the group. Jehoshaphat insisted on hearing from one, and at last Ahab found a prophet of Yahweh, a man named Micaiah, who insulted the other prophets by first mocking what they had said, and then giving a contradictory prophecy—one that came true, by the way. One of the false prophets, a man named Zedekiah was incensed: “Then Zedekiah, son of Kenaanah, went up and slapped Micaiah in the face” (1 Kings 22:24). This was not an attack on Micaiah’s life or body. Zedekiah was insulted by Micaiah’s words, and he insulted Micaiah back in a way that was perfectly understood in the culture. Micaiah, as if following the words of Jesus spoken some 800 years later, ignored Zedekiah’s insult and simply kept on speaking the words God gave him to speak.

Christians need to follow the advice of the Lord and learn to ignore insults without burning in anger. We also need to know the culture and customs of the Bible so that we can correctly interpret such verses. The command to “turn the other cheek” has no bearing on the criminal justice system and the justice exercised by the government in the defense of society, and neither does it have anything to do with self-defense or war.


Chapter 7

7:12. “Look!” The Greek word is idou (#2400 ἴδον), 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).
7:16. “God has visited his people.” This verse can be confusing to some people who do not realize that God usually “visits” us, or works around us, through other people. Occasionally, Trinitarians will cite this verse as proof that Jesus is God, because it says that God visited His people. However, that phrase in no way proves the Trinity. Any word or phrase in Scripture must be interpreted in light of both its immediate and remote contexts. In this case, the immediate context alerts us to the truth being presented. The people called Jesus “a great prophet,” which tells us right away that they did not think he was God.

God “visits” His people by sending them some blessing. This is clear from verses like Ruth 1:6, “Then she [Naomi] arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.” In the Book of Ruth, Yahweh “visited” His people by sending them bread, but even that did not mean that God gave them the bread.
directly, like He had done with the manna at the time of Moses. God “visited” the people by ending the famine and allowing the ground to produce grain again, but the people were the ones who plowed, sowed, weeded, and harvested. God simply provided the fertility, but without His blessing nothing would grow. So God “visiting” His people, in that case, was simply Him putting His blessing on the soil. In a similar fashion, in the Gospels, God visited His people by sending them “a great prophet” who raised a widow’s son from the dead.

A lesson we should learn from this verse and others like it is that God works through His people. When He does, He often gets the credit even when people do the actual work. When God works through people, the Word records things like, “God visited His people” (Luke 7:16) and “God has done great things” (Luke 8:39). Americans today use the same language. If an acquaintance gives you some money when you need it and says, “The Lord put it on my heart to give this to you,” you might well say to someone else, “The Lord really blessed me today.” Neither you nor any other person would believe that you were saying that the person who gave you money was “the Lord.” Everyone understands that the Lord works through people, and so our language, like biblical language, reflects that knowledge. For more information on this, see Charles Morgridge, True Believer’s Defense Against Charges Preferred by Trinitarians, p. 118.

7:19. “Are you the Coming One.” See the commentary on Matthew 11:3.

“another one.” The Greek word “another” is allos (#243 ἀλλος), here meaning another of the same kind; a second one. In other words, “Are you THE one, or is there a second one?” (Or perhaps, “Is there someone else?”) This record has a different emphasis than the record in Matthew 11:3, which uses the Greek word heteros (#2087 ἕτερος), referring to someone of a different quality. See commentary on Matthew 11:3.

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

7:27. Quoted from Malachi 3:1.

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

“least important person.” See commentary on Matthew 11:11.

7:29. “declared God righteous.” This seemingly difficult phrase is very powerful. The idea being portrayed is that God is on trial. Is He a righteous God? 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 righteous, and has provided for mankind. However, the religious leaders rejected God’s provision (verse 30), to their own doom. It is important to realize that the tax collectors and sinners did not “declare” God to be righteous with their mouth, although they may have done that too, but by their actions.

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

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

Chapter 8
8:4. **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 commentary there), and almost the same Greek phrase as occurs in Matthew 11:15. For an explanation of the exclamation, see the commentary on 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!”


“**sacred secrets.**” We translate the Greek word μυστήριον (#3466 μυστήριον) as “sacred secret” because that is what μυστήριον actually refers to: a secret in the religious or sacred realm. [For more information on the “Sacred Secret” and the Administration of Grace, see Ephesians 3:9.]

“so that…” For this quotation from Isaiah and the purpose of parables, see commentary on Matthew 13:13. The “so that” is a hina with a verb in the subjunctive mood purpose-result clause: see entry on Matthew 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.

8:12. **“the Slanderer.”** This is “the Devil.” The Greek is διάβολος (#1228 διάβολος). The Greek word διάβολος means “slanderer,” the one who slanders others, and that is a primary characteristic of the Devil. He has no regard for a person’s reputation or the illicit means he uses to discredit and destroy people. Slander is a primary tactic of the Devil. [For information on the names of the Devil, see Appendix 14: “Names of the Slanderer”].

“**cannot believe.**” The verb “believe” is in the subjunctive mood, thus many versions have “may” not believe, but the Greek conjunction hina (#2443 ἵνα) earlier in the sentence is the reason the verb is subjunctive, and therefore in these cases we must get the sense of the verb from the context. In this case, the Devil does not take the word from people so they “may” not believe, his intention is that with no word in their heart, they “cannot” believe (see J. B. Phillips, The New Testament in Modern English. The translations by N. T. Wright and A. Nyland, say “won’t” believe).

8:19. **“his mother.”** Jesus’ family had come to take control of him, because they thought he had gone insane (There is no mention of Joseph; he had apparently died. See commentary on John 19:27.

8:24. **“subdued.”** The Greek word translated “subdued” is ἐπιτίμαω (#2008 ἐπιτίμαω), 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 ἐπιτίμαω 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, ἐπιτίμαω Vol. 2, p. 626). For more on ἐπιτίμαω, see commentary on Mark 1:25.

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

8:28. **“What do I have in common with you?”** See commentary on Matthew 8:29.
“torment me.” See commentary on Matthew 8:29.

8:40. “returned.” The Greek word is hupostrepho (#5290 ὑποστρέφω) 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 commentary 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-affected man lived.

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

8:47. “she came trembling, and falling down before him.” The record of the woman who had the issue of blood for twelve years occurs in Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-35; and Luke 8:43-48. Each record has some of the same information, but each record includes different details as well. In this case, there are too many matching details for the records not to be of the same event, and there are no contradictory details—they all fit together to make a singular picture of the event. Mark and Luke include many details that are left out of Matthew. Matthew does not record the power that came from Jesus, or how Jesus then searched for the person who touched him. The focus in Matthew is on the woman’s need, her King meeting that need, and Jesus focusing on her faith. Like a benevolent King, he tells the woman to “Be of good cheer,” because her faith had healed her. Mark and Luke include many more details, and it seems almost like some kind of professional courtesy that it is Mark, not Luke (Luke was a doctor!) who says she suffered many things from many doctors and instead of getting better got worse (Mark 5:26). Mark and Luke record Jesus having to be persistent to find the person who touched him, including having to ignore his close disciples who thought it was incredulous that he would even ask who touched him in that large crowd. Because the Gospel of Mark focuses on Jesus as a servant, and Luke on Jesus as a man, a human being (see commentary on Mark 1:1), it seems to make sense that Jesus would have to fight with more circumstances to find out what happened to him, whereas it makes sense that as the King, Jesus would simply see the woman and address her.

8:52. “sleeping.” The Greek verb is katheudō (#2518 καθεύδω). Sleep is used as a euphemism and metaphor for death. See commentary on Acts 7:60.


Chapter 9
9:3. “staff.” The Gospel of Mark says to take a staff. For information on the apparent contradiction, see commentary on Matthew 10:10.

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

9:18. “alone.” In this case, “alone” means apart from the huge crowd mentioned in the previous verses.

9:19. “Elijah.” For information on why the people thought that Elijah would come, and why John the Baptist was called “Elijah,” see commentary on Matthew 17:10.

9:24. “life” (2x). The Greek word is psuchē (#5590 ψυχή; pronounced psoo-kay'), often translated “soul.” The Greek word has a large number of meanings, including the physical life of a person or animal; an individual person; or attitudes, emotions, feelings, and thoughts. Here it refers to the physical life of the body, which is why most versions translate it “life,” which is accurate in this context. [For a more complete explanation of psuchē, “soul,” see Appendix 7: “Usages of ‘Soul’”].

9:25. “life.” The Greek word is psuchē, as in verse 24. It is used twice in verse 24 of the life of the body, and it is expanded in this verse to be life in general, both here and the hereafter, which is why many versions translate it “life” in verse 24 but “soul” in verse 25. We felt it was better to translate the word the same way in both verses and point out that “life” can be just our physical life or our physical and everlasting life [For a more complete explanation of psuchē, “soul,” see Appendix 7: “Usages of ‘Soul’”].

9:26. “ashamed.” Most Christians do not understand the Day of Judgment or the Kingdom of Christ on earth, so these words do not make sense to them. Although unbelievers may well be ashamed of the words of Christ, many believers are too, and they show it by not boldly standing on what Jesus said, often never mentioning Jesus or his teachings, but instead trying to “blend in” to the people around them. [For more on the Kingdom being on earth, see Appendix 2: “Life in the Age to Come”; for more on rewards and punishments on the Day of Judgment, see commentary on 2 Cor. 5:10, “good or worthless.”]

“of the holy angels.” This is a simple and well stated truth: when Jesus comes back, it will be in his glory, and the Father’s, and the holy angels. There is no mention of the “Person,” the Holy Spirit, because there is no such “third person of the Trinity.” See, Graeser, Lynn, Schoenheit, The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to Be Like Christ.

9:28. “went up onto the mountain.” For an explanation of this event, which is referred to as “The Transfiguration,” see commentary on Matthew 17:2.

9:29. “the appearance of his face became different.” For more on this event, which is referred to as “the Transfiguration,” see the commentary on Matthew 17:2 and 3.

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

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

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


“made him have convulsions.” 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.

9:48. “Indeed.” This is the “confirmatory” use of the Greek gar, not the causal use in which it is usually translated “for.” Some grammarians refer to it as the “confirmatory gar.”

Chapter 10

10:3. “Pay attention.” The Greek word is idou (#2400 ἰδού), 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.”

10:4. “greet no one.” This does not mean to be unfriendly. The oriental greetings were long and involved, and Jesus wanted his disciples to go with haste.

10:18. “the Adversary.” The Greek word for Adversary is Satanas (#4567 Σατανᾶς), which has been transliterated into “Satan” in most versions. This causes the meaning of the word, which is important, to be lost. For more information on it, see the note on Mark 1:13. [For more information on the names of the Devil, see Appendix 14: “Names of the Slanderer”].

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 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 pipō (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, like lightning, traveling in a downward direction from heaven to earth.

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

10:21. “in the holy spirit.” There is no definite article. This holy spirit is the gift of God. [For more information on the uses of “holy spirit”, see Appendix 6: “Usages of ‘Spirit’”.

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

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

“life in the Age to come.” This is the everlasting life that begins with the new Messianic Age, the Millennial Kingdom. [See Appendix 2: “Life in the Age to Come”.


10:28. “live.” This is one of the many places where “live” is used idiomatically for “live forever,” and sometimes “life” is used in the same way: idiomatically for everlasting life.

The idiom is very ancient, and is why Ezekiel 33:12-20 is very clear that if a “righteous” person becomes unrighteous he will “die” (i.e., “die” forever, sometime after he is judged on the Day of Judgment), while if a wicked person repents and becomes righteous he will “live,” (i.e., live forever). It is why Habakkuk says that righteous will “live” (i.e., live forever) by their faithfulness (Hab. 2:4). There are many other uses of the idiom, and there are cases where, although the primary meaning of “live” is “live forever,” there are undertones of also “live to the fullest.” For “live” meaning “live forever,” see, John 5:25; 6:57; 11:25; 14:19; Rom. 6:8; 2 Tim. 2:11; Heb. 12:9. For “life,” meaning “everlasting life,” see, Matt. 7:14; 18:8, 9; 19:17; Mark 9:43, 45; John 3:36; 5:40; 20:31; Acts 11:18; Rom. 5:18; Gal. 3:21; 2 Tim. 1:1; 1 John 3:14; 5:12.

Just as “live” or “life” can refer to everlasting life, “die” and “death” could refer to everlasting death (see commentary on John 8:51).

10:31. “he passed by on the other side.” 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.

10:42. “but one thing is necessary.” This is one of the many places where the verse should have been started in a different place for clarity. The sentence reads, “you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary....” When the sentence is broken in the middle by the “42,” it can be difficult to see what it means.

Chapter 11

11:6. “just come.” The verb is in the aorist tense. The guest had just arrived and caught the host off guard, with nothing to feed him.

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)

11:13. “give holy spirit.” There is no definite article. This holy spirit is the gift of God, which was poured out on the day of Pentecost. [For more information on the uses of “holy spirit”, see Appendix 6: “Usages of ‘Spirit’.”]
11:14. “mute demon.” 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.

11:15. “Beelzebul.” The Greek is Beelzeboul (#954 Βεελζεβολ), which gets put into English as “Beelzebul.” He is called the “prince of demons” in Luke 12:10. “Beelzeboul” is “lord of the dunghill.” This comes from the Hebrew zebul (dung, a dunghill). [For more on this name and the other names of the Slanderer (the Devil), see Appendix 14: “Names of the Slanderer”.

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

   “the Adversary.” The Greek word for Adversary is Satanas (#4567 Σατανᾶς), which has been transliterated into “Satan” in most versions. This causes the meaning of the word, which is important, to be lost. For more information on it, see the note on Mark 1:13. [For information on the names of the Devil, see Appendix 14: “Names of the Slanderer”.

   “Beelzebul.” See commentary on 11:15.


   “sons.” Not the literal sons, but the disciples of the religious leaders. [For more information on “sons” being disciples, see commentary on Matthew 12:27.]

11:21. “in peace.” Other versions read “safe.” Christ, who spoke Hebrew (or Aramaic), would have used the word for peace, shalom, which indicates a state of wellbeing. 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 the Semitic languages of Hebrew or Aramaic to Greek and then to English.

11:24. “the unclean spirit.” Jesus had been talking about demons and had cast out a demon (cp. v. 14), and the subject never changed, so it is “the” unclean spirit, that is, like the ones he had been referring to.

   “a resting place.” The Greek is anapausis (#372 ἀνάπαυσις), and it can either mean “rest” or “a resting place” (see BDAG Greek-English lexicon; cp. The New English Bible; The Kingdom New Testament by N. T. Wright; The Kingdom of God Version by R. Faircloth). Here, the better translation is “a resting place,” that is a place to settle in and use as a base for causing trouble and harm. The demon does not “rest” in the person or animal it occupies, it goes about its demonic activity.

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

11:32. “Look!” The Greek word is idou (#2400 ἰδού), 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 one's “eye” was impure, the light of God would not shine well, or shine at all, in the body.

   “single.” The Greek word translated “single” is haplous (#573 ἕπλως), and means “single,” therefore “unmixed.” The key to this saying about the “single” eye and the “evil eye,” in this context of wealth, is to realize they are Semitic idioms. In this context the “single eye” is the generous eye, it is unmixed with worldly desires for wealth and
possessions, and it therefore generous towards others. In contrast, the “evil eye,” is used idiomatically in the Semitic languages for a person who is greedy, covetous, and envious.

In Western cultures, the “evil eye” was a look or glace that meant harm and brought harm. Although this use of the “evil eye” may have existed in ancient Judaism, there is no reason to think it is used in Matthew or Luke. The Semitic idiom of the “good” or “single” eye being generous, and the “evil eye” being greedy, covetous, and stingy, holds true throughout the Bible. The “good eye” of Proverbs 22:9 is generous, and the “evil eye” of Deuteronomy 15:9; 28:54, Proverbs 23:6 and 28:22 refers to someone who is greedy and stingy. See commentary on Matthew 6:22.

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

11:42. “necessary.” The Greek word is dei (#1163 δεῖ; pronounced “day”), and it refers to what is necessary, what one must do, or has to do. In today’s English it seems to be waterering down the meaning to translate it as “should” or “ought,” because there are many things we “should” do that are not actually a necessity. But love and justice are not just things we “should” do, if we are going to obey God, they are necessities. R.C. H. Lenski, in his translation, says, “But these it was necessary to do, and those not to dismiss.” John Nolland (Word Biblical Commentary: Luke 9:21-18:24), also uses “necessary” and has, “[if you were to do the will of God] it would be necessary to…..” The verb tenses in the phrase are somewhat idiomatic, the infinitives acting more like aorists (Lenski), and being “difficult to catch precisely in translation” (Nolland), which explains why the versions word the last phrase in the verse somewhat differently from one another.

11:50. “that.” The Greek preposition hina (#2443 ἧνα) here is used as introducing a result clause. God did not send prophets with the purpose of them being slain so He could punish a generation; He sent them to turn people from sin and call them back to Him. The fact that the prophets were killed “resulted” in a generation that will experience the wrath of God. Of course, God also realized that His prophets would be mistreated and killed, but He still sent them to help people, and their sacrificial death became part of the necessary redemptive process, God fully knowing that the final outpouring of His wrath would be the precursor to the Messianic Kingdom on earth. God gives people every chance to change, but also acts in a way that His judgment is just. The two processes are inextricably linked.

Chapter 12

12:5. “Gehenna.” See commentary on Matthew 5:22. [For more information on annihilation in the lake of fire, see Appendix 5: “Annihilation in the Lake of Fire”.

12:6. “assaria.” 1/16th 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, one assarion would be worth one-half hour of work and so two worth about one hour’s work, but in biblical times a laborer’s work day was often longer than 8 hours, and lasted from shortly after sunup to sundown. See commentary on Matthew 10:29.


“the Holy Spirit.” “The Holy Spirit” is the name for God that emphasizes His power in operation. God is called “the Holy Spirit” in a number of verses in the NT, including Matthew 1:20; 12:32; and Hebrews 9:8. [For more information on the uses of “Holy Spirit”, see Appendix 6: “Usages of ‘Spirit’”.

12:12. “the Holy Spirit.” “The Holy Spirit” is the name for God that emphasizes His power in operation. God is called “the Holy Spirit” in a number of verses in the NT, including Matthew 1:20; 12:32; and Hebrews 9:8. [For more information on the uses of “Holy Spirit”, see Appendix 6: “Usages of ‘Spirit’”.

12:19. “soul” (2x). The Greek word often translated “soul” is psuchē (#5590 ψυχή; pronounced psoo-kay’), and it has a large number of meanings, including the physical life of a person or animal; an individual person; and attitudes, emotions, feelings, and thoughts. Here psuchē is used of the person himself. Thus, the NIV says, “And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty…. [For a more complete explanation of “soul,” see Appendix 7: “Usages of ‘Soul’”.


“is being demanded.” The Greek word is apaiteō (#523 ἀπαίτεω), which means to demand or ask for something back or to demand something that is due; to ask or demand with some urgency. Here it is in the present tense, active voice, so it has the essence of, “is being demanded from you.” The present tense is sometimes used in a general way to express something that will happen in the future, and so some versions have a future tense (“this night your soul will be demanded from you”). However, it is likely that the present tense subtly portrays the spiritual battle that is always going on behind the scenes. Satan stands before God day and night accusing people (Rev. 12:10), and he certainly demanded to have Peter, who, like all of us, had sinned (Luke 22:31).

12:22. “life.” The Greek word is psuchē (#5590 ψυχή; pronounced psoo-kay’), often translated “soul.” The Greek word has a large number of meanings, including the physical life of a person or animal; an individual person; or attitudes, emotions, feelings, and thoughts. Here it is broadly used as the person and his life. It could be translated, “Do not be anxious about your life,” or “Do not be anxious about yourself.” [For a more complete explanation of psuchē, “soul,” see Appendix 7: “Usages of ‘Soul’”.


12:35. “Your.” In talking to his disciples, the Lord’s words become emphatic to them (partly from the imperative mood of the associated verb). No matter what others do, the disciples of Christ must be focused on obeying him.

“must be.” The verb is imperative. Sometimes the imperative mood can mean an encouragement, as in, “Let your,” but that is not the case here. The Lord will come, and his servants must be ready for him. We dare not treat the commands of the Lord as if they are just suggestions. God created us to do good works (Eph. 2:10), and there are rewards for those who do, and punishment for those who do not.

12:54. “in the west.” That would be over the Mediterranean Sea. Wind from the sea brought rain, while wind from the south, from the Sinai, or from the east, Arabia, brought dry uncomfortable heat.
12:58. “For example.” Jesus was very aware of the times and the importance of being able to serve God rather than be sidelined by tricks and traps of the Adversary (cp. 12:45), so he gave this example.

Chapter 13

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. “See.” The Greek word is idou (#2400 ἰδού), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”). Usually translated “Look,” that seemed too strong in this direct address. The vinedresser was not being condescending to the owner in any way. We might have used “Lo.”

“use up.” The Greek word katargeō (#2673 καταργέω) 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.

13:9. “soon after.” The Greek phrase, eis to mellon is idiomatic, but mellon most often refers to something that is about to happen, not something that is far off. The point the gardener was making was that once the tree was fertilized he and the owner should start to see positive changes very quickly, and realize there would be a good chance the tree would bear fruit next season. Although some versions use “next year” as a translation of the phrase eis to mellon, there is no reason to think the gardener was thinking about a time that far off. The point of the parable, and something we should keep in mind when working with people, is that if we give them the attention they need, we should start to see some results fairly quickly. While it is true that there are people who do not change for years and then suddenly change, we are not to spend an inordinate amount of time trying to help those people. When we say “Yes” to helping one person, we are saying “No” to other opportunities and serving the Lord in other ways. We are not called just to use our time for the Lord, but rather to make the best use of our time for him (Eph. 5:16).

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

13:16. “the Adversary.” The Greek word for Adversary is Satanas (#4567 Σατανᾶς), which has been transliterated into “Satan” in most versions. This causes the meaning of
the word, which is important, to be lost. In this case, the Adversary has used his power to cripple this believing woman. For more information on it, see the note on Mark 1:13. [For information on the names of the Devil, see Appendix 14: “Names of the Slanderer”.]

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

“eighteen years!” We pick up the exclamation from *idou*, (“Look!”). 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.

13:19. For more information on this parable, see commentary on Matthew 13:32.
13:22. “through.” The Greek is *kata*, used in the distributive sense (cp. Lenski; Hendrickson). Lenski translates this as: “city by city and village by village.”
13:30. “Look!” The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἵδού), 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.

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


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

Chapter 14

14:2. “Look!” The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἵδοú), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).
14:5. “son.” The oldest texts read “son.” It seems that reading was unsettling to copyists, who at some point changed *ouis* (son) to *onos* (donkey). There would be no reason to change “donkey” to “son.” Some manuscripts have all three: donkey, son, and ox, the copyists not being able to decide how to correctly copy the text.
14:14. “resurrection of the righteous.” In the future the dead will be raised at different times. Dead Christians will be raised at the Rapture, which is immediately before the Great Tribulation. Those people who are righteous will be raised at the resurrection of the righteous (Luke 14:14; Acts 24:15), also called the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5, 6), and “the resurrection of life” (John 5:29), and people in that resurrection are part of the Messianic Kingdom on earth. [For more on the Rapture and the resurrections, see commentary on Acts 24:15].
14:15. “Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the Kingdom of God!” There is a lot in this statement. The exclamation point comes from the tone of the sentence, not from an imperative verb. The man, hearing Jesus speak about the Resurrection of the Righteous, correctly understood that anyone who was part of that resurrection would be a part of the Messianic Kingdom on earth.

It was “a prevailing Jewish idea, a great and long-continued feast will be held when the Messianic kingdom is established on earth after the resurrection [of the Righteous]” (N. Geldenhuys, The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Luke). It is clear that the man who spoke up, likely a Pharisee or expert in the Law, did not think that the Kingdom of Heaven was currently going on, but was future (the verb “will eat” is in the future tense). [For more on the kingdom on earth, see Appendix 3: “Christ’s Future Kingdom on Earth”]. The man’s statement is clearly true: anyone who is in the Resurrection of the Righteous (or in the Rapture) and gets to take part in the Messianic Kingdom on earth is indeed blessed.

The belief in a Messianic Kingdom on earth was prevalent among the Jews, but so was the belief that “good” Jews like the Pharisees would certainly be a part of it—a belief that Jesus took some pains to dismantle at various times in his teachings (cp. Matt. 5:20; 21:31). So it was that after the man made his statement, that Jesus took time to correct him, albeit in a manner that set forth the truth in a way that was not directly confrontational and one that invited the dialogue, “What did that parable mean?” Those who were self-absorbed or arrogant would never see the point Jesus was making, while the humble would either see it or ask about it.

14:23. “will be filled.” The verb is subjunctive, hence many translation say “may” be filled, but the Greek preposition hina that starts the phrase requires the verb to be subjunctive. Thus the verb has to be translated from context. Here the Lord wanted the servants to bring people in so his house “will” be filled.

14:26. “life.” The Greek word is psuchē (#5590 ψυχή; pronounced psoo-kay'), often translated “soul.” The Greek word has a large number of meanings, including the physical life of a person or animal; an individual person; or attitudes, emotions, feelings, and thoughts. Here it is broadly used as the life of the person.” [For a more complete explanation of psuchē, “soul,” see Appendix 7: “Usages of ‘Soul’”].

14:35. “Anyone who has ears to hear had better listen!” This is the same Greek phrase as occurs in Mark 4:9 (see commentary 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.

Chapter 15

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 voice. 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 to each other.” The Greek is diagogguzō (#1234 διαγογγύζω), and it means to murmur among a crowd or to each other (gogguζō without the dia prefix is used of just murmuring). 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 among themselves.

“This man.” The Greek is just “This” or “This one,” used derisively. They scorned Jesus with their words.

15:4. “does not leave.” No shepherd would leave a flock of sheep unattended in the wilderness. This is one of those places where we have to understand the ancient customs as well as Jesus’ audience did to have the parable make sense. Rarely if ever would a flock of one hundred sheep be watched by one person. There would be an owner, or a main shepherd, and then some helpers. But the owner cares deeply for his flock, and would leave the 99 with the hired help while he searched for the lost sheep. This is part of the parable, that the owner cares so much for the sheep that he would search for one that is lost, not just hope it came home somehow. God is constantly searching for the lost, and we should be too.

15:5. “lays it on his shoulders.” Shepherds have reported that sometimes sheep that have been lost are so scared and disoriented that they will not walk, and even if they would they would probably walk too slowly to suit the shepherd. So the shepherd does the hard work of carrying the sheep. This is a wonderful illustration of how just “finding” the lost person is not enough. We then have to carry that person until they are “with the flock” and can stand strongly on their own.

15:8. “drachma.” The drachma was a Roman coin made of silver. Although it varied in value over the course of the Roman empire, during the time of Christ it was apparently equivalent to a Greek denarius, which was worth a day’s wage for a laborer (cp. Matt. 20:2).

15:15. “hired himself out to.” The Greek phrase is literally, “joined himself to,” which is an idiom for beginning to work for someone, to hire oneself out to someone else (cp. NET First Edition text note).

15:18. “before you.” The Greek is en Moff (#1799 ἐνώπιον). The word has several meanings, and thus the meaning must be determined from context. Its primary meaning is literal, “before” and it pertains to a position in front of an entity, before someone or something. Thus it also pertains to being present or in view, in the sight of, in the presence of, among, and it also pertains to value judgment, thus, “in the opinion of; in the judgment of.” It also has special uses, such as in this verse when it is combined with “sin.” In this case it means more than just in your sight or judgment, but “against you” (cp. BDAG; Friberg).

The word is a good one for the son to use; it reveals his humility at this point in his life. He says he has sinned against God (“heaven” is used as a euphemism for “God,” God being sometimes considered too holy to say politely) and “against you,” which includes the fact of the sin being against his father, but also recognizing that it was “in your opinion,” thus recognizing that the father was aware of the sin and personally hurt by it.
15:29. “Lo.” The Greek word is \textit{idou} (\textit{ἰδοὺ}), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

**Chapter 16**

16:9. “\textit{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. Matthew 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 commentary on Matthew 6:24.

\textit{“in the Age to come.”} This is the new Messianic Age, the Millennial Kingdom. [See commentary on this phrase in Appendix 2: “Life in the Age to Come”.

16:11. “\textit{And if you have not been faithful...}” 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. “\textit{No servant is able to serve two masters.}” See commentary on Matthew 6:24.

16:19–31. “\textit{a certain rich man.}” 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 ways a person deals with his wealth and earthly possessions will 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 conclusions must be drawn from the entire scope of Scripture, not just individual sections. 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 a person dies 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. This conclusion can be drawn from many verses of Scripture, and thus the clear message of the Bible is that unless people get forgiveness for their sins they will be punished for the evil they have done (cp. 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).

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 shows 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 every way—body and soul—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 (see Is There Death After Life? by Graeser, Lynn, Schoenheit). 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” (Rev. 20:5, 6), also called the “Resurrection of the Righteous” (Luke 14:14; Acts 24:15), and “the resurrection of life” (John 5:29), will live forever with Jesus. Dead people who are resurrected in the second resurrection, the Resurrection of the unrighteous (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 [For more on people not “burning in Hell” forever, see Appendix 5: “Annihilation in the Lake of Fire,” and Matthew 5:22, “Gehenna”. For more on the Rapture and the resurrections, see commentary on Acts 24:15].

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 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 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
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. Our life is 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.


Chapter 17

17:2. “hung around his neck.” For information on millstones, see 17:35.

17:3. “Watch 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.

17:6. “trust as a grain of mustard seed.” A mustard seed looks small to the world, but it has total trust that it can do what God designed it to do, and we, too, should have total trust that we can do what God has called us to do. Some versions such as the HCSB, NIV, and NRSV, add to the Greek text a reference to size (for example, the NIV says “as small as a grain…”), and this reverses the meaning of the parable and makes it nonsense. Small faith will not get us much, but total faith can move mountains. [For more information on the mustard seed and having faith like a mustard seed, see commentary on Matthew 13:32 and Matthew 17:20].

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 (21 km) 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 were 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), he had to cross the Jordan River again. He arrived in Bethany six days before Passover (John 12:1, 2).

“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 accompanied with observation.” 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 ἰδοὺ), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

“take notice.” The Greek word is idou (#2400 ἰδοὺ), 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 Matthew 24:4-25. The tribulation will be a terrible time for people on earth.

17:26. “days of Noah.” For an explanation of why Jesus used the illustration of Noah, see commentary on Matthew 24:40. Noah’s ark and the Flood are described in Genesis 6 and 7.

17:28. “days of Lot.” For an explanation of why Jesus used the illustration of Lot and Sodom, see commentary on Matthew 24:40. The record of the destruction of Sodom is in Genesis 18:20-33; 19:1-29.


17:35. “There will be two women together grinding grain.” 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 2-4 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, and 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.
Chapter 18

18:3. “kept coming to him.” In the Ancient Near East, the officials were appointed by the King or ruler and were answerable to him, not to the public. In fact, often they were related in some way to the ruler. One of the reasons people would give their daughters to a man like Solomon, who had 1,000 wives and concubines, was so they could gain political appointments. The judges and magistrates, then, were not voted in and could not be voted out, so many of them felt no compulsion to be helpful. The usual way to get their assistance was that they could be threatened by someone with equally powerful contacts, or they could be bribed or offered some benefit for giving their assistance. Alas, the only resort of the poor was to become such a bother that eventually the judge might actually be helpful.

In 1853 the oriental scholar, Richard Burton, made a secret pilgrimage to Mecca (at that time, any Western Christian discovered there would shortly be killed). One thing he needed to start his journey was a certain passport. Burton went to the gate of the building of the Governor of Alexandria, where he sat without being helped for over three hours until someone finally bothered to tell him he was in the wrong place.

The next day he went to the Palace. He writes:

The first person I addressed was a Kawwas, or police officer, who, coiled up comfortably in a bit of shade fitting his person like a robe, was in full enjoyment of the Asiatic “Kayf” [a state of relaxation]. Having presented the consular certificate and briefly stated the nature of my business, I ventured to inquire what was the right course to pursue for a visa.

…”Don’t know,” growled the man of authority, without moving anything but the quantity of tongue absolutely necessary for articulation.

Now there are three ways of treating Asiatic officials,—by bribe, by bullying, or by bothering them with a dogged perseverance into attending to you and your concerns. The latter is the peculiar province of the poor.

Moreover, this time I resolved, for other reasons, to be patient. I repeated my question in almost the same words. Ruh!, “Be off,” was what I obtained for a reply. But this time the questioned went so far as to open his eyes. Still I stood twirling the paper in my hands, and looking very humble and very persevering, till a loud, “Ruh ya kalb,” “Go, O dog.”

At that point Burton left, fearing that the next thing would be a lash from the hippopotamus hide whip the policeman had. Burton goes on to say, “I tried a dozen other promiscuous sources of information,—policemen, grooms, scribes, donkey-boys, and idlers in general,” but he got no help (Richard Burton, Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah & Meccah, Vol. 1, pp., 20, 21). Finally, his patience wore out and he bribed a soldier with some tobacco and money, and met with success.

Thus the parable that Jesus told about the poor woman whose only recourse to get help was to pester the judge was something his audience was all too familiar with. Without explaining all the reasons why we on earth have to pray and pray to get success, which is not due to God’s not caring but due to the intensity of the spiritual battle raging
in the universe, Jesus effectively made the point that if we want to get things from God, we have to persevere and pray until we get them.


18:11. “took a stand.” Robertson (Word Pictures in the New Testament) 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 (Matt 6:5; Mark 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 πρὸς εαυτοῦ (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 πρὸς 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.

18:17. “like a little child.” With the same attitude a child would have: humility, openness, innocence, excitement, and joy. Expecting to receive and live in harmony, not to control or be someone important.

18:18. “life in the Age to come.” This is the everlasting life that begins with the new Messianic Age, the Millennial Kingdom. [See Appendix 2: “Life in the Age to Come”.

18:20. Quoted from Exodus 20:12-16.

18:25. “Indeed.” The Greek conjunction γάρ (#1063 γάρ) usually expresses a reason and is translated “for.” But occasionally it expresses a continuation of the thought and is sometimes then referred to as a “confirmatory γάρ,” and can be translated, “indeed,” “yes,” etc. Here the camel reference is elucidating the point Jesus just made about the difficulty of getting into the Kingdom of God.

“camel.” There has been much discussion about this verse. The Greek and Aramaic texts read “camel,” and that does not seem too extreme given the fact that Jesus, and Orientals from that era in general, were fond of hyperbole (cp. Luke 6:41, a person having a “beam” in his eye). Origen referred to a reading that said “rope,” but it has little support. In the fifteenth century AD, it was postulated that the “needle’s eye” was a small gate that the camel had to crawl through, but that view has now mostly lost scholarly support. For one thing, historically the explanation was developed centuries after the biblical era, and also there is no epigraphical or archaeological support that there was any such practice in biblical times of trying to get a camel through a small door. As the “gnat” in Matthew 23:24 is a real hyperbole, so also is the camel.

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

18:30. “life in the Age to come.” This is new Messianic Age, the Millennial Kingdom. [See Appendix 2: Life in the Age to Come”.

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18:31. “Take notice!” The Greek word is idou (#2400 ἰδού), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

18:34. “they did not comprehend the things that he said.” Once the disciples realized that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God (Matt. 16:13-17; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21), he began to tell them that he must suffer, die, and be raised from the dead. In spite of his clear teaching about it, however, they did not understand what he meant.

Jesus taught about his suffering, death, and resurrection many times. He taught about it right after the disciples recognized him as the Christ (Matt. 16:21; Mark 8:31, 32; Luke 9:22). Then he taught about it again immediately after the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:9-12; Mark 9:9-13); then again when he was in Galilee shortly after the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:22, 23; Mark 9:31, 32; Luke 9:43-45), then again at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 8:21, 28); then again while he was going up to Jerusalem for the Passover, at which time he would be killed (Matt. 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34); and then again when he was in Jerusalem for the Passover (Matt. 26:2; cp. John 12:7).

The fact that the disciples never understood what Jesus meant, even though he clearly taught that he would suffer, die, and be raised from the dead, gives us some very important insights. For one thing, it shows us how the Jews at the time of Jesus viewed their Messiah, and for another it shows us that once someone has a firmly embedded pre-conceived idea about what the Bible says, he can look at very straightforward verses and misunderstand them.

As to what the Messiah would do when he came, just as the Jews never expected a virgin birth (note Mary’s reaction to the angel’s message, and see commentary on Luke 1:34), they never expected their Messiah to suffer and die. The common teaching at the time of Christ was that there were two great ages, the present, evil age, and the wonderful Messianic Age to come, and that the Evil Age would end, and the Messianic Age start, during the time of the Messiah. This teaching was so imbedded in the minds of the Apostles that they could not understand Jesus’ teaching that he would suffer and die.

The death of the Messiah was so contrary to their understanding that even though Jesus said it plainly over and over, they did not really get it until they saw him personally after his resurrection (this should also give us some insight into why it was so difficult to make converts—trying to get the Jews to believe in a crucified-then-resurrected Messiah required the signs, miracles, and wonders prevalent in the early years of the Church!).

Even after his death and resurrection, upon seeing the empty tomb, the disciples did not understand what had happened (John 20:9). It took Jesus personally appearing to a number of people for the disciples to believe he had been raised from the dead. Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:16), then to the women who came to the tomb (Matt. 28:9), then to Peter (this appearing is not recorded in Scripture; we are only told that it happened; Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5); then to the two men on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:31), then to the disciples as a group (Luke 24:36ff). Even with all this evidence, Thomas, who was not with the disciples when Jesus appeared, still did not believe until he had personally seen the resurrected Lord (John 20:26-28). Ultimately, it took both understanding the Scriptures and seeing the resurrected Christ to fully confirm their belief in the resurrected Christ (Luke 24:45).

And just as they were not able to understand the death and resurrection of Jesus before it happened, they did not understand what he was saying to them when he spoke of
his ascension into heaven (John 14:5; 16:17-19). Even after his death and resurrection, the disciples did not understand the ascension. Very close to his ascension the disciples asked him if he was going to restore the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6). They understood the prophecies of the restored earth ruled by the Messiah, and thought that he would use his spiritual power to conquer Jerusalem and the world. They did not realize Jesus had to ascend into heaven. Jesus’ ministry from heaven became clear to them over time. When the ascension happened, the Apostles kept looking into heaven, as if he would come right back down, and had to be told by two angels that suddenly appeared that he would come back down in the future, something that became much more clear as year after year as the books of the New Testament were written and Jesus did not come back and establish his kingdom.

18:39. “but he cried out all the more.” There are many lessons that we learn from Scripture about things that help us get what we want in life. One of them is being doggedly determined, and this is an example of it. You would think that the crowd would want to help a blind man see, but, alas, often people do not have the best interest of others at heart. In this case the crowd likely has some “religious reason” for supposedly protecting the sanctity of Jesus, and not let him be disturbed from his goal of reaching Jerusalem. Not deterred by the false religious scruples of the crowd, the blind man knew what he wanted and knew what it took to get his petition to Jesus—by yelling loud enough Jesus could hear him—and he yelled until he was heard, at which point he could bring his petition directly to Jesus, who in typical loving and compassionate form, saw the man’s trust and determination and healed him.

Chapter 19

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

Luke 19:5. “I must stay at your house.” Jesus spent the night at Zacchaeus’ house. The trip from Jericho to Jerusalem was over 15 miles (24 km), all uphill, and so he would have started out on the next day, probably in the late morning, and arrived before supper. When he arrived in Bethany, the people there made him a supper. The trip to Jerusalem took place six days before Passover (John 12:1, 2).

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

19:9. “he also is a son of Abraham.” Instead of speaking directly to Zacchaeus, Jesus spoke about him and his salvation to those who were present.

19:13. “minas.” The Greek is mna (#3414 μνᾶ), 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.” If a worker makes $8 an hour or $64 per day, in 100 days he makes $6,400 dollars. One hundred days work is roughly 1/3 of a years working days, so a mina was worth about 1/3 year’s wage for a worker.

19:20. “see.” The Greek word is idou (#2400 ἰδού), 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 have the verse in a parenthesis.

Luke 19:28. “And when he had said these things, he went on ahead.” Jesus had spent the night at Zacchaeus’ house in Jericho (19:5). It was over 15 miles (24 km) from Jericho to Jerusalem, all uphill, so he would have gotten up and gotten a start by the laste morning, and sometime after he arrived in Bethany at the house of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha (John 12:1, 2), they made him supper.

19:30. “colt.” This “colt” is not a young horse, but a young donkey (Matt. 21:2-5).

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, πρὸς τῇ καταβάσει, 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).


19:41. “drew near and saw 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 sobs.” The Greek is klaı̂ō (κλαίω; 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 in the New Testament; 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 δακρύω, 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,” in their hearts they did not really want the Messiah that he was. They
Luke 28:2

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 audible
crying, sobbing 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. (for his more silent crying, see commentary on John 11:35).

19:42. “would bring.” The Greek preposition pros means “to” or “toward,” and the idea
is that the things that would lead to or would bring peace. The hardness of Jerusalem and
its leaders no doubt fueled Jesus’ emotion, but that was exacerbated by the people around
him shouting, “Blessed is the King....” He knew that they wanted a Messiah, yes, but the
kind they wanted, not the kind he was. They wanted political deliverance, wealth and
health, and would not settle for less. Thus, it was only a few days later when they realized
Jesus would not bring them what they wanted, they shouted, “Crucify him” (23:21).

“peace...” This is the figure of speech, aposiopesis, or “sudden silence” (Bullinger,
Figures; Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament). Jesus, overcome with emotion
or seeing no point to it, did not finish his sentence. Some versions end the phrase with an
exclamation point, as if Jesus was showing great emotion, perhaps anger or frustration.
There is no imperative in the Greek text and Jesus is crying over the lost potential: “If
only you had known...” and he let his voice drop off. Then he restarted with the actual
situation, “But now they have been hidden from your eyes.”

“have been hidden.” The Greek is kruptō (#2928 κρύπτω), to conceal or to hide, and
it is in the passive voice. This verse is not saying that God hid what the people of
Jerusalem needed to see, but rather just makes the statement that they have been hidden.
When a person stubbornly refuses to acknowledge the truth, over time one’s
understanding becomes darker and darker. This was the situation with Jerusalem. The
leaders and the people had refused to believe Jesus over and over, and eventually their
eyes could not see.

19:46. Quoted from Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11.

19:48. “hanging upon what he said.” A very graphic idiomatic saying. A more literal,
but also more confusing, translation is that all the people “were hanging on him,
listening” (cp. YLT). But the people were not literally “hanging on him,” they were
hanging on every word he spoke. The Jewish leaders hated Jesus, but the crowds loved
him.

Chapter 20

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.

20:8. “Neither will I tell you.” Jesus was not fooled by the Jews saying they did not
know. They knew exactly what they believed, but those hypocrites and cowards were
afraid to say it. Jesus had said if they would tell him about John’s baptism, he would tell
them about the source of his authority. Since they would not tell him, he kept his word
and would not tell them.

20:9. “And he began to speak to the people this parable.” This parable is a clear
reference to the parable of the vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7, except in Isaiah the vineyard is
itself Israel, and is wicked, while in Jesus’ parable the vineyard is God’s and it is the
people who are hired to tend it who are evil. Jesus was using thinly veiled language to
speak of the leaders of the Jews, who had been entrusted by God to take care of His
vineyard, i.e., His people, but were evil. The Jews got his point (v. 19), and wanted to
arrest him but were afraid of the people. This parable appears in Matthew 21:33-46; Mark

20:14. “will be.” The Greek verb is subjunctive, but that is due to the hina (#2443 ἵνα)
that starts the phrase and demands a subjunctive verb, and in these cases the tense of the
verb must be translated from context. The renters thought if they killed the heir, the
vineyard would be theirs.

20:16. “May it not be!” 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 Psalm 118:22.
20:34. “people of this age.” The Greek literally reads, “the sons of this age,” but that is
the standard Semitic idiom where a “son” of something refers to someone who is
somehow associated with it, for example, a “son of disobedience” is a disobedient person.
Thus a “son of the resurrection” (Luke 20:36) is a person who is resurrected.

20:35. “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among those
who are dead.” This verse in Luke is referring to the first resurrection, the resurrection of
the righteous, which is at the start of the Millennial Kingdom, Christ’s 1000 year reign
(Rev. 20:4). The second resurrection is the resurrection of the unrighteous (Acts 24:15;
Rev. 20:5, 11-14). [For more on the resurrections, see commentary on Acts 24:15].

“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 Isaiah 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).

20:39. “you have well spoken.” The experts in the law who made that statement would have been Pharisees, and they believed in the resurrection (cp. Acts 23:6-9), but had never managed to silence the Sadducees like Jesus had just done.

20:40. “For they did not dare to question him any more.” After Jesus silenced the Sadducees, they did not question him any more.


20:46. “experts in the law who desire.” The English versions are divided as to whether the meaning is, “Beware of the experts in the law. They desire to walk in long robes…” or “Beware of the experts in the law who desire to walk in long robes.” The Greek text can be punctuated either way. If there is a period (or even a comma) after “law,” then Jesus is warning the people about all the experts in the law. If, on the other hand, there is no punctuation between “law” and “who,” then Jesus is only warning people about those experts who are self-seeking. It is a difficult choice. On the one hand, the Bible testifies that there were some experts in the law who were godly, and Jesus surely knew that, and so could have made a simple literal statement. On the other hand, it is common to exaggerate that kind of statement; they did it in biblical times and we do it today. We might say, for example, “Lawyers are greedy,” and our audience would know that not every lawyer is greedy, but many of them are.

So was Jesus making a literal statement, or was he exaggerating to make a point? We may never know, but for translation purposes, given the fact that only a few verses earlier there were some apparently godly experts in the law (Luke 20:39), in our opinion, it is clearer to translate the statement in a way that expresses literal truth. We feel that makes it much easier for the English reader to believe what Jesus said—that only some experts in the law were to be avoided. Also, it avoids the possibility that someone would think that Jesus said every expert in the law was an ungodly person, something clearly not true.


Chapter 21

21:6. “one stone on another.” The Greek is literally, “a stone upon a stone that will not be thrown down.”


21:15. “a mouth.” Figure of speech metonymy, the mouth being put for the words that will come from it.
21:19. **“souls.”** The Greek word is *psuchē* (§5590 ψυχή; pronounced psoo-kay’), and it has a large number of meanings, including the physical life of a person or animal; an individual person; or attitudes, emotions, feelings, and thoughts. Here it refers to the physical life of the body, which is why some versions translate it “life.” However, since in this context Jesus is not referring to temporal life, but everlasting life, “soul” seemed a better choice than “life.” By staying faithful to the end, believers gain everlasting life. [For a more complete explanation of “soul,” see Appendix 7: “Usages of ‘Soul’.”]

21:23. **“distress…wrath.”** This is the wrath of God associated with the Day of the Lord (see commentary on Revelation 6:17).


**Chapter 22**

22:3. **“the Adversary.”** The Greek word for Adversary is *Satanas* (§4567 Σατανᾶς), which has been transliterated into “Satan” in most versions. This causes the meaning of the word, which is important, to be lost. For more information on it, see the note on Mark 1:13. [For more information on the names of the Devil, see Appendix 14: “Names of the Slanderer.”]

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. The “commander” was the highest official in a Greco-Roman city (thus we have translated it “magistrate” in Acts 16:20, 22, 35, 36, 38). The Greek word *strategos* is also used of the commander of the Temple police in Jerusalem. The “commander” was the top man in charge of the police force that governed the Temple. Then there were officers of various ranks under the commander. In the Jewish writings the commander of the Temple is called, “the man of the Temple Mount.” The Temple police were a large number of hand-picked Levites who kept order at the Temple, which was a huge complex, covering more than 37 acres, and was sometimes filled with tens of thousands of people. The Temple police 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. They had the power to arrest people, which is what they were sent to do to Jesus but were unable to do (John 7:30, 32, 45). 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.

At night the Temple police were placed in twenty-four stations around the Temple and its compound. Twenty-one of the stations were occupied by Levites, while three were occupied by both Levites and priests. There were ten men at each station except for the three innermost to the Sanctuary, which had ten Levites and ten priests. Thus, there were 240 Levites and thirty priests on guard in the Temple every night.

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. **“Listen!”** The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδον), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).
Luke 2:86

a man carrying a pitcher of water.” This would be very unusual. The customary practice for millennia was that women carried the water.

22:15. “eagerly desired.” The Greek is the figure of speech polyptoton, and reads, “with desire I have desired,” meaning with great desire, or eagerly desired.

22:19. “This is my body.” This is the figure of speech metaphor. In the Bible, there are many uses of the three common figures of speech of comparison, which are simile, metaphor, and hypocatastasis. These three figures are commonly used in English speech as well, but only simile and metaphor are generally known by name.

A simile is a comparison by resemblance, usually using “like” or “as.” If a person is a sloppy and noisy eater, someone might say, “You eat like a pig.” Psalm 1:3 uses a simile when it says a righteous person is like a tree planted by the water. Proverbs 11:22 (HCSB) says, “A beautiful woman who rejects good sense is like a gold ring in a pig’s snout.” Jesus effectively used the figure simile when he said, “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs” (Matt. 23:27).

More intense than a simile is the figure metaphor, a comparison by representation. In a metaphor, one noun represents another. In the pig example above, a metaphor would be, “You are a pig.” Jesus used a metaphor when he said to his disciples, “I am the vine; you are the branches...” (John 15:5 NIV).

Even more intense than metaphor is the figure hypocatastasis, which is a comparison by implication. This figure is very common, but not well known by name. In the pig example, instead of comparing the messy eater with a pig by saying he is “like” a pig, or even that he “is” a pig, in hypocatastasis the comparison is just implied. One person says to the other, “Pig!” and the meaning, although just implied, is effectively communicated. [For more on hypocatastasis, see commentary on Rev. 20:2].

There are many metaphors in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Genesis 49:14 says, “Issachar is a strong donkey.” Deuteronomy 33:22 says “Dan is a lion’s cub.” Job 25:6 says, “man...who is a maggot.” Psalm 18:2 says, “The Lord is my rock,” and Psalm 84:11 says, “For the LORD God is a sun and shield.” God is not literally a “sun” but He does provide warmth and what is needed for life and growth. Neither is He literally a “shield,” but He does protect us from much harm. Psalm 60:7 (ESV) says, “Ephraim is my helmet; Judah is my scepter.” Jeremiah 50:17 says, “Israel is a scattered flock...” Hosea 10:1 says, “Israel was a spreading vine; he brought forth fruit for himself.”

New Testament metaphors include: “You are the salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13), “I am the bread of life” (John 6:48), “I am the door of the sheep” (John 10:7), and says, “you are a letter from Christ” (2 Cor. 3:3).

The danger with the figures metaphor and hypocatastasis is that the reader may not realize that a figure is being used and mistake the figure for a literal statement. That is what has happened with Jesus’ statement, “This is my body.” The early Christians understood the metaphor that Jesus used when he said, “This is my body. “There is no evidence that the apostles or anyone in the early Church misunderstood what Jesus was saying was a metaphor or ever even considered the idea of what is now called “transubstantiation.”

The doctrine of transubstantiation, in which the bread (“host”) is said to become the actual body of Christ developed very late, more than 1000 years after Christ. The Internet encyclopedia Wikipedia says, “The earliest known use of the term
‘transubstantiation’ to describe the change from bread and wine to body and blood of Christ was by Hildebert de Lavardin, Archbishop of Tours (died 1133), in the eleventh century and by the end of the twelfth century the term was in widespread use. In 1215, the Fourth Council of the Lateran spoke of the bread and wine as ‘transubstantiated’ into the body and blood of Christ.” (This information from the Internet can be confirmed in books such as Walter Elwell, ed., Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, under “Transubstantiation”).

22:20. “which is being poured out for you.” 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.

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

“the Adversary.” The Greek word for Adversary is Satanas (#4567 Σατανᾶς), which has been transliterated into “Satan” in most versions. This causes the meaning of the word, which is important, to be lost. For more information on it, see the note on Mark 1:13. [For more information on the names of the Devil, see Appendix 14: “Names of the Slanderer.”]

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.

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

22:43, 44. There are a number of reasons for believing that these verses are an addition to
the text and are not original. They are absent from the earliest Greek manuscripts, but
also from manuscripts of diverse text types. Also, some of the manuscripts that do
contain them have scribal marks indicating that although the scribe copied them into the
text, they were not original. Also, they are not in the same place in every ancient
manuscript. In some manuscripts they occur in Matthew, after Matthew 26:39. This fact
is very telling, because if a text is original and gets accidentally removed, it is always in
the same place in the manuscripts that have it. However, if a verse is added, sometimes
scribes add it in different places, which is what happened with these verses. Also, the
verses contain vocabulary that occurs nowhere else in Luke, which, on its own does not
carry much weight, but when combined with the other evidence is noteworthy. While it is
still possible that the verses are original (some early manuscripts contain them while
others do not, and some Church Fathers quote them while others omit them), the weight
of the evidence leads us to believe they were added to the text.

One thing to keep in mind is that, although it sometimes happens that a section of
scripture this long is added or deleted by accident, it is far more likely that this section, as
complete as it is, was added or omitted on purpose. That being the case, and since we can
construct from the manuscripts that this addition or deletion occurred sometime in the
second century after Christ, why would the change occur? The most likely reason for the
change would have been as an effort to combat one of the “heresies” of the early church:
Docetism. The label “Docetism” came from the Greek word dokein, “to seem,” and it
was the belief of the docetics that Jesus was not human, but only seemed human. The
debate over whether Jesus was human or merely some sort of phantom raged hot and
heavy in the second century and was firmly condemned at the Council of Nicaea in 325
AD. Thus, given the time period and the evidence of the text itself, it seems likely that in
order to have a text that “proved” Jesus was human, these verses were added to the text of
Scripture.

Even if the verses were added to the text, that does not mean the event did not
happen. It is possible that Jesus really did pray so hard he sweat drops of sweat, and this
was part of the oral tradition that was passed down about Jesus by the members of the
early Church. Then, especially considering the controversy about the humanity of Jesus, it was added to the text by scribes anxious to defend Jesus’ humanity. For more information, see Metzger, Textual Commentary, and Ehrman, Orthodox Corruption of Scripture.

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


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 (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 appellative to “man” here in verse 58. Then in verse 59 we are told still “another” addressed Peter, but this time the Greek is allos (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 appellative “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 (blasphêmeō) is transliterated (not translated) from the Greek into English as “blasphemy.” In English, “blasphemy” is only used in reference to God. However, in Greek, blasphêmeō and blasphêmia (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 blasphêmeō, 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.”

Chapter 23

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.

“but he did not answer him.” It is certainly understandable that Jesus did not answer Herod Antipas. First and foremost, there was no profit in it. For him to die in Jerusalem he would have to be tried before Pilate, who had the authority there. He had no desire to be taken under arrest back to Galilee. Further, he would provide no satisfaction to Herod, who had killed his friend and cousin John the Baptist. Neither was he interested in giving any satisfaction to Herod’s court, which included his murderous wife Herodias, or his dancing step-daughter Salome. He could have told them that soon he would be their judge and condemn them to a second death, but that would have only made him the butt of their jokes.


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

“sent him back to Pilate.” Herod Antipas was no doubt embarrassed by his failure to get Jesus to talk to him, so he mocked Jesus, treated him badly, and sent him to Pilate. He could have taken Jesus back to Galilee and tried him there, but since he was already feeling a lack of support from his subjects for killing John the Baptist, he would not take Jesus back to his area of strongest support and execute him when he could simply send him back to Pilate, who would then have to deal with him.

23:12. “friends.” Pilate and Herod Antipas had been hostile to each other, deeply disliking one another. Herod had even sent a letter about Pilate to the Roman Emperor Tiberias about his not respecting Jewish customs (see commentary on Pilate on Matthew 27:2.) Pilate’s sending Jesus to Herod, even though Pilate could have tried the case himself, was viewed by Herod as a personal and professional courtesy, both in recognizing his rank as Tetrarch of Galilee, but also in allowing him to see Jesus, something that Pilate likely knew Herod wanted.

23:13. “Pilate called the chief priests and the rulers and the people together.” This was now close to noon on Tuesday (John 19:14), and the start of Jesus’ second trial before Pilate. In Luke 23:1, the Jews brought Jesus to Pilate; he did not have to call them together (cp. Matt. 27:1; Mark 15:1; John 18:28).

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

23:15. “see” The Greek word is idou (#2400 ἰδού), 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 Matthew 27.15 and Mark 15.6. See Metzger, Textual Commentary.

23:21. “Crucify! Crucify him!” The majority of this crowd was probably Jewish leaders, followers of the Jewish leaders, Temple police, etc. There is a lot of traditional teaching about the fickle crowd who shouted “Hosanna” as Jesus rode into Jerusalem, but shouted “crucify him” only a few days later, but the real situation was different than that. To be sure, there would have been people who, seeing Jesus humbled and beaten by the Jewish rulers and the Romans would have thought he was a deceiver who misled and tricked them, and they would have changed their mind perhaps to the point they wanted
Jesus crucified. However, the Gospel records make it plain that there were always people who doubted Jesus. This second trial before Pilate had not been advertised (Pilate had to gather the Jewish leaders back together after Herod returned Jesus to Pilate; Luke 23:13), but when the Jewish leaders were summoned before Pilate, no doubt they quickly spread the word to gather their supporters, who would have made up this crowd before Pilate. The followers of Jesus made up the crowd that followed him and were mourning (see commentary on Luke 23:27).

23:27. “a great multitude.” This shows that there was a huge crowd of people who did follow Jesus Christ, and did not agree with his crucifixion. It shows that the people in Jerusalem were divided into two camps: the group of people who shouted “Hosanna” and “Son of David” when Jesus entered Jerusalem some days earlier (Matt. 21:9; Mark 11:9; John 12:13), and the group of people who had shouted “Crucify him” (Matt. 27:23; Mark 15:14; Luke 23:21; John 19:15). The great multitude who was following Jesus seemed to genuinely sympathize with him, but it was to the women who were so emotional that he addressed himself.

“the People.” In this context “the People” refers to the people who were Jews (see commentary on Matt. 2:4).

“were beating themselves on the chest.” The Greek is koptō (#2875 κόπτω), and it means, to cut, strike, smite, or to beat one’s breast for grief.

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

23:34. “And he said.” 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 βλασφημέω) means showing disrespect to a person or deity, and/or harming his, her, or its reputation. [For more information on blasphēmeō, see commentary on Matt. 9:3].

23:42. “remember me.” This is the “pregnant sense” of remember, when the word remember is used idiomatically to mean more than just remember, it means to pay special attention to. For a more complete explanation, see commentary on Romans 8:29.

23:43. “I say to you today, you will be with me...” This verse is one of the demonstrations of Jesus’ great love for people. The malefactor on the cross had no assurance of salvation, and in fact may have been fairly certain of his own doom. Yet in a
last act he reached out to the Messiah, and Jesus promised him life in Paradise. Jesus never turns away those who come to him for salvation.

What Jesus said in Luke 23:43 to the criminal on the cross has been quoted to prove that when a person dies, he goes immediately to Heaven or Hell, but it does not have to read that way. Admittedly, the way that this verse is punctuated in almost every English Bible, it does say the criminal was going to go to Paradise that day. However, there was no punctuation in the original text (in fact, there were not even spaces between the words). All punctuation was added by translators, and they added it in a way that fit their theology and made sense to them. Thankfully, most of the time the translators have done a good job with the punctuation, and it is correct and helpful. However, in this verse almost every English Bible puts the comma in the wrong place, creating a false and misleading reading.

We believe that the comma should be after the word “today,” not in front of it. That way, the verse reads: “And he [Jesus] said to him [the criminal], ‘Truly, I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise.’” Thus Jesus did not say the criminal would be in Paradise that day, but rather made the point that today he was saying the criminal would be in Paradise in the future.

Placing the comma after “today” makes the verse fit with both the scope of Scripture and the immediate context. From the scope of Scripture we learn that when a person dies he is dead; not alive in any form (see commentary on 1 Cor. 15:26).

The comma being after “today” also fits with the immediate context. To see this, we must remember what the criminal said to Jesus in the previous verse, Luke 23:42: “Remember me when you come into your kingdom.” The criminal was speaking about the “kingdom.” The “kingdom” is not “heaven,” and it is future, it is not available now, which is why the criminal said, ‘when you come into your kingdom.’ The kingdom is the Messianic Kingdom that Jesus will set up on earth after he fights the Battle of Armageddon and conquers the earth. The Bible has a lot to say about the Messianic Kingdom: there will be peace, justice, and safety on earth. Jesus will rule from Jerusalem, everyone will worship in the Temple (Ezek. 40-44), and the lion will eat straw like the ox (Isa. 11:7). Also, everyone will be healthy and have plenty to eat. [For more information about the Millennial Kingdom see commentary on Matt. 5:6, “the meek will inherit the earth,” and John Schoenheit, The Christian’s Hope: The Anchor of the Soul].

The criminal did not doubt that the Messianic Kingdom was coming, but he likely doubted whether he would be allowed into it. So in an unassuming, pleading way, he requested, “Remember me when you come into your kingdom.” In other words, the criminal said to the Lord that he would like to be in the first resurrection, the Resurrection of the Righteous, and get to enter the Kingdom and be saved. It was a wonderful act of love for Jesus to say, “you will be with me in Paradise.”

Why did Jesus use the word “today?” In many languages, including Greek, Hebrew, and English, words that we normally think of as being “time words” are often used for emphasis. This happens with the English word “now” all the time. A teacher might say, “Now class, make sure you sign your test.” The purpose of “Now” in that sentence is not time, but emphasis, and that can be the case in both Hebrew and Greek as well (cp. Luke 11:39, Acts 13:11; 15:10; 22:16; 1 Cor. 14:26; James 4:13).

In Hebrew, the word “today,” or “this day” was also used for emphasis, and it is used that way many times in the Old Testament. “I call heaven and earth to witness
against you today,...” (Deut. 4:26); “know therefore today,...” (Deut. 4:39); “And these words, which I command thee this day,...” (Deut. 6:6). “I testify against you this day, that you shall perish” (Deut. 8:19). A use that is very similar to Luke 23:43 is Deuteronomy 30:18, “I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish.” There is very little difference between, “I say to you today” (Luke 23:43) and “I declare to you today” (Deut. 30:18). Deuteronomy 9:1 says, “Hear O Israel today you are going to cross over this Jordan (P. Craigie; The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, without punctuation). It is vital that we understand that Israel did not cross Jordan “that day,” and in fact did not do so for another couple months. So “today” did not mean that very day, but was used for emphasis. Bullinger, Companion Bible, notes the punctuation of Deuteronomy 9:1 should be: “Hear O Israel today, you are...,” which is very similar to Luke 23:43. Other uses, just in Deuteronomy, that include the word “today” more for emphasis than for time, include 4:40; 5:1; 7:11; 8:1, 11, 19; 9:1, 3; 10:13; 11:2, 8, 13, 26, 27, 28, 32; 13:18; 15:5, 15; 19:9; 26:3, 16, 17, 18; 27:1, 4, 10; 28:1, 13, 14, 15; 30:2, 8, 11, 15, 16, 18, 19; 32:46. Joshua 23:14 is another verse that uses “today” for emphasis, not time. As it is punctuated in the NASB, it reads, “Now behold, today I am going the way of all the earth.” But Joshua did not die that day, which we can see by just reading the last two chapters of the Book of Joshua. Thus Joshua 23:14, Luke 23:43 and other verses we have seen should have the comma put after the word “today,” not before it. Neither Jesus nor the criminal went to “Paradise” that day (see commentary on “Paradise” in Luke 23:43).

“Paradise.” The Greek text actually reads, “the Paradise” (tō paradeisos), that is, the well-known one that the prophets had been speaking about for centuries. Jesus was not speaking about “a” paradise,” but “the Paradise” that will be on earth when he conquers the earth and sets up his kingdom.

The English word “paradise” comes from the Greek word paradeisos (#3857 παράδεισος; pronounced pä-rá-day-sos). “Paradise” was, and will again be, a place on earth. God’s plan was that mankind would live on earth, and so He put Adam and Eve on earth in the Garden of Eden. God’s plan for mankind to live on a wonderful earth was temporarily spoiled by sin, but God will bring His plan to fulfillment. When Jesus Christ conquers the earth at the Battle of Armageddon and sets up his Messianic Kingdom, mankind will again live in “Eden,” in Paradise (Rev. 2:7).

The Hebrew word eden (#5731 בהר) means “delight, or pleasure.” When God created Adam and Eve, He loved them and so He put them in the “Garden of eden;” the “Garden of Delight” (Gen. 2:15). It is unfortunate that the translators decided to transliterate the word eden into “Eden” instead of translate it into “Delight.” The phrase “Garden of Eden” does not mean anything to most English readers except that it was a physical place on earth. In contrast, had the translators decided to say, “Garden of Delight” instead of “Garden of Eden,” we would still know it was a place on earth, but God’s love and purpose in putting people in a wonderful place would have been revealed.

When the Greeks living in Egypt translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek around 250 BC and made the Septuaqint version, they translated the phrase “garden of eden” as “paradeisos” (pronounced par-a-day'-sos). Actually, paradeisos was not a Greek word, but was a loan-word from the Persian language and meant “pleasure garden.” It referred to the lush, protected pleasure gardens that oriental rulers and powerful men kept for their enjoyment. The English word “paradise” comes from the
Greek word “paradeisos.” That the Greek speaking Jews translated the “garden of eden” as “paradeisos” was a good choice, because the Garden of eden was indeed a garden of delight, a paradise. By the time of Christ, paradeisos (Paradise) was one of the terms used for the Millennial Kingdom of Christ on earth, as we can see from 2 Corinthians 12:4 and Revelation 2:7.

We do not know for sure what language Jesus spoke when he spoke to the criminal on the cross because we do not know the nationality of the criminal, but Jesus did know because he heard the criminal speak. If Jesus spoke Hebrew, what he said would be in essence, “You will be with me in Eden.” If he spoke Greek, he would have used the word paradeisos.

The criminal on the cross asked to be remembered when Jesus came into his Kingdom, which will be on earth, and Jesus responded and comforted the man by saying he would indeed be in Eden, or Paradise, which will be on earth. When Jesus said, “You will be with me in Paradise,” Jesus was promising the man he would be in the resurrection of the righteous (Luke 14:14; Acts 24:15), also called the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5, 6); and “the resurrection of life” (John 5:29), and people in that resurrection then get to be part of the Messianic Kingdom on earth. [For more information on the resurrections, see commentary on Acts 24:15].

Neither Jesus nor the criminal went to “Paradise” that day. When Jesus Christ died, Scripture universally testifies that he was in the grave and not in Paradise. In fact, Paradise (the Messianic Kingdom on earth) has still not come—we are still awaiting the resurrection of the dead and the Messianic Kingdom on earth. But the fact that Jesus said, “You will be with me in Paradise” is a beautiful expression of Christ’s heart for mankind. He could have looked at the criminal and said, “Okay, I will remember you.” But by saying “You will be with me in Paradise,” Jesus gave the man strength and hope to be able to endure his last few hours of tremendous suffering on the cross. The man was in excruciating pain, but he had a hope that burned with a fire that must have kept his heart warm until his dying breath. [For more information on the Kingdom of Christ being on earth, see commentary on Matthew 5:5; the meek will inherit the earth].

It is sometimes taught that “Paradise” is an intermediary state that existed for righteous people before they could go to heaven. There is no direct scriptural support for such a place, but it is assumed to exist due to some false assumptions.

The first false assumption is that the soul is immortal, and therefore has to live someplace. However, there is no Scriptural support for the soul being immortal. In fact, just the opposite. The soul can and does die (cp. Matt. 10:28). The reason that people need to be “raised from the dead” is because the “person” is dead, not just the body. If the person’s soul was alive someplace, it could be judged without the body being present, but Scripture never teaches that. Furthermore, when it speaks of resurrection, it speaks of the “person” being raised. There is no verse about a living soul rejoining a dead body. [For more information on this topic, see Appendix 4: The Dead are Dead].

Having made the false assumption that the dead person is actually alive and has to live someplace, theologians then drew another false conclusion based on the first one. First, they correctly realized that if the person died before the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the person’s soul could not go to “heaven.” If a dead person could go to heaven before Jesus died for his sin, then anyone could go to heaven before Jesus, and thus Jesus would not really have needed to come at all. So theologians invented a place
where the souls of good people could go while they waited for the savior to save them and open the way to heaven. This “place” does not exist in the Bible, so it needed a name, and therefore some theologians call it “Paradise.”

The simple, biblical truth is that when a person dies, he is dead until God raises him from the dead, and the three major times that happens in Scripture are the Rapture of the Church, the First Resurrection (or Resurrection of the Righteous), and the Second Resurrection (or Resurrection of the Unrighteous). Jesus and the malefactor both died on the cross that day. God raised Jesus from the dead three days later and Jesus is now in heaven ruling as Lord and Christ. The malefactor is still in the grave, dead and completely unaware of the passage of time. But Jesus will be good for his promise, and on Resurrection Day that man will hear the shout of the Son of Man and come out of the tomb (John 5:25-29; Ezek. 37:12-14).

23:44. “sixth hour…ninth hour.” This is about our noon to 3 PM. Both the Jews and Romans divided the day into 12 hours, starting at daylight, roughly 6 AM. [For the hours of the day and the watches of the night, see commentary on Mark 6:48].

23:46. Quoted from Psalm 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 (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. 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, Appendix B, “Usages of ‘spirit’ in the New Testament”. For more on spirit, see Appendix 6: “Usages of ‘Spirit’”].

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

“there was a good and righteous man named Joseph.” Joseph is mentioned in all four Gospels. For the relationship between Joseph and Nicodemus, see commentary on John 19:39.

The death and resurrection of Christ is the pivotal point in the history of mankind. Each of the Four Gospels describes the event, but describes different aspects of it. It takes some effort to make all the pieces on the subject fit together. To be sure, the central message is crystal clear and stands on its own in every Gospel—God raised Jesus from the dead and the tomb is empty. However, when just read side by side, the Gospels have apparent contradictions. But the fact that we must piece the records together to get the actual history of the account is the same thing we have to do in many other places in the Bible in order to understand the more intricate information God has for us in His Word.
Just because the Four Gospels do not read the same way about an event does not mean they contradict each other. In order for each Gospel to portray its own unique picture of the Messiah, it has to have information that the other Gospels do not have, or omit information that they do have [For the four unique Gospel portraits of Jesus Christ, see the commentary on Mark 1:1].

We must keep in mind that even when a record in one Gospel seems to flow smoothly from one event to another, words such as “and,” “now,” or “but,” can represent a break in time and do not necessarily occur immediately after the phrase before it. For example, there are a large number of verses that start with “and,” which read as if they followed immediately after the previous verse, when actually we can see from the scope of Scripture that there was both time and other events that occurred between the verses.

The only way to properly construct the chronology of the Four Gospels is to be willing to split the seeming flow of events in a Gospel when there is good evidence from the other Gospels that there are intervening events. By reading each Gospel quickly, and simply noticing what is included or excluded, the unique emphasis of each Gospel is more easily seen. In contrast, by reading the record of Jesus’ life event by event in all four Gospels, we get the composite historical account of what happened.

In fitting the records together we can see that sometimes large periods of time occur right in the middle of a verse, and only by splitting a verse into two parts can we reconstruct a proper chronology. It would have been helpful if the men who invented the verse divisions had started a new verse each time there was a break in the chronology of Christ’s life. However, because the verse divisions are man-made (in fact, the modern verse divisions we use today were not put into the New Testament until the mid-1500’s), they are not always put in the best places. They are good for reference, but unfortunately sometimes they conceal the true chronology of the biblical text rather than help us understand it.

The study below lists the verses in chronological order. Commentary on the individual verses can be looked up under that specific verse reference. As we do our study, it is helpful to overview the chronology:

- **Wednesday, Nisan 14.** Jesus was crucified, died, and buried.
- **Thursday, Nisan 15.** The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was a Special Sabbath. The people rest. The religious leaders ask Pilate for a guard to watch the tomb for three days, which would be Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.
- **Friday, Nisan 16.** The women get spices to properly bury Jesus but they do not go to the tomb because they knew a guard had been placed there for three days.
- **Saturday, Nisan 17.** The weekly Sabbath. The people rest. Jesus gets up from the tomb just before sunset, “three days and three nights” after he was placed in the tomb, fulfilling his prophecy of Matthew 12:40 that he would be “in the heart of the earth” for three days and three nights.
- **Sunday, Nisan 18.** Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene, then the other women, then the men on the road to Emmaus, then Peter, then the disciples behind locked doors.
- **Sunday, Nisan 25.** Jesus appears to the disciples and Thomas behind locked doors.

**Wednesday, 14th of Nisan: close to sunset**
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<td>Luke 23:56b.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; of Nisan: evening. The Resurrection. The event itself is not described in Scripture.</td>
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<td>Saturday, 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; of Nisan: late in the day</td>
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<td>Sunday, 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; of Nisan: very early Sunday morning</td>
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<td>Sunday, 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; of Nisan: very early Sunday morning while it was still quite dark</td>
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<td>Matthew 28:9, 10</td>
<td>[[Mark 16:10, 11]]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; of Nisan: early to mid-morning</td>
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</table>
### Matthew 28:11-15
| Luke 24:9b |

### Sunday, 18th of Nisan: early to mid-morning (summary statement)

| Luke 24:10, 11 |

### Sunday, 18th of Nisan: early to mid-morning

| Luke 24:12 |

### Sunday, 18th of Nisan:


### Sunday 18th of Nisan: evening, before sunset


### Sunday, 18th of Nisan (or soon afterward):

| John 20:25 |

### Sunday, 25th of Nisan:

| John 20:26-31 |

### Sunday, 25th of Nisan (or soon afterward):

| Matthew 28:16a. |

### Between Tuesday, 27th of Nisan, and the Ascension:

| Luke 24:47-49 |

### The Ascension:

| [[Mark 16:19]] | Luke 24:50, 51 |

### The Day of Ascension to the Day of Pentecost:

| Luke 24:52-53 |

### Summary Statement:

| John 21:24, 25 |

### [After the Day of Pentecost:]

| [[Mark 16:20]] |
[For information on the events of the last week of Jesus’ life, see commentary on John 18:13. For a more detailed explanation of the Wednesday crucifixion and Jesus’ three days and three nights in the grave, see commentary on Matthew 12:40].

23:52. **“This man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.”** Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. See commentary on Matthew 27:58.

23:54. **“and the Sabbath was beginning.”** The Greek word translated “was beginning,” is ἐπιφώσκω (#2020 ἐπιφώσκω), and it literally means, to grow light. Thus it was used of “dawn,” or also idiomatically as “beginning.” Thus literally, “the Sabbath was dawning.” This phraseology can be confusing to us Westerners because the Jewish Sabbath began at sunset, not dawn. The Jews, however, used the phrase idiomatically for the beginning of something. We could translate the verse as, “the Sabbath was dawning,” and understand it idiomatically, just as they did, but a less confusing way to translate the phrase is “the Sabbath was beginning.” We must remember that they did not have the kind of accurate clocks we do today, so they had to pay attention to the sun in the sky to know exactly when the Sabbath started. However, if there were clouds on the horizon, or if they were in a valley or alleyway, the exact time the sun when down and the Sabbath began might not be exactly clear. They could only tell when the time for the Sabbath was drawing close. [For more information on ἐπιφώσκω see commentary on Matt. 28:1.]

We must also keep in mind that according to Jewish reckoning of time, the sunset started the new day. So here in Luke 23:54, Wednesday the 14th of Nisan, the day Jesus Christ was crucified, was ending, and Thursday, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, was starting. Often the Passover sacrifice so dominated the events that the whole time period was just referred to as “Passover.” The Sunset after the Passover lamb was sacrificed started the 15th of Nisan and the new day, which was always a Sabbath, no matter on which day of the week it occurred (Lev. 15:7). Since the Law of Moses decreed that the 15th of Nisan was a special Sabbath, Luke 23:54 says the “Sabbath” was beginning. We need to be clear on the fact that the “Sabbath” in Luke 23:54 is not the weekly Sabbath, Saturday, but Thursday, the 15th of Nisan. This point is made again in John 19:31, which tells us specifically that this Sabbath was a “high day,” meaning a special Sabbath, not the regular weekly Sabbath. Most Christians do not realize that when the Bible says Jesus was crucified the day before the “Sabbath,” it does not mean the regular weekly Sabbath, but the Sabbath that starts right after the Passover sacrifice and starts the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the 15th of Nisan.

Because it was so close to the Sabbath and the start of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the women did not have time to buy and prepare the spices, so they went home (Luke 23:56). Friday, the 16th of Nisan, they bought and prepared the spices, but likely did not go to the grave because they knew it was guarded for three days. Saturday, the weekly Sabbath, they rested (Luke 23:56). Then, early Sunday morning, they went to the tomb with the spices. Sunday was the fourth day, and they had good reason to believe the guards would be gone by then.

23:55. **“And the women who had come with him out of Galilee, followed after.”** The women saw that Joseph had not prepared Jesus’ body, so they thought they had to prepare him themselves. See commentary on Matthew 27:58 and commentary on Matthew 27:59.

23:56. **“prepared spices and ointments.”** The women did this on Friday, the 16th of Nisan. (See commentary on Matt. 27:58 and see commentary on Mark 16:1).
“rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.” The women rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment, and although they would have rested on both the Special Sabbath and the regular weekly Sabbath, because of the chronology we can tell that this verse in Luke refers to the regular weekly Sabbath. Mark 16:1 makes it clear that the women bought the spices after the Sabbath, but in this verse they had already bought the spices when they rested on the Sabbath, so this Sabbath is the regular weekly Sabbath, Saturday the 17th of Nisan (see commentary on Mark 16:1).

The commandment in the Law of Moses about resting on the weekly Sabbath is Exodus 20:8-10, and about resting on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is Leviticus 23:4-8. According to the Law of Moses, walking was not considered work so the women could have walked to the tomb on the Sabbath without breaking the Sabbath. However, by the time of Jesus, Jewish traditional law had imposed limits on how far a person could walk on the Sabbath without it being work. The limit was called “a Sabbath day’s journey” and was 2000 cubits, or just over one half mile (see commentary on Acts 1:12). So the women still could have “rested” on the Sabbath but still walked to the tomb (see commentary on Matt. 28:1).

Jesus’ resurrection, which would have occurred between 23:56 and 24:1, is not specifically recorded.

Chapter 24

24:1. “at early dawn.” Literally, at “deep dawn.” We know from Mark 16:2 that this was when the sun had just come up (see commentary on Mark 16:2).

24:4. “perplexed.” The Greek is diaporeō (#1280 διαπορέω), to be perplexed, greatly perplexed, bewildered, totally at a loss. (See commentary on Mark 16:5).

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

“two men stood by them.” The record of the women seeing two angels occurs only in Luke. Although the Bible calls these angels, “men,” that is only so we know the form they appeared in. When the women entered the tomb and saw one “young man” sitting there, they did not know he was an angel. Then, however, “two men” suddenly appear out of nowhere in the tomb with the women, and these angels were wearing gleaming clothing (the only other use of this word “gleaming” in the NT refers to the gleam and flash of lightning). There was now no doubt in the minds of the women that they were in the presence of angels, so they became frightened and bowed down in reverence.

“gleaming clothing.” The Greek is astraptō (#797 ἀστράπτω), and it means “to light up,” thus, to gleam or to flash. In Luke 17:24 it is used of the flash of lightning. The young man (the angel) the women first met when going into the tomb was in a white robe, but that would not have been uncommon. However, when these two angels suddenly appeared, their clothing gleamed like lightning. The women were frightened by these angels that appeared.

24:5. “the men.” The Greek reads “they” spoke to the women, but the REV and many other English versions have “the men” because the text says “men” in 24:4, and it avoids the ambiguity in “they said to them,” which is the reading of the Greek. From comparing the verses that have this record (Matt. 28:5; Mark 16:6) it seems clear that only one angel
did the actual speaking, the others were in agreement with what he said, and thus the
“they” in the verse.

The record of these two angels appears only in the Gospel of Luke, but it is vital
because according to the Law of Moses there had to be two witnesses for something to be
considered true, but now we can see that there were three angels who witnessed to the
fact that Jesus had been raised from the dead (Matt. 28:6; Mark 16:6; and Luke 24:6).

Once the angel reminds the women that Jesus said he would rise from the dead,
they remember that he said that (Luke 24:8).
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.”
24:8. “And they remembered his words.” Luke, written from the perspective of the
Lord as a human being, has more about women than any of the other three Gospels [For
the reason for Four Gospels, see commentary on Mark 1:1]. Luke is the only Gospel that
specifically credits the women with remembering the words of Jesus. Matthew says the
women had “great joy” (Matt. 28:8).
24:9. “and they told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest.” The “they” in
this verse is all the women who came to the tomb with spices after the sun had risen
(Luke 24:1, Mark 16:2). It does not include Mary Magdalene, who had gone on her own
very early to the tomb (see commentary on John 20:1). Mary had seen the open tomb
before these women, met the Lord before these women did (cp. Matt. 28:9), and reported
back to the disciples separately, before these women did (John 20:18).

Luke is the only Gospel that records the women actually returning and telling “the
Eleven” (Judas had already hanged himself) and the disciples that Jesus was raised from
the dead. Matthew 28:8 says the women left the tomb to go tell the disciples, but never
says they actually told them. Mark 16:7 implies they were going to tell the disciples as
the angels told them to, but Mark, like Matthew, never specifically says the women told
the disciples. Luke, however, specifically says the women told the disciples. It is possible
that because a woman’s testimony was not allowable in a court of law in the ancient
Jewish culture, that Matthew and Mark omit this detail, but Luke, written from a human
point of view, includes it and gives the women credit for their faithfulness to follow
through with what the angels and Jesus said to do.
24:10. “told these things to the apostles.” This verse is a summary verse. It mentions all
the women who reported to the apostles that Jesus was raised from the dead. The subject
of the verse is what the various women said to the apostles, and this is the key to
understanding the verse. All of these women had seen Jesus alive (Matt. 28:9; John
20:16), and testified to that fact, but the disciples did not believe any of them. These
verses are not saying that Mary Magdalene was physically with the women when they
carried the spices to the tomb. It is saying that all the women had the same testimony
about Jesus being alive. Mary Magdalene’s testimony agreed with the testimony of the
women who went to prepare the body of Jesus.

24:12. “Peter arose and ran to the tomb.” Luke 24:12 is omitted in some early
manuscripts but contained in others, so there is a chance it is not original. However,
overall the evidence supports its being original. It seems much more likely that a scribe
wanting to protect Peter’s reputation would omit the verse than that a scribe would
simply invent this story about Peter. Veneration of Peter started very early, and so there
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would have been a lot of reason to omit things that tended to lessen his status in the eyes of the Church. That Peter would question his first trip to the tomb and make a second trip, but still not believe in the resurrection was a very human thing to do, especially given Peter’s strong-willed nature. However, for people who were venerating Peter as the leader of the apostles, one can see how there would have been a temptation to omit the verse. The NASB puts the verse in brackets to indicate that it is doubtful.

Sometime after the women reported that they had seen the Lord, but before Cleopas and the other disciple returned from seeing the Lord on their trip to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), the Lord appeared to Peter. There is no verse in the Gospels that describes the meeting of the Lord and Peter, but it is clear that there had to be a time on Sunday when Peter was alone, apart from the other disciples. By the time Cleopas and his friend, who saw the Lord on the road to Emmaus, join the apostles and the others, “Simon,” a common name for Peter, had already seen the Lord (Luke 24:34). Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 15:5 says that the Lord appeared to Peter and then to the apostles. If this verse is original, it is Peter’s second trip to see the empty tomb and would have been an excellent time for Jesus to appear to Peter alone.

“stooping down.” The Greek word is parakuptō (#3879 παρακύπτω), and it means to stoop towards something in order to look at it (see commentary on John 20:5).

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

“two of them were going.” Jesus Christ appeared to two disciples, Cleopas and an unnamed disciple, as they walked to Emmaus, which is about 7 miles (11 km) from Jerusalem (the location of Emmaus is unknown, but Luke 24:13 lets us know it was about a seven miles from Jerusalem). When Jesus made his identity known to them, they hurried back to Jerusalem.

“about seven miles.” The Greek text reads “60 stadia.” The identification of Emmaus is unknown, and has been made more uncertain because a few ancient texts read, “160 stadia,” but that seems very unlikely, especially since the disciples, after realizing they had met Jesus, went back to Jerusalem and seemed to have gotten there fairly soon (even if they walked, they would have walked the sixty stadia in about two hours). A “stadion” was a measurement used by the Greeks and then the Romans, and was roughly equal to 600 feet (in ancient times, the stadion varied slightly from city to city). Thus sixty stadia was some 6.8 miles (about 11 KM).

24:21. “it is now the third day since these things came to pass.” Jesus died on the day of the week we call Wednesday (the Jews would simply say the fourth day of the week). These disciples were speaking to Jesus in the afternoon of the “first day of the week” (Luke 24:1), which we call Sunday. At first glance, and according to many translations, if these two disciples said that it was now the third day since “these things have happened,” that would make Jesus crucified on Friday, or the earliest Thursday. But Jesus was crucified Wednesday, was buried just as Wednesday became Thursday (the Jews started their day at sunset, not midnight), and Jesus was in the grave “three days and three nights” (Matt. 12:40). Wednesday sunset to Thursday sunset is one day and one night, Thursday to Friday is two, and Friday to Saturday is three, and Jesus got up as night fell on Saturday. When Sunday morning came, all the angels said was, “He is not here, he is risen,” but they did not say how long he had been up. Mary Magdalene came to the tomb while it was still dark and he was already up.
Given that information, how do we understand what these men were saying? The answer is provided in the fact that they were speaking Aramaic, not Greek. In 1851 James Murdock did a translation of the New Testament from the available Aramaic text which reads, “But we expected that he was to deliver Israel. And lo, three days [have passed], since all these things occurred.” Then in 2006 Janet Magiera did a translation from the Aramaic and arrived at basically the same translation: “But we had hoped that he was going to deliver Israel and behold, three days [have passed] since all these [things] happened.”

If Jesus was not buried until the end of Wednesday, then three days passed (Thursday, Friday and Saturday.) and the disciples spoke to Jesus on Sunday, which is exactly what the Scripture records. The mention of the three days is important, because it is a logical question to ask, “Why didn’t the disciples simply say that these things happened five days ago?” The mention of three days is important because Rabbinic literature from after the time of the New Testament shows that the rabbis taught that the soul hung around the body for three days looking for an opportunity to re-enter it, but when decomposition set in on the fourth day, the soul left (cp. Leviticus Rabba (Rabbinical commentary) 18.1 (Leviticus 15:1)). Although that particular rabbinical commentary post-dates the New Testament, it is common knowledge that Jewish traditions were very stable and lasted for centuries. The fact that we have Rabbinic literature about the soul staying around the body for three days before leaving, taken together with evidence from the New Testament such as this verse in Luke and the record of Lazarus in John 11, is excellent evidence that the belief existed at the time of Christ.

The men on the road to Emmaus had already heard from the women that Jesus was alive (24:23), but left Jerusalem, believing he was dead in spite of their report. But it seems likely that if Jesus had not been dead for a full three days and nights, these disciples might have believed there was a chance that Jesus was alive after all, and have stayed in Jerusalem. In telling this stranger on the road that three days had passed since Jesus’ death, they were in part explaining why, even though they had hoped that Jesus was the Messiah, they were giving up on that vision and going home.

Even the Greek text can be understood to read in such a way as three days had passed since “all these things happened.” For example, The Holy Bible: The New Berkeley Version in Modern English, Revised edition (Gerritt Verkuyl, Zondervan Publishers, 1969), reads: “...Moreover, three days have already passed since all those things occurred.” The point is that, by Sunday, three whole days (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday) had passed since Jesus had been buried at nightfall Wednesday night.

24:31. “and they recognized him.” Jesus Christ appeared to two disciples, Cleopas (v. 18) and an unnamed disciple, as they walked to Emmaus, which is about 7 miles (11 km) from Jerusalem. When he made his identity known to them, they hurried back to Jerusalem, only to find the disciples saying that the Lord had also appeared to Simon (Luke 24:34).

24:34. “has appeared to Simon.” Jesus Christ first appeared to Mary Magdalene close to where he was buried (John 20:16). Then he appeared to the rest of the women who had come to wrap his body with spices (Matt. 28:9, 10). Then later that day, but before he appeared to the two men on the road to Emmaus (who knew the tomb was empty; Luke 24:24), Jesus appeared to Peter. None of the Four Gospels record this meeting, but the disciples spoke of it (Luke 24:34), and 1 Corinthians 15:5 mentions it also.
There is an apparent contradiction between Mark 16:13 and Luke 24:34. Mark says that when the Cleopas and his friend came to Jerusalem and told the apostles and disciples, they did not believe. Luke, however, says that when they came and reported, the disciples already believed because the Lord had appeared to Simon (Peter). Some have tried to solve this by saying that the “Simon” is the name of the other disciple that was going to Emmaus, but the proper reading of the Greek text makes that impossible. The better solution is that the last twelve verses of Mark are not original, and the “apparent contradiction” is caused by adding the verses in Mark to the text (see REV commentary on Mark 16:9).

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.

24:45. “Then he opened up their minds.” Jesus taught about his suffering, death, and resurrection many times. He taught about it right after the disciples recognized him as the Christ (Matt. 16:21; Mark 8:31, 32; Luke 9:22). Then he taught about it again immediately after the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:9-12; Mark 9:9-13); then again when he was in Galilee shortly after the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:22, 23; Mark 9:31, 32; Luke 9:43-45), then again at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 8:21, 28); then again while he was going up to Jerusalem for the Passover, at which time he would be killed (Matt. 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34); and then again when he was in Jerusalem for the Passover (Matt. 26:2; cp. John 12:7). In spite of all his teaching, the disciples never really understood what Jesus meant until after his resurrection when he opened up their minds to understand the Scriptures. [For more information on the disciples understanding Christ’s suffering and death, see commentary on Luke 18:34].

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 ἰδού), 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 commentary 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.