

The Royal Majesty Of The Kingdom



JUNIOR NOTES — 9 to 12 Years

STAGE FOUR OF FIVE STAGES

CHRISTADELPHIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 121, ST. AGNES 5097, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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FOREWORD

Our notes this year start with the baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ and conclude with his resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father in Heaven.

The lessons are chosen so that we might learn the truths that Jesus taught and so that we might have a desire to find out more about the Kingdom of God and how we might ultimately find a place in that Kingdom.

Children are encouraged to read the lessons carefully and to ask their parents and Sunday School teachers about the matters spoken of in the stories.

teachers are reminded of the necessity to emphasise the principles outlined and to select or expand the material as they assess the needs of their individual scholars.

The questions are intended to draw out the important lessons in each story.

It is our prayer that these lessons will draw us closer to God as we wait for the return of His Son from Heaven.

THE COMMITTEE

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1. JESUS IS BAPTISED BY JOHN

*"Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us
to fulfil all righteousness"*

Aim

*To show how John the Baptist prepared the hearts
of the people for the coming of Messiah;
and how Jesus himself was baptised.*

John prepared himself in the wilderness for the great work God had for him to do – *"Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways"* (Luke 1:76). Messiah, that is, Christ, was soon to appear to Israel and John was to be the herald who went on ahead announcing to the people that their king was coming.

Matthew 3; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:1-22

JOHN PREPARES FOR THE COMING MESSIAH

As we read in last year's lessons, John was a very special child. The angel Gabriel had told Zacharias that this child would grow up to be like the prophet Elijah, who turned the hearts of many in Israel back to their God (Luke 1:17).

When John grew up he left his father and mother and went out into the desert. Away from the comforts of his family home, he learned to lean on God for all his needs. His daily food was locusts and wild honey. For his clothes he wore a coat of camel's hair and a leather girdle about his waist (Matt.3:4; cp Elijah 2 Kings 1:8). There, in the loneliness of the wilderness, John was getting ready to make his announcement to Israel. All the people must hear the news and prepare themselves.

When the time came, God sent him to the hill country of Judea and all the country round about Jordan to proclaim his message. Messiah their king, was coming. They must prepare to meet him. The prophets had long ago foretold of the Messiah (that is, the king *anointed* by God), who would appear to his people to save them.

Everyone talked about John. Some said that he was the

Messiah, but John said, "*I am not*". John himself told them who he was: "*I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah*" (John 1:23: see Isa. 40:3).

JOHN'S MESSAGE

4 John was a powerful teacher, very stern and fiery in his speech. God had filled him with the Holy Spirit from his birth (Luke 1:15) and so he was able to tell the people just what God thought of them. It was time for them to repent – that is, to change their ways. "*Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*", he said to all who came to hear (Matt. 3:2). All kinds of people were stirred by his words. "*What shall we do then?*" they asked (Luke 3:10). So John told them to repent and be baptised. He pointed out to them how selfish and thoughtless they were. Such behaviour did not please God. They must change their ways and be generous to others, be thankful to God and be content with what they had. They must show God that they loved His ways and were ready to listen to the Messiah He would send, and follow him.

When news of John's work reached the ears of the Scribes and Pharisees back in Jerusalem, they thought they had better find out for themselves what the people were getting so excited about. They were supposed to be the leaders in Israel, teaching the people God's laws and His ways, but they had led the people astray. When John saw them coming, he spoke sternly to them in front of everyone. He called them a "*generation of vipers*" because they had deceived the people, just as the serpent in the garden of Eden had told Eve a lie and deceived her. "*Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance*", John told them. They too must change their ways or God would bring terrible judgments upon them in the years ahead.

When any of the people came to John and confessed their sins he led them down into the water and there baptised them. Their bodies went completely under the water. It was a sign that their old way of life must be put to death. When they came out of the water they were now ready to begin a new and better way of life, not pleasing themselves, but pleasing God.

JESUS IS BAPTISED IN JORDAN

During his three and a half years preaching and baptising, John did not know who Messiah really was. One day a man stepped out of the crowd and came to John. It was his cousin, Jesus. John knew what kind of man he was. He knew of no-one more upright and godly than Jesus. This was not the sort of person he was preaching to. He was telling the wicked and the sinners to repent and be baptised. This man was not a sinner. So when Jesus asked John to baptise him, John said, "I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Matt. 3:14). 5

Jesus, however, knew that *all* men have need of baptism. "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness", Jesus told John (Matt. 3:15). So Jesus too went down into the waters of the Jordan and John baptised him. As he came up out of the water a marvellous thing happened. Jesus was praying, and suddenly the heavens were opened and the Spirit of God in the shape of a dove alighted on him. A voice was heard from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (v17). Here was God's "anointed", His Messiah, for God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit. Now John knew that this was the one they had all been waiting for. John's work was done. Jesus himself would now continue the work of preaching, saying, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4 :17). 6
7
8

LESSON FOR US

God's ways are right and we must learn to seek His ways and walk in them. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Yahweh. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9). Only the Lord Jesus Christ was sinless. All his thoughts were God's thoughts and in all his ways he obeyed God. We must try to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. We must learn of God's ways from the Bible every day. Then, when we are older, we will see that we must be baptised to please God, as Jesus did. 9
10

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 - 12 years only)

13a What did the prophet Isaiah say that made John speak as he did? *"All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand forever"* (Isa. 40:6-8). We are *"flesh"*, all of us; we are sons and daughters of Adam. We grow up and flourish like the lovely flowers of the field. Then, before long, we grow old and eventually we die, like the flowers of the field, whose beauty fades and they wither and die. It has happened to *all* men since Adam. If that was all we could hope for, life would be very miserable. What is there that can make life worth living and give us hope of everlasting life? It is God's Word, the Bible, which endures forever (see 1 Pet. 1:24-25). We can never start too young to try and change our ways.

b. Fleshly thoughts and actions come easily – it is so easy to be selfish, thoughtless, unkind, lazy, disobedient and so on. God wants us to change from those fleshly ways and become godly children – obedient, kind, generous, thoughtful, diligent and unselfish. Reading and thinking about the Word of God each day can change us, for it was the Word of God in the mind of Jesus Christ that made him perfectly obedient to his Father.

c.

QUESTIONS (9 – 12 years)

Short Answers

- ✓1. Where did John live when he grew up?
- ✓2. What was John's food and clothing?
- ✓3. Who was John preparing the way for?
- ✓4. What did John tell the people they must do?
5. What did John say when Jesus asked to be baptised?
6. What did Jesus say to John to show him why he wanted to be baptised?
7. Where was Jesus baptised?
8. What did the voice from heaven say?
9. How different are God's thoughts from our thoughts?
10. Where can we learn of God's thoughts and ways?

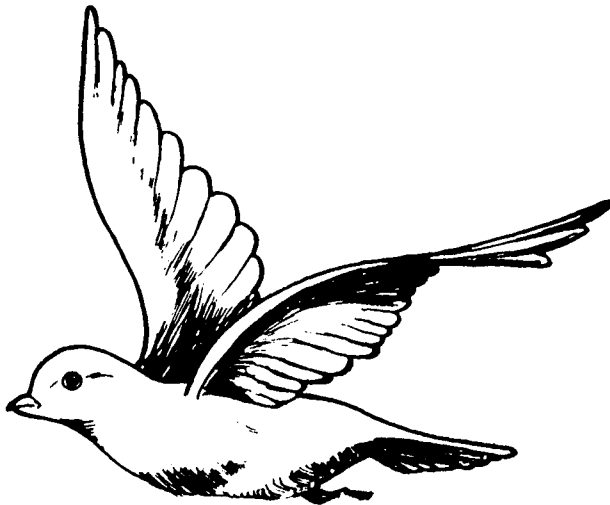
Detailed Answers

11. Tell how John prepared people for the coming of Messiah.
- ✓12. Tell what happened when Jesus was baptised.

Additional Answers (11 – 12 years only)

13. (a) What happens to "*all flesh*" (that is, all men and women)?
- (b) What "*stands forever*" and can give us eternal life?
- (c) What sort of people will we be if we read the Word of God and think about it each day?

Matt 3:16-17



2. JESUS IS TEMPTED IN THE WILDERNESS

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”

Aim

To show how Jesus overcame the temptations in the wilderness

Straight after his baptism Jesus went into the wilderness where he was put to the test. As he had always done in the past thirty years of his life, Jesus had an answer ready from the word of God as he faced each trial. It was the word of God in his mind which he believed with all his heart that made him obedient to his Father's will.

Matthew 4: 1-11; Mark 1: 12-13; Luke 4: 1-13

IN THE WILDERNESS

- After the excitement of his baptism in the Jordan, Jesus no doubt felt the need for some quiet time away from the crowds. He needed time to think about the work God had for him to do and time to pray to his Father. John had pointed him out as the Messiah and he must now begin to show the people the way of salvation. The work he had to do would not be easy. He would face many difficulties and eventually a terrible death. The good news of the Kingdom must be preached to the people, but he himself would suffer and die. All these things lay ahead, but he would gladly do them all “for the joy that was set before him” (Heb. 12:2). For forty days
1. he fasted in the wilderness, having only the wild beasts as his companions. Then at the end of forty days, when he was tired and hungry, the tempter came to him.

THE TEMPTER COMES WITH QUESTIONS: Matthew 4:1-11

5. Who the tempter was we do not know, but he came to see if Jesus could prove that he was the Son of God, as the voice from heaven had proclaimed at his baptism. He came to tempt Jesus, that is, to put him to the test, to see what power he really had. Of course, Jesus had the power of the Holy Spirit, given to him by his Father when he was baptised. He

knew he was the Son of God, and that the power he had been given was to be used for God's glory, not his own.

So the tempter said to him, *"If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread"* (Matt. 4:3). What a temptation that was for a man who had not eaten for forty days! He was very hungry, but God had not given him the power of the Holy Spirit just to please himself. Jesus had an answer ready in his mind: *"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"* (v4). It is more important to feed on God's Word by reading the Bible than to worry about feeding our bodies. So he would not turn those stones into bread. 9a

Then the tempter suggested that he throw himself down from the highest tower of the Temple and said, *"If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down"* (v6). The tempter himself knew that God's angels would care for His Son (see Psa. 91:11-12). Jesus, however, knew how wrong it would be to put his Father to the test. He knew God was with him all the time. Jesus said, *"It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"* (v7). So he would not do it. 9b

Then the tempter wanted Jesus to use his new power to overthrow all the kingdoms of the world and fall down and worship him. He wanted to share the power and glory of them all. God had certainly promised that His Son should be King over all the earth, but there was a work to do first. He must first suffer and die, before God would give him the glory and honour and the kingdom. *"Get thee hence, Satan"*, said Jesus to his enemy (as the word "Satan" means), *"for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve"* (v10). 9c

HOW JESUS OVERCAME TEMPTATION

Did you notice that every time Jesus was tempted to sin, he had an answer ready from the Word of God? Look at the verses from which he took his answers in Deut. 8:3, 6:16 and 6:13. They were all taken from the words of Moses spoken to Israel. In Deut. 8:3 Moses spoke of the time when the Jews complained and murmured, because they did not believe God had the power to provide them with food and water in the 7

wilderness. Moses told them that natural bread was not the most important thing, but rather the Word of God, for that is the true bread. God will always provide food and water for those who believe His Word. To such people, who believe in Him, He will also give eternal life. How much better then is that true bread which God provides.

LESSON FOR US

There are three ways in which all of us are tempted, the same three ways in which Jesus was tempted. The natural desires of us all are called "*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life*" (1 John 2:16). If we are only interested in pleasing ourselves, then we will sin against God in one or more of these ways.

Everything that the world offers can seem very attractive. The Bible, however, teaches us: "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world*" (1 John 2:15-16).

The Lord Jesus Christ knew how to overcome all temptation, because his mind was filled with the Word of God. He did not allow his feelings of hunger, pride or ambition to put aside the Word of God. So by reading our Bible every day and thinking about what is written there, we will have an answer ready for every temptation. This is how we overcome sin and please God.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 - 12 years only)

You will notice in Matthew 4 and Luke 4 that the tempter is called "*the devil*". This is not a name, but tells us what he was like. It means someone who sets himself against God by speaking lies. For example, Judas Iscariot was called a "*devil*" because he accused Jesus falsely and betrayed him to the rulers of the Jews (John 6:70-71). This tempter who came to Jesus in the wilderness wanted him to use the great power of God to do things which were not right. We too, can be a "*devil*" whenever we sin against God.

Jesus said to the tempter, "*Get thee hence, Satan*" (Matt.

4:10). "Satan" is a Hebrew word put straight into our English Bibles. It means an opponent or enemy. Again, it is not a name. Jesus only called Peter "Satan" when he spoke unwisely; his words were not helpful, but were the words of an enemy. So the tempter in the wilderness was a enemy of God and Jesus turned him away with the words of God.

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

- ✓1. Where did Jesus go after he was baptised? *Wilderness*
- ✓2. How long did Jesus stay in the wilderness? *40 days.*
- ✓3. What did Jesus do in the wilderness? *think of his work & prayed to God.*
- ✓4. Who came to Jesus at the end of his days in the wilderness? *Tempter*
5. What did he want Jesus to prove? *that he was the son of God.*
6. What book of the Bible did Jesus get his answers from? *Deut.*
7. Why could Jesus not be king straight after his baptism? *because he had a work to do.*
8. Where can we always find an answer that will help us please God whenever we are tempted? *Scriptures.*

Detailed Answers

- ✓9. (a) What was the first thing the tempter said to Jesus? *Turn the stones to bread.*
- (b) How did Jesus answer him? *Man shall not live by bread alone*
- (c) What lesson does that teach us? *more important to feed on God's word*
10. (a) Why are we told not to love the world? *lust of flesh / eyes - pride of life*
- (b) How did the Lord Jesus Christ overcome all temptation? *Filling his mind with the word.*

Additional Answers (11 - 12 years only)

11. (a) Why is the tempter called "the devil"? *he wanted Jesus to do wrong.*
- (b) Who else in the Bible has been called a "devil"? *Peter.*
- (c) What does the word "satan" mean? *enemy of God*

Matt 4:4

3. JESUS CALLS HIS FOLLOWERS

"They forsook all and followed him."

Aim

To show how Jesus began to choose his followers.

Jesus was thirty years old. He had three and a half more years in which to teach the people of Israel the gospel – the good news concerning the kingdom of God. During that time he drew twelve men closely around him to hear his words and to see the miracles which God had given him the power to do. Later, when he was taken from them, these same men would have to carry on the work of spreading the gospel.

John 1:35-51; Luke 5:1-11, 27-28; 6:13-16

THE DISCIPLES OF JOHN TALK WITH JESUS: John 1:20-42

Six weeks had passed since Jesus was baptised. The leaders of the Jews were plainly puzzled by what was happening. They sent some priests and Levites down from Jerusalem to ask John the Baptist if he was the Christ. John's answer was clear: *"I am not the Christ"* (v20). He told them of one who would come after him who was much greater than he. John knew now who that one was, but Jesus had been gone nearly six weeks and John was waiting for him to come and show himself to the people.

1. The day after this John saw Jesus returning from the wilderness. As he came toward him, John pointed him out to his disciples, saying, *"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"* (v29). John's disciples listened very intently to these words.

2. The following day when John the Baptist was standing with two of his disciples, Andrew (Simon Peter's brother) and John, he saw Jesus and once again pointed him out as *"the Lamb of God"* (v36). So Andrew and John followed Jesus. He invited them to come with him and they talked with him all night. Imagine how eagerly they would have listened to his words.

Andrew was anxious to find his brother and tell him the exciting news: *"We have found the Messiah"* (v41). When Jesus set eyes on Simon, he said, *"Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas"* (v42), that is, Peter. Jesus knew that this young man would be changed by all that he heard and saw. His name, too, would be changed to Peter, meaning a stone or rock, for he would become as steady as a rock in serving the Lord and be a leader amongst his followers. 3.

JESUS GOES INTO GALILEE John 1:43-51

The following day Jesus went north to Galilee. There he found Philip and said: *"Follow me"* (v43). Philip joined the little party and later went and found his friend Nathanael. Philip too was excited. *"We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph"* (v45). Nathanael was doubtful. He knew from his study of the prophets that Messiah would come from Bethlehem (see Mic. 5:2, which we know was fulfilled at the birth of the Lord Jesus). But Philip had seen Christ and urged his friend to *"come and see"* (v46). When Jesus saw Nathanael, he recognised him at once as a godly and sincere young man. *"Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee"*, the Lord said (v48). Nathanael was an honest man and knew that Philip must be right. *"Rabbi, (that is, Master) thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel"*, he exclaimed (v49). What a wonderful understanding Nathanael already had, to recognise Jesus as the Son of God, the one promised to David to be king over Israel (see 2 Sam. 7:12-13). 4.

FISHERS OF MEN: Luke 5:1-11

Simon, Andrew, James and John were fishermen. They had been out fishing all night on the lake of Galilee, but caught nothing. When morning came they brought in their boats and washed and mended their nets on the shore. Jesus was preaching on the lakeside and the crowd was so large that he went and sat in Simon's boat. He asked him to move it a little way off shore so that he could teach the people from the

- ship. When he had finished speaking, he said to Peter, *“Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets”* (v4). Peter thought it would be pointless, but still, because the Lord had asked him, he would do it. No sooner had they let down their net than it was filled with fish and the net broke. They called to James and John to come and help them. Soon there were so many fish that both the boats began to sink. Simon saw at once that it was a miracle. How ashamed he was now for he had been busy washing and mending his nets, while Jesus taught the people. He had been too busy to listen! If he was going to follow Jesus, he must count everything else unimportant. *“Fear not”*, the Lord said, *“from henceforth thou shalt catch men”* (v10). God would provide their daily food, as this miracle had clearly shown. They must spend their time with people, teaching them about God’s kingdom. So they brought their ships to land and *“forsook all, and followed him”* (v11).
- 5.

CHOOSING TWELVE APOSTLES: Luke 6:12-16

- Many people followed Jesus, listening intently to his teaching. These were called “disciples”, meaning “learners” or “ones who are taught”. Of them all, Jesus chose twelve to be “apostles”. An “apostle” is “one sent forth” with a message. The night before he chose these twelve, Jesus went up into a mountain to pray to God. It was a most important decision and he needed God to guide him. He stayed all night in the mountain, praying. Then, when the morning came, he called his disciples to him and named the twelve. Lists of these apostles are found in Matt. 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-19, Acts 1:13, 26 and Luke 6:13-16.
- 6.
- 7.

The twelve apostles are:

1. Simon Peter
2. Andrew, his brother
3. James, the son of Zebedee.
4. John, the brother of James.
5. Philip
6. Thomas
7. Matthew
8. James, the son of Alphaeus.

9. Thaddaeus (called Lebbaeus, or Judas of James).
10. Simon (called Zelotes or the Canaanite).
11. Judas Iscariot (who betrayed Jesus).
12. Bartholomew. Nathanael.

They were not the sort of men the world would choose for its leaders. They were not well-educated or rich, but the Lord knew their hearts and he was the best teacher they could have. Only one proved to be faithless – Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed his Lord. He was later replaced by Matthias (see Acts 1:26).

THE TWELVE SENT FORTH: Matthew 10:5-8

The Lord sent out the twelve apostles to preach, saying, *“The kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (v7). This was the message which must be delivered to all Israel. It was not yet time for the Gentiles to hear it, but Jesus said, *“Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”* (v6). He was the shepherd and the sheep must be drawn to him. He gave them also power to perform miracles, so that those to whom they preached would be convinced that the message came from God. *“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give”* (v8).

8.

THEIR REWARD: Matthew 19:28-29

What a great responsibility the apostles had, but what a great privilege as well. During their lifetime they suffered much for the things they believed, yet Jesus on one occasion told them of the wonderful work they would perform in the kingdom because they *“forsook all and followed him”*. *“Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel”* (v28). What a wonderful hope this is. All who forsake the things of this life and follow him will receive many blessings, the greatest of which will be, *“Ye shall inherit everlasting life”* (v29).

9

LESSON FOR US

We must try to be disciples of Jesus, learning of his ways and listening to the word of God carefully, so that we can obey

Him. To do this we must forsake those things which will take up too much of our time.

- Jesus spoke of the great reward that will be given to those who “*forsake all and follow him*”, saying that they “*shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life*” (Matt. 19:29). If we forsake the things of the world and put God first in our lives and obey Him, He will care for us and bless us now. Then, when Jesus returns, we shall receive immortality in the Kingdom.

QUESTIONS (9 – 12 years)

Short Answers

1. When John the Baptist pointed Jesus out to his disciples, what did he say?
- ✓ 2. Who were the first disciples to follow Jesus?
- ✓ 3. What did Jesus say Simon’s name would be changed to? What does it mean?
- ✓ 4. What did Nathanael say to Jesus?
5. Four disciples were fishermen. What did Jesus say they would catch from now on?
6. What does the word “disciple” mean?
7. What does the word “apostle” mean?
8. What were the twelve apostles given to help them convince men of their message?
9. What reward did Jesus offer the twelve apostles?
- ✓ 10. What shall we have if we forsake all and follow Jesus?

Detailed Answers

11. ✓ (a) Tell the story of the miraculous net full of fish.
x (b) What lesson was Jesus teaching the disciples?
 12. Jesus chose twelve men to be his close friends and helpers.
 - (a) What did Jesus do before choosing these men?
 - (b) What were their names?
- ✓ The children to list the 12 apostles.

Mark 1:16-17 (Hayley V.17) -18-
Rev. Matt 19:28

4. THE WEDDING IN CANA

“This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him”

Aim

To show how Jesus first showed his power in the miracle of turning water into wine

The power that Jesus had, the power of the Holy Spirit, had been given to him by God at his baptism. His disciples had not yet seen him use this power. They believed what John the Baptist told them, that he was “*the Lamb of God*” (John 1:36) and they followed him. They listened to his word and became his disciples, but when they saw his miracles, they were convinced that he was the Christ.

John 2:1-11

THE WINE RUNS OUT: John 2:1-4

Very soon after Jesus had gathered his first few followers around him, he was invited to a wedding in Cana of Galilee. His mother Mary was there and his disciples also were invited. A wedding was always a happy occasion. In those days the feasting and rejoicing with family and friends sometimes lasted for days. 1. 2.

Something happened at this wedding which could have spoiled the pleasure of the occasion and brought disgrace on the host – the wine ran out before the feast had ended. When Mary discovered this embarrassing situation, she said to Jesus, “*They have no wine*” (v3). Jesus realised that she was hoping he could help and he said to her, “*Woman, what have I to do with thee?*” (v4). He wanted his mother to understand that whatever he did from now on, since his baptism, he did to please God. As much as he loved his mother and wanted to please her, he must do his Father’s work only. It was not yet time for him to be known publicly to all men. Nevertheless he did perform a miracle at this time as the first sign to his disciples and those gathered at the wedding that he was the Christ. 3.

WATER INTO WINE: John 2:5-10

Mary seemed to get the impression that Jesus would help. She said to the servants, *“Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it”* (v5).

4. At the entrance to the house there were six large stone waterpots. They were there so that the guests could wash their hands before eating, not because they were dirty, but it was a custom of the Jews (see Mark 7:3). Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the waterpots with water”. When they were filled to the brim, he told them to draw out and take it in to the ruler of the feast. It seemed a strange order, yet Mary had told them to do whatever he commanded. To their amazement,
5. they drew out – not water, but wine from those very large jars that they themselves had filled with water. When the ruler of the feast tasted that wine, he congratulated the bridegroom for providing such excellent quality. Most people would pour the best out first, “but”, he said, “thou has kept the good wine until now” (v10).
- 6.

WHY JESUS PERFORMED MIRACLES: John 2:22

8 The power of God is greater than any power man can have. You may remember when God sent plagues upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians that the magicians tried to copy Moses. By their trickery, it looked at first as if they could too, but even they had to admit that it was God’s power at work through Moses. So in the miracles Jesus performed he was showing the people what great power God had given him. He was the Son of God and God was with him. In Acts 2:22 Peter describes him as *“Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you”*. In John 2:11 we are told: *“This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him”*. This was just what God intended – the people saw the miracles and believed his words. In this way the Lord Jesus Christ taught the people to give honour to God, for it was God that had given him the power of the Holy Spirit.

LESSON FOR US

In all the miracles that Jesus did he set out to teach the people particular lessons. This was the first miracle Jesus did and it taught a very important lesson. The waterpots were there *"after the manner of the purifying of the Jews"* (v6). The water was to wash the body. It made them feel clean, but it could not make a man clean within, that is, in his heart. Jesus taught that we should be *"pure in heart"* (Matt. 5:8). The words that Jesus spoke could change a man and make him clean within. When we read the Word of God and think about it and keep it in our hearts, it changes us. Let us then read that Word daily and God will be pleased to see that change in us. 8.

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

1. Where was Jesus invited to attend a wedding feast?
2. Who went with him?
3. When the wine ran out, who asked Jesus to help?
4. What did Jesus tell the servants to do?
5. What wonderful thing happened to the water in the jars?
6. What did the governor of the feast say?
7. How was Jesus able to turn the water into wine at the wedding feast? *by God's power.*
- ✓ 8. Why did Jesus perform miracles?

Detailed Answers

- ✓ 9. Tell the story of the first miracle Jesus did in Cana of Galilee. Make sure you tell
 - (a) why Jesus turned the water into wine;
 - (b) what lesson we can learn from this miracle.
10. Why did God give Jesus the power to perform miracles?

John 2:11

Matt 19:28 revision.

5. NICODEMUS, THE PHARISEE, COMES TO JESUS

*“Except a man be born again, he cannot see
the Kingdom of God”*

Aim

*To show how Jesus cleansed the Temple and taught
Nicodemus the way of salvation*

After the wedding at Cana, Jesus went to Capernaum for a little while with Mary his mother, his brothers and his disciples. From there he went to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. It was here that he first began to show the people how far they had gone astray from the true worship of God. Here too, he met a Pharisee who was willing to listen carefully to his words.

John 2:12-16; 3:1-21

JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE: John 2:13-16

The temple at Jerusalem was the third temple to be built there. First, there had been Solomon's temple (1 Kings 5:5) and later, when the children of Israel returned from captivity, the second temple had been built when Zerubbabel was governor (see Ezra 5:2). Now, many years later, Herod's temple stood on the same spot overlooking the Kedron Valley. It was a magnificent building, which had taken forty six years to build, and the Jews were very proud of it. To this place Jews from all over the land came to worship God and to keep the feasts He had appointed. This time when Jesus came to keep the passover, what he saw made him very angry.

1. Instead of quiet, sober and thoughtful worshippers, he saw in the temple *“those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting”* (v14). There would have been a terrible din of shouting and arguing above the noise of the animals, some selling, others bargaining as they offered to change the foreign money of travellers into the local money used to buy the offerings. All of them were greedy money lovers. The hearts of these people were far from their God. It made Jesus very angry indeed.

2. Twisting some cords into a whip, he drove the traders

out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen. Then he poured out the changers' money and overthrew their tables. He ordered the men with doves to take them and leave. They fled before him, knowing that they had broken the temple laws. His angry voice followed them: *"Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise"* (v16). They were strong words, but true. When his disciples saw what was happening they remembered the words of Psa. 69:9: *"The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up"*. These words spoke of Christ's great love for his Father which made him full of indignation that God's people should treat His house in such a disgraceful way.

So he began to cleanse his Father's House. Three years later at the end of his work, Jesus once again went into the Temple and found the same sort of behaviour (Luke 19:45-46). Israel had not learned the lesson (see Lesson 19).

NICODEMUS COMES TO JESUS BY NIGHT: John 3:1-5

Jesus stayed in Jerusalem for some time, working miracles among the people who crowded into the city. Many of them believed when they saw the miracles which he did. Jesus found he was becoming very popular with the crowds, but he did not trust them, for he knew how easily people can change.

The rulers of Israel did not mix with the ordinary people. They stood apart and watched from a distance. There was one man among them, however, a Pharisee called Nicodemus, who watched what Jesus did and thought quite carefully about what he said. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night to learn more of this man who spoke with such authority and did things which no ordinary man could do. Nicodemus no doubt thought it would not be wise for him, a ruler of the Jews, to be seen visiting Jesus after the uproar he had caused in the Temple. So he went by night. *"Rabbi,"* (that is, *"master"*) he said, *"We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him"* (v2). Nicodemus was honest. It was clear to him that God was with Jesus.

BORN OF WATER

Jesus, however, went on to talk about something that Nicodemus just did not understand. *“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”*, Jesus said (v3). Now Nicodemus knew that a man can only be born once. What then did Jesus mean? He went on to explain that there is another way in which we can be born. *“Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”*.

All people are born the first time as babies, but it is the second birth that is so important in God’s eyes. When a person comes to understand the Word of God and decides to repent (that is, change their ways) and obey God, they are baptised. By this they are showing God their desire to put behind them their old way of life of just pleasing themselves, and in its place, want to begin a new life pleasing God. It is a new life that begins at baptism. So baptism is called being “born of water”. Only the Word of God can change someone and make them ready for baptism. Anyone can go under the water and come up again, but he is not *baptised* unless God’s word has made him change his ways. The change first begins in our minds. So we must fill our minds with the Word of God.

BORN OF SPIRIT

Jesus told Nicodemus that unless *“a man be born of water and of the Spirit”* he cannot enter the kingdom of God (v5). He was talking of another new beginning. This time he was talking of that glorious change which will come over our bodies when we are given immortality. This will happen when Christ returns, after the resurrection. This is the great hope we have if we love the Word of God.

These new kinds of birth will only happen if the Word of God has changed us. How wonderful God’s Word, the Bible, really is, if it can make a new person of us, fit for the Kingdom of God.

NICODEMUS EVENTUALLY BELIEVES

Nicodemus had not thought this way before. He found it hard to understand. *"How can these things be?"* he asked Jesus (v9). Jesus' answer must have embarrassed him a little: *"Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"* (v10). Most of the Pharisees were very proud men and hated the way Jesus criticised them. Pride can blind us and make us dishonest, but Nicodemus eventually believed wholeheartedly that Jesus was the promised Messiah. He spoke up for Jesus when the rulers of the Jews scoffed at those who believed in him (see John 7:50-52). It was Nicodemus, too, who later helped Joseph of Arimathea take the body of Christ down from the cross and place it in the sepulchre (John 19:39-42). 10.

LESSON FOR US

Jesus went about Israel doing a lot of good, but people were sometimes upset by things he said, because he showed up their faults. Such things as greed, pride and love for money made him very angry. He drove the greedy traders out of his Father's house because he hated their disgraceful behaviour. They loved money more than God. 11.

It is easy today to be greedy and covetous, always wanting things. Today shops are full of interesting and new things to buy. Children at school have always got new things to show or talk about, things that money can buy. Yet we have something far more wonderful, that lasts forever, and money cannot buy it (see Isa. 55:1-2). The wise writer of the Proverbs has much to say on these matters. *"How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!"* (Prov. 16:16). Sadly, we learn in a later lesson, that it was love of money that made Judas betray the Lord Jesus (Mark 14:10-11. See Lesson 22).

John the Baptist had criticised the Pharisees and Sadducees for their pride. They thought they had no need of repentance (Matt. 3:7-9), but God hates *"the proud in heart"* (Prov. 16:5). Because of their pride, the Pharisees and Sadducees refused to believe that Jesus was the Christ. How wise Nicodemus was to listen to Jesus and believe in him.

"Blessed is that man that maketh Yahweh his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies" (Psa. 40:4. This is a Psalm that speaks of the suffering of Christ at the hand of wicked Jews). We must follow that example if we, too, want to enter the kingdom of God.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 – 12 years only): John 3:14-15

There is something else that Jesus said to Nicodemus that pointed forward to his crucifixion. *"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up"* (v14). Do you remember the story of the plague of serpents that bit the Israelites in the wilderness and they died? God told Moses to make a serpent of brass and put it high on a pole. Anyone who looked at it in faith, that is, believing that God would heal them, was healed (see Num. 21:6-9). Jesus was going to be set on high, nailed to a stake by wicked men, but anyone who saw that and still believed in him, would be saved. *"Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life"* (v15). What a wonderful hope that gave, not only to Nicodemus, but to the whole world.

QUESTIONS (9 – 12 years)

Short Answers

1. Why did people come to the temple in Jerusalem?
2. Why was Jesus angry when he came to the temple?
3. What did Jesus say as he drove the traders out?
4. Who came to see Jesus by night?
- ✓5. What did Nicodemus think of Jesus?
- ✓6. What does it mean to be *"born of water"*?
7. What must a person do before he is baptised?
- ✓8. When will we be *"born of the Spirit"*?
9. What is it that changes us so that we can be *"born of water and of the spirit"*?
10. Did Nicodemus believe in Jesus?
11. What two things did Jesus hate, which made him angry?

Detailed Answers

- ✓12. Write a description of:
- (a) What Jesus saw in the temple that made him angry.
 - (b) What he did about it.
13. From this lesson we learn of two things which God hates – the love of money and pride.
- (a) What do we learn about the love of money?
 - (b) How is Nicodemus an example for us concerning our pride?

Additional Answers (11 – 12 years only)

14. What was Jesus trying to teach Nicodemus when he said, *“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God”*?
15. Why did Jesus remind Nicodemus of the story of the serpent on the pole?

John 3:3.

6. THE NOBLEMAN'S SON

“And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way”

Aim

To show how a nobleman believed Jesus and his son was healed

After spending two days talking to the Samaritans, Jesus went north to Galilee with his little band of disciples. He came again to Cana, where he had performed his first miracle of changing water into wine. On that occasion many believed when they *saw* the miracle. This time Jesus expected men to believe the *words* that they heard him speak. We will see what wonderful power he really had.

John 4:46-54

A CRY FOR HELP: John 4:43-47

- While Jesus was at Cana, a certain nobleman came
1. hurrying from Capernaum, some twenty five kilometres away. We are not told his name, but the word “*nobleman*” shows that he was a royal officer, probably working for Herod Antipas, the ruler over this part of the land. This nobleman had come to find Jesus, because he was desperately worried.
 2. His son was very sick. As soon as he had heard that Jesus had returned from Jerusalem to Galilee, he anxiously went to look for him to plead for his help. His son was on the point of
 3. death and he begged Jesus to come down and heal him.

The fame of Jesus had spread quickly throughout the land. The things that he said and the things that he did in Jerusalem had soon filled the rulers of the Jews with anger and jealousy. Those who had come from Galilee for the feast had taken the news of all these events back to their home towns. So when he now returned to Galilee, “*the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast*” (v45). Here in Galilee, there was a different mood among the people. They welcomed him and were eager to see more of the miracles that he was becoming famous for.

THE SECOND MIRACLE IN CANA: John 4:48-50

So the nobleman came to Jesus, desperately begging for help. Jesus said to him, *"Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe"* (v48). Remember how Jesus had reminded his mother at the wedding of Cana that he must do his Father's work. His work was to preach the Kingdom of God, so that men would believe and repent. It was the heart and mind of men that Jesus wanted to change.

When the nobleman heard Jesus' words, he could think of nothing else but his dying son. Surely this man, about whom he had heard so much, would help him. *"Sir, come down ere my child die,"* he cried (v49).

Jesus said to him, *"Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way"* (v50). 4

No doubt that Nobleman stayed to hear more about the Kingdom of God. This was the important thing, that he might believe that Jesus was the Christ and change his ways and give honour to God. What a burden had been lifted from that poor man's shoulders when he heard Jesus say, *"Thy son liveth"*. He went on his way home with his heart full of thankfulness and joy.

THE NOBLEMAN AND HIS HOUSEHOLD BELIEVE ON JESUS: John 4:51-54

The next day, as the nobleman was travelling home, his servants met him on the way and told him the good news, *"Thy son liveth"* (v51). This was no surprise to the nobleman, for he had believed Jesus' same words. He asked his servants what time of the day his son had begun to get better. They said, *"Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him"* (v52). That was the very same hour that Jesus had spoken those wonderful words, *"Thy son liveth"*. When the nobleman explained the whole story to his family and his servants, they were astonished and all of them believed that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. 5. 6.

LESSON FOR US

The nobleman knew that there was no hope for his son unless Jesus was prepared to help him. That is why he pleaded with Jesus to come down to Capernaum. He had to learn the lesson that Yahweh is a God at hand and also afar off (see Jer. 23:23-24). When God speaks, His word is done. So God gave Jesus the power to do miracles and works of healing, and all that was necessary was for him to "*speak the word*".

We must never forget that *all* that God has spoken will be done. He has said that Christ will return and raise the dead (a very great miracle) and show His great power in the earth again. If we believe His word, as the nobleman did, we will be able to rejoice when he comes.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 - 12 years only)

Jesus said to the nobleman, "*Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken*" (v50).

What a great *faith* the nobleman showed. To "*have faith*" means to "*believe*", to be convinced in our mind that something is true. The wonderful stories we read in the Bible are full of men and women of faith. They are people who believed that what God said was true. We read in Romans 10:17 that "*faith cometh by hearing ... the word of God*". We can learn to have faith in the same way as the nobleman. He heard the words of Jesus and *he believed*. He did not argue; he did not doubt. He "*went his way*" (v50).

By reading the Bible and listening carefully to the words of God, spoken by the prophets and by Jesus and the apostles, we learn to have faith. When the nobleman heard Jesus' words, he believed *and obeyed*. It is not enough to read and believe. We too must also obey. Only by believing and obeying will we please God.

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

- ✓1. When Jesus was at Cana, a nobleman came to him. Where did the nobleman come from?
2. Why did the nobleman come to look for Jesus?
3. What did he want Jesus to do?
4. What did Jesus say to the nobleman that made him happy?
- ✓5. Why did the nobleman ask his servants what time his son had begun to get better?
- ✓6. When the nobleman explained what happened, what did his family and servants think?

Detailed Answers

7. When Jesus was at Cana, a nobleman came to him from Capernaum. Tell the story.
- ✓8. The nobleman had heard of Jesus' power to do miracles.
 - (a) What did the nobleman want Jesus to do?
 - (b) What lesson did Jesus want the nobleman to learn?
His work was to preach the Gospel. It was the heart, mind of men Jesus wanted to change.

Additional Answers (11 - 12 years only)

9.
 - (a) How did the nobleman show his faith?
 - (b) How can we learn to have faith?

John 4:50.

7. NAZARETH REJECTS JESUS

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor"

Aim

To show how the people of Nazareth rejected Jesus and tried to kill him.

From Cana Jesus decided to return to Nazareth, his home town. Everyone knew him there. They knew him as the son of Joseph, the carpenter. They had heard the stories of his miracles and what he had done in Jerusalem. He had grown up amongst them and they knew him better than anyone else. This, however, was the very thing that made it hard for the people of Nazareth to believe that Jesus could be the Messiah, the Son of God. No doubt they had loved him as a boy, for he was always obedient and courteous. Now, however, he had come back as a teacher and they would not listen.

Luke 4:16-31

JESUS TEACHES IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT NAZARETH:

Luke 4:16-22

On the sabbath day Jesus went into the synagogue *"as his custom was"* (v16). He had always loved to study the word of God, even as a boy. Now on this sabbath day he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him and he found the passage where it said, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord ..."* (vv18-19; see Isa. 61:1-2).

Halfway through the sentence in Isaiah, Jesus stopped reading, rolled up the scroll and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him, as they waited to hear what he would have to say. The words that he had read pointed forward to Messiah, the one *"anointed"* by God. They told of miracles and happy times and freedom from pain and sorrow. Everyone listened quietly, being amazed at the *"gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth"* (v22). As

he began to speak to them he said: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (v21). Here was Jesus of Nazareth telling them that he was Messiah, and they said among themselves, "Is not this Joseph's son?" (v22). 2.

How wrong they were. Jesus was indeed the Son of God. 3.
To these people of Nazareth, however, he was the carpenter's son, who had grown up in their town with them and their children. Their minds were shut and they would not believe in him. If only they had listened carefully to the words from Isaiah, they would see what sort of man Messiah was – for he was sent to the poor, the brokenhearted, the captives, the blind and the bruised. These people of Nazareth did not even realise that they needed him. So strong were their feelings against him, that he himself was amazed at their unbelief (Mark 6:6). 4.

NO PROPHET IS ACCEPTED IN HIS OWN COUNTRY: Luke 4:23-27

Jesus knew that they would expect him to do *"signs and wonders"* here as he had done in Capernaum. Yet they would not welcome him. They showed no faith whatever. So *"he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief"* (Matt. 13:58). 5

"No prophet is accepted in his own country", Jesus went on to tell the people of Nazareth, as they sat there looking hostile and angry (v24). He reminded them of two great prophets of old, who had offered help to *faithful Gentiles*, because the people of Israel took no notice of the words of God (vv26-27).

- (a) There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when God sent no rain for three and a half years, but Elijah was sent to none of them. Instead, God sent him to Zarephath, a city outside the borders of the land of Israel to a widow woman there, who believed in the God of Israel. The women of Israel had turned from worshipping Yahweh, the true God. So God sent Elijah to a Gentile woman and helped her in the time of famine (see 1 Kings 17:1, 8-16). 6
- (b) There were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, but none of them were cleansed of their

leprosy. It was the Syrian captain, Naaman, who was healed (see 2 Kings 5).

7. The lesson was clear. Elijah and Elisha were great prophets, but they found few in Israel who believed their words. Two Gentiles showed a lot more faith and God was able to help them.

THE JEWS TRY TO KILL JESUS: Luke 4:28-31

When Jesus had finished, *“all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath”* (v28). They had not understood when he quoted to them from Isaiah 61, but there was no mistake about what he was saying now.

8. They hated Gentiles and were too proud to learn the lesson. His words stung them. So they shut their ears *“and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill whereon the city was built, that they might cast him down headlong”* (v29). These were the people he had grown up with.

9. These same people now wanted to kill him because of his words.

God was with His beloved son and miraculously delivered him out of their wicked hands. His time had not yet come. So Jesus left Nazareth and made his way to Capernaum.

LESSON FOR US

What a sad thing it is when people are self-righteous. They are sure they are right and will not listen to God's Word. We all need God to help us, but we must be humble enough to listen.

10. It is easy to do the same as those Jews of Nazareth, to shut our ears when we are rebuked. Sometimes we shut our ears when our parents are pointing out what we have done wrong. They are trying to teach us right ways and we must not be too proud to listen. It is all preparing us to be obedient children of God. God will not work in our lives to guide us and help us if we refuse to listen to His Word as it is spoken by our parents and our teachers.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 – 12 years)

When Jesus quoted from Isa. 61:1-2, we saw that he stopped part-way through a sentence. Why did he do this? If you turn to Isaiah you will find that the next words are: *“and the day of vengeance of our God”*. That day of vengeance, when God would punish the wicked, was still to come. The apostle Paul speaks of that day when God will send His mighty angels to take *“vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Thess. 1:8; read vv 7-10). It will be a terrible day for the wicked, but what a glad day it will be for the righteous, who have loved and obeyed God. Isaiah speaks of that happy time in v3, and Paul writes of it in Rom. 2:7 and 10: *“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, (God will give in that day) eternal life ... glory, honour and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile”*.

So when Jesus spoke in the synagogue at Nazareth, that *“day of vengeance”* was a long way off. Meanwhile God had *“anointed”* him to do a work – to preach to those who would listen. Such people received help and blessings from him while he was among them and those same people will receive life eternal in his Kingdom.

QUESTIONS (9 – 12 years)

Short Answers

- ✓1. When Jesus was in the synagogue at Nazareth, what part of the Bible did he read from? *Isa 61:1-2*
- ✓2. When he sat down, what did he say to the people?
3. Who did they think he was?
4. Who was he really?
- ✓5. Why did he not do many miracles in Nazareth?
6. Which two great prophets did Jesus remind them of?
7. Why had God sent these prophets to help Gentiles?
8. Why were the people of Nazareth angry when Jesus told them these stories?

9. What did the people of Nazareth try to do to Jesus?
10. Why do we shut our ears sometimes when we are rebuked?

Detailed Answers

11. Tell what happened in the synagogue in Nazareth when Jesus got up to read.
- ✓ 12. Jesus told the people in the synagogue at Nazareth that "*no prophet is accepted in his own country*".
 - (a) What two stories did he tell to show what he meant?
 - (b) Why did this make them angry?
 - (c) When he finished speaking what did the Jews do?

Additional Answers (11 – 12 years only)

13. (a) What were the next words in Isa. 61:2 which Jesus did not quote?
- (b) When will these words be fulfilled?

Luke 4:24.

8. JESUS IN CAPERNAUM

*“And the fame of him went out into every place
of the country round about”*

Aim

*To show how Jesus healed many people at Capernaum
and his fame was spread afar off*

After his unpleasant visit to Nazareth, Jesus made his way to Capernaum on the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee. He stayed there for some time, performing many wonderful miracles. Capernaum was a busy fishing town, on the great trade route from Damascus in the north to Egypt in the south. Here, too, Jesus called Matthew from his tax-collecting to follow him. What a great honour it was for this city to have the Son of God in its midst.

Luke 4:31-44; Mark 1:21-39

JESUS TEACHES WITH POWER: Mark 1:21-28

On the sabbath day (the seventh day of the week, our Saturday) the people used to gather in the synagogues to hear the reading of the scrolls of the Law of Moses and the Prophets. The synagogues were simple buildings, quite different from the Temple in Jerusalem, but they were all built to face toward the Holy City.

The people were excited about this new teacher in their midst. Perhaps the nobleman whose son had been healed was there. The stories of Jesus' miracles had gone before him. There was a different atmosphere here from that on the sabbath before in Nazareth, where the people had *“despised and rejected”* him (see Isa. 53:3). So Jesus stood up to teach. As the people listened to his words they were astonished. How different he sounded from the scribes, for this man spoke with authority (v22). He taught them as one who really knew what the words meant. And so he did, for he had spent his whole life in study of that word and in prayer to his Father. So when he spoke, *“His word was with power”* (Luke 4:32). Here was a teacher who could really help them to understand God's ways.

The people gave Jesus their full attention, until suddenly

3. the meeting was interrupted by a loud voice shrieking out: "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God" (v24). Jesus knew that this was not just some rude person trying to spoil their meeting. This poor man could not help himself. He had no control over what he was saying. Jesus took pity on the poor man and answered his words by saying: "Hold thy peace, and come out of him" (v25).

4. What did Jesus mean by these words? In those days, they thought that insane people were controlled by "demons" or "evil spirits". So Jesus spoke as though he was talking to an "evil spirit" in the man. After Jesus had spoken, the man collapsed on the floor, thrashing about as though in a fit, crying out as he did so. Then, suddenly, he was quiet and stood up unharmed and in his right mind (Luke 4:35). The people in the synagogue were amazed. Everyone knew that Jesus' words had truly healed the man of his mental sickness. What sort of man was this who not only spoke with such authority, but had power over "unclean spirits" as well!

This was a day to be remembered. "What a word is this!" they said. The fame of Jesus spread far and wide.

JESUS CURES PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW: Mark 1:29-31

5. When they left the synagogue at Capernaum, Jesus and his disciples went to Peter's house. Things were not very happy there however, for Peter's wife's mother was very sick with a terrible fever. When they told Jesus and asked his help,
6. he immediately went in to see her. Standing over her he rebuked the fever and taking her by the hand he lifted her up. Straightaway the fever left her and she got up from her bed and went about looking after her family and guests, quite well again. Jesus had performed a wonderful miracle, this time on behalf of those who had left all to follow him. What blessings God gives us while we serve Him, as Peter especially would have learned at this time.

HEALING THE SICK AT SUNSET: Luke 4:40

What a busy and exciting day it had been on this sabbath day in Capernaum. Tired though Jesus was, the people gave him no rest. At evening, as the sun began to set at the end of the sabbath, everyone in the district brought their sick relatives and friends to him to be healed. "He laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them" (Luke 4:40). What kindness and compassion he showed! There had never been a prophet or a healer like this man. When Matthew tells this story (see Matt. 8:16-17), he remembers the words of Isa. 53:4: *"Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses"*. To those like Matthew, who had studied the Old Testament prophets, many things in Jesus' life showed quite plainly that he was the Messiah whom the prophets had foretold. 7

LEAVING CAPERNAUM: Mark 1:35-39; Luke 4:42-44

Jesus did not sleep long that night, but rose up *"a great while before day"* to go out and find a quiet place, right away from everyone where he could pray to his Father undisturbed. 8. Peter and the other disciples Andrew, James and John, went out looking for him. He had done so many wonderful things the day before in Capernaum, that everyone had come early to Peter's house to see him. *"All men seek for thee"*, they said (Mark 1:37), but Jesus had other plans. *"I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also"*, he said, *"for therefore am I sent"* (Luke 4:43). 9. So he continued to do the work of God throughout the land of Israel, teaching everywhere that Messiah had come to bring them salvation.

LESSON FOR US

Jesus did indeed have the power of God, but he was a man, like us, who grew tired and needed a rest. Yet look how hard he worked in God's service. Jesus knew what God required: *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind"* (Luke 10:27). He was prepared to do that, every day. That is what God expects from us too. In one way he was so very different from us; he was completely unselfish. He thought of others and not himself. When he saw so many sick

people, his heart went out to them and he healed them. We have not that power to help others as he did, but God has given all of us the ability to be kind and thoughtful and caring towards others. There are many ways in which we can show this.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 - 12 years only)

We will find in later lessons that Jesus often healed people on the sabbath day. The leaders of the Jews, whose job it was to teach the people from the Scriptures, used to get very annoyed about this. The Law of Moses clearly said that no work should be done on the sabbath day. *“Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of Yahweh thy God”* (Exod. 20:8-11). So they thought that Jesus was breaking the Law. This was, of course, not true. When God wrote that commandment, He meant that people should stop doing their *own* work (v9) on the sabbath day and remember the things God had done for them. Jesus showed them how foolish they were. If a man had a sheep and it fell into a pit on the sabbath day, would he leave it there? Wouldn't he go and lift it out? *“How much then is a man better than a sheep?”* said Jesus, *“wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days”* (Matt. 12:10-13).

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

1. Why did the people gather in the synagogues on the sabbath days?
2. What did the people think of Jesus' words and teachings compared to those of the scribes?
3. What suddenly happened while Jesus was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum?
4. What did Jesus say to the man who called out in the synagogue?
5. Where did Jesus and his disciples go when they left the synagogue?

6. ✓ How did Jesus help Peter's wife's mother?
7. What happened at sunset on that sabbath day in Capernaum?
8. ✓ What did Jesus do when he got up very early the next morning?
9. Why did Jesus not stay any longer in Capernaum?

Detailed Answers

10. ✓(a) What did the people at Capernaum think of Jesus when he taught them in the synagogue?
(b) Tell what happened in the synagogue.
11. ✗(a) Jesus showed kindness and compassion to many people at Capernaum. Which people did he help?
✓(b) What does the Bible say God expects from us?

Additional Answers (11 - 12 years only)

12. (a) What did the Law of Moses say about this sabbath day?
(b) Was Jesus breaking the Law when he healed on the sabbath day?
(c) Why did God want men to rest on the sabbath day?

Mark 1:35

Luke 4:43 revision.

9. JESUS TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"

Aim

To show how Jesus taught the disciples to show by their actions that they love God.

"Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matt. 4:23). News of these things spread quickly throughout the land and many crowds followed him, keen to hear his gracious words and to see the wonderful miracles he performed. This time when Jesus saw the multitudes who flocked to him, he went up into a mountain followed by his disciples. Here, as they gathered around him on the mount, he taught them many things and showed them the great blessings that will come to all those who follow him.

Matthew 5, 6 and 7

YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD: Matthew 5:14

1. Jesus first told them how blessed all true disciples are because of the happiness that comes from knowing the Truth. What a glorious hope we have of being in God's kingdom (vv2-12). No matter what troubles may come upon us, God in heaven has set aside a great reward for us if we remain faithful to Him. *"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad"*, said Jesus, *"for great is your reward in heaven"* (v12).

11 The Truth is like a lamp that gives light in a dark place. It shows us a safe way for our feet to walk in. In Psalm 119:105 we read: *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"*. All followers of Christ who know the Truth, must themselves shine as a light in this dark and evil world. This is what Jesus told his disciples: *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (v16). Other people must see that we know and love God. By our words and actions we must show the light of the Truth to the rest of the world, for, said Jesus to the disciples, "Ye are the light of the world"(v14).

“BUT I SAY UNTO YOU...”

Jesus spent a lot of time showing his disciples how they must act if they wanted to please God. He took their minds back to the commandments God had given Israel many years before at Mt. Sinai. Those commandments became known as the Law of Moses, for it was Moses who taught the people. To many Israelites the Law of Moses seemed to be a long list of things to do and things not to do. God did indeed insist that they obey His laws, but there were lessons in each of these laws that He wanted them to learn.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the great teacher who could show them exactly what God expected of them. When he spoke to them about the Law, he said: *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil”* (v17). He was not teaching them anything different from what God had always taught through Moses and the prophets. Indeed, he himself kept the law perfectly every day of his life. Unlike any other man, he never sinned against God or broke any of His commandments. What better teacher could they have. 2

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES: Matthew 5:19-20

The rulers in Israel, the Scribes and the Pharisees, had led the people astray from God. They were so anxious to make sure that people noticed how righteous they were, that they forgot all about God. They acted so that men might see and praise them. Jesus said, “They have their reward” (6:2). They were all outward show, but their hearts were far from God. So Jesus used them as a warning to his disciples. Unless their righteousness was better than the Pharisees’ they would not enter into the kingdom of God (v20). 3

What a terrible warning! How were they to know the right way to behave? Jesus showed them the way. He reminded them of some of the commandments of God and taught them that what God wanted to see were *obedient hearts*. If our hearts are right with God, we will not break His laws but obey them willingly.

BE NOT ANGRY: Matthew 5:21-22

In the Law of Moses the sixth commandment said: *"Thou shalt not kill"* (Exod. 20:13). Murder is very evil in God's sight. Under the Law of Moses the murderer himself was put to death.

4 When Jesus was speaking about this to his disciples, he went on to say: *"But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment"* (v22). Now a man may not even commit a murder because he is afraid of the punishment, yet in his heart he may be thinking evil and angry thoughts against his brother. Those angry thoughts and feelings are just as bad in God's sight. Such a person, the Lord Jesus said, is not fit for the kingdom of God.

So Jesus was showing his disciples how they ought to understand God's commandments. It is not just the act of killing which is wrong, but all the thoughts that make a man feel like killing.

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES: Matthew 5:43-48

126. Once again, Jesus showed that it had been said in the Law, *"Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy"* (v43. See Lev. 19:18). It is easy to love those who love us and are kind to us, but we find it easy to hate those who are unkind to us. Jesus said that the true disciple must be different. *"But I say unto you"*, Jesus said, *"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"* (v44). This is much harder, yet if we love God we will try to be like Him for he is always ready to show kindness to all men. *"He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust"* (v45).

LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURE IN HEAVEN: Matthew 6:19-21

5
6. Everyone wants to be rich. It was the same in Jesus' day. He told his disciples to store up heavenly treasure instead. *"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not*

break through nor steal" (v20). Earthly treasure – our money, our possessions, and the things we spend a lot of time saving for – can be stolen or ruined in a moment. Heavenly treasure, on the other hand, is found in the storehouse of God's Word, the Bible. In that storehouse we find *wisdom*, which is more precious than rubies; *instruction* and *knowledge* of the Truth which are far more valuable than silver and gold (see Prov. 8:10-11). This treasure will last forever and will never be ruined by moths or rust. No-one will ever be able to take it from us. God has chosen for His kingdom those who are poor in this world, but rich in faith (Jas 2:5). Jesus said, "*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*" (v21).

NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS: Matthew 6:24

A disciple must follow his master. When Jesus said, "*Follow me*", his disciples left all and followed him (see Matt. 4:18-22; 9:9). Jesus reminded them of this as he taught them on the mountain. "*Ye cannot serve God and mammon*", said Jesus. ("*Mammon*" is a word meaning the riches of this world). A disciple cannot love God and the world. If he puts his trust in money or the things of this world, he is showing that he does not really trust God to care for him. If he trusts God, God will provide everything he needs and more besides.

GOD KNOWS WHAT WE NEED: Matthew 6:25-34

Jesus taught his disciples by simple examples how wonderfully God cares for all His creation. Just think how He cares for the birds. "*Are ye not much better than they?*" Jesus said (v26). How beautifully He clothes the flowers of the field and "*shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*" (v30). People spend too much time thinking about food and clothes. "*After all these things do the Gentiles seek*", said Jesus, but "*your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things*" (v32).

What a wonderful teacher Jesus was. His message was simple and easy to understand: "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*" (v33).

BE DOERS OF THE WORD AND NOT HEARERS ONLY: Matthew 7:24-27

Jesus ended with a parable which taught them what he wanted them to do now that they had heard his words.

Some who heard him would be wise. They would *hear* his words and *do* them – like a wise man who built his house upon a rock. *“The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock”* (v25).

Others who heard him would go away and do nothing about it – like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. *“The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it”* (v27).

The words of the Lord Jesus are like a strong foundation. We must listen carefully to them and build our lives on them. Then, when troubles arise, as they often do, we will not be swept away from the Truth. We will see that God is still with us, guiding us through those difficult times. After the rain and the flood and the storm, the sun shines again giving us new hope. So the Word of God, which helps us in our troubles, will guide us safely all our lives till we gain the kingdom.

LESSON FOR US

10 The parable of the wise man who built his house upon the rock teaches us the most important lesson – we must *hear* God's word and do it. His word can change us, for none of us are fit to enter into the kingdom of God as we are. We must all change our ways. That was John the Baptist's message and the message of Jesus himself. We must not look at others to find out their faults, but keep looking at the character of Jesus and try to be like him.

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

1. ✓ What makes the disciples of God happy?
- Rev - 2. Did Jesus keep the Law of Moses?
- Rev - 3. What reward did the Scribes and Pharisees have?

4. ✓ What is, in God's sight, just as bad as murder?
5. How does God show His love to evil and unjust men?
- Rev 6. What sort of treasure did Jesus tell us to store up?
7. What is "*mammon*"?
8. ✓ Why should we not worry too much about food and clothes?
9. ✓ What did Jesus tell us to "*seek first*"?
10. What sort of people are like the wise man who built his house upon a rock?

Detailed Answers

11. What did Jesus mean when he said to his disciples, "*Ye are the light of the world*"?
12. Jesus taught his disciples that they must have obedient hearts.
 - (a) How did the Pharisees behave?
 - (b) How should we behave toward our enemies?
13. ✓ Jesus said, "*Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven*".
 - (a) What sort of treasure is this?
 - (b) What sort of people does God choose for His kingdom?
14. Tell the parable of the two builders. What important lesson do we learn from this story?

Matt 5:14

10. JESUS TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES HOW TO PRAY

“Pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly”

Aim

To show how Jesus taught his disciples to pray.

While he was in the mountain with his disciples, Jesus taught them many lessons for daily life. They must be different from other men, showing that they loved God and obeyed Him. Jesus himself had set the example. All his life he had studied the Word of God and every day he prayed to his heavenly Father. This gave him the strength to face all the difficulties that arose as he went about preaching to the people. As we follow his life we shall see how often he prayed to God for help and how much he needed to talk with God in prayer. He also taught his disciples at this time how to pray. By following his example they would draw close to their heavenly Father.

Matthew 6:1-15

BE NOT AS THE HYPOCRITES

Jesus had already shown his disciples that they must not copy the example of the Scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 5:20). Everything they did was for show. They hoped people would see how righteous they were and praise them. *“They have their reward”*, said Jesus (6:2, 5). When they gave a gift to the poor, they made sure everyone was watching. When they prayed they did it on the street corner where everyone could see them! Their gifts may have helped the poor, but God was not pleased. People may have heard their prayers, but God did not listen. They would have no reward from Him.

1. Jesus called them “hypocrites”. They pretended to be generous to the poor, but really they wanted the praise of men. They pretended to pray to God, but in their hearts they were thinking of the people who were watching and listening. Jesus did not want his disciples to be like that. It was much better that when they helped the poor only God should know about it. When they prayed, they should go away quietly by themselves where they could not be seen and pray to God in secret. God would hear and reward them openly. What a
- 2.

wonderful reward that will be, when Christ returns and the true disciples are given eternal life in God's kingdom.

AFTER THIS MANNER THEREFORE PRAY YE: Matthew 6:9

When the Scribes and Pharisees prayed, they went on and on. *"They think that they shall be heard for their much speaking"*, Jesus said (v7). Jesus himself sometimes prayed *"all night"* (Luke 6:12), but what a difference there was. They repeated the same words and phrases over and over again, because they did not know what else to say and their heart was not in it. Jesus, on the other hand, knew his Father well. So he knew how to speak to Him. He was indeed a loving heavenly Father, worthy of all honour and praise, and willing to listen to the prayers of those who loved Him, especially His son.

Jesus knew that his disciples needed special advice on how to pray. God really knows our hearts and knows just what we need before we ask Him, but when we pray we show that we love Him and need His help. So he set before them the way to approach God in prayer, saying, *"After this manner therefore pray ye"*.

"OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN": Matthew 6:9

Jesus told his disciples to think of God as their *"Father"*. We know that our fathers care for us and provide for us every day. They are good and kind, but expect us to be obedient and loving children. God is like that – a loving heavenly Father who cares for all His children.

He guides us, if we listen to His words written in the Bible (Prov. 3:5-6). He protects us, if we trust Him (Psa. 18:1-2; 34:7); He chastens (corrects) us, when we are disobedient (Prov. 3:11-12); He hears us whenever we cry unto Him (Psa. 116:1-2; Matt. 7:7-12).

Many times in the mountain with his disciples, Jesus taught them to think of God as their heavenly Father. *"Glorify your Father which is in heaven"*, he said (5:16); *"Love your enemies ... that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven"* (5:44-45, 48); *"our Father knoweth what things ye*

have need of" (6:8); "how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (7:11)

Paul teaches us that "there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him" (1 Cor. 8:6). So every disciple must come before Him with the respect and honour due to such a Father, who is the Creator of all things.

"HALLOWED BE THY NAME": Matthew 6:9

4 *"Hallowed"* is not a common word today, but it means "holy". God's name, Yahweh, must be very holy to us. It must never be used lightly. People today blaspheme God in their daily conversation and think nothing of it. God knows, however, and He will soon send the Lord Jesus Christ to punish this wicked world. Then everyone will learn to honour God's name and obey Him (Psa. 72:17-19).

"THY KINGDOM COME": Matthew 6:10

That has been the prayer of all the children of God for thousands of years. That is our hope. God promised David that his son (the Lord Jesus Christ) would sit upon his throne in Jerusalem and David would be there to see it (2 Sam. 7:12-16). The first thing Christ will do when he returns is to raise the dead and choose all the righteous and faithful of God's children to reign with him in his kingdom. "*The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed*", Daniel said (Dan. 2:44). Jesus promised his disciples that they would sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28). We too, will be in his kingdom, if we love and obey him now (Matt. 25:34).

"THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN": Matthew 6:10

5 God's angels, who live in heaven, are His messengers. They carry out perfectly all God's commandments (Psa. 103:20). Very few people on earth know God's commandments and none of us obey them all the time. The day is coming, however, when God will give eternal life to His saints and they shall be "*equal unto the angels*" (Luke 20:35-36). Then they will reign with Christ as kings and priests on the earth (Rev.

6

5:10) and begin to teach His laws to all the world. It will take a thousand years to change the whole world into a glorious place again, where all men and women will do God's will and give glory to Him. 6

“GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD”: Matthew 6:11

Food is necessary from day to day. On the third day of creation God made the *“herb yielding seed and the fruit tree yielding fruit”* (Gen. 1:11, 29), as food to sustain our bodies. In the wilderness, where no fruit trees grew, God gave Israel manna every day (Exod. 16:14-15) until they entered the Land of Promise (Josh. 5:12). Israel grew tired of manna and complained. They were unthankful, quickly forgetting that without it they would die. God provides everything necessary for us each day – our food, our clothing, our shelter. So let us always remember to thank Him for all His kindness and appreciate what He does for us (Read vv 25-34). *We are dependant on Him for all things* 7

“FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS”: Matthew 6:12

The meaning of this verse is found in verses 14-15: *“If ye forgive men their trespasses (that is, the things people do or say to harm you), your heavenly Father will also forgive you”*. Sometimes people do things that annoy us or make us angry and we perhaps feel that we want to pay them back. God is not pleased with that sort of attitude. He wants us to return good for evil (5:44) and to forgive our enemies. If we can learn this now, then as we grow older we will realise that we also are sinners against God and need His forgiveness. Forgiveness of our sins is the wonderful blessing God gives us when we are baptised. If we do not learn to forgive others, then we can never expect God to forgive our sins. 8 9

“LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL”: Matthew 6:13

Jesus taught his disciples to ask God to guide them during the day, so that they would not be caught up in the evil ways of the world. If we are trying to obey God and we ask His guidance, then we must be careful that we do not seek the

company of wicked, godless friends, or go to places where the followers of Jesus would not go. We cannot expect God to “*deliver us from evil*” if we are foolish like that. When Paul wrote a letter to the young disciple Timothy, he advised him to “*flee*” from evil things and to keep company with those who love God (2 Tim. 2:22). In this way we will be on our guard against wickedness and keep away from it.

“FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER. AMEN”: Matthew 6:13

Jesus finished his prayer with praise to God. He is a living God, who rules now over the kingdom of men, though they do not know it. Soon, He will show His great power when Christ returns. Then all men will bow down before Him and praise His Name (Isa. 45:22-23). If we humble ourselves now before Him, He will give us a place of honour in His Kingdom.

LESSON FOR US

We have seen that there are many lessons for us in this wonderful prayer that the Lord Jesus taught his disciples. Try to memorize this prayer, not so that you can repeat it as a prayer to God, but rather so that you can think about each part of it and learn the lessons it teaches. Remember that God is a loving Father who cares for you and give Him that honour which is due to His holy Name. Soon this prayer will be answered fully when Christ returns to set up God's Kingdom. We will see His will done on earth as it is now done in heaven, when “*the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea*” (Hab. 2:14).

QUESTIONS (9 – 12 years)

Short Answers

1. Why did Jesus tell his disciples not to copy the Scribes and Pharisees?
2. ✓ Who should know when we pray to God?
3. ✓ When we pray to God, what should we call Him?
4. *"Hallowed be Thy Name"*. What does this mean?
5. Who does God's will in heaven?
6. ✓ When will God's will be done on earth?
7. ✓ God knows what we need before we ask. Why should we ask then?
8. ✓ How should we feel towards people when they harm us?
9. ✓ When does God give us the wonderful blessing of forgiveness of all our sins?
10. ✓ When will this prayer, which Jesus taught his disciples, be fulfilled?

Detailed Answers

11. (a) How did the Scribes and Pharisees act when they prayed and when they helped the poor?
 - (b) What reward did they have?
 - (c) How should we act in these things?
 - (d) What reward do we hope to have?
12. Jesus taught his disciples to pray: *"Our Father which art in heaven"*.
 - (a) How is God like a Father to us?
 - (b) If He is our Father how should we act towards Him?
- Rev. 13. Jesus taught his disciples to pray, *"Thy kingdom come"*.
 - (a) What reward did God offer them in the kingdom?
 - (b) What reward does God offer us?
 - (c) How will God's will be done on earth in the Kingdom?

Hab. 2: 14.

11. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

“Behold, a sower went forth to sow.”

Aim

To show how Jesus taught the parable of the sower and what it means for us.

Jesus was down by the shores of the lake of Galilee and crowds of people had gathered around to hear him. He settled himself in a boat just offshore and began to tell them parables. These were not just stories to entertain the people, but stories with a hidden meaning. He wanted people to remember what he said and so he kept the stories very simple. It was more important, though, for them to think carefully about what they heard and to find out what lessons he was trying to teach them. Perhaps, as he sat in the boat, he saw in the distance a farmer scattering his seed, for he told several parables on that day about seed and harvest and bread. The parable of the sower is easy to remember, but we must never forget the hidden lesson.

Matthew 13:1-23. See also Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15

A SOWER WENT FORTH TO SOW

Farming in Bible days was very different from farming today. In the land of Israel most farmers grew wheat and barley, from which their bread was made. The farmer had to plough the field with the help of his ox. The weeds had to be pulled up and the rocks removed. There would be times when he could not remove the heavy rocks and others when he missed the patches of stones hidden beneath the top soil.

When the ploughing was finished he waited for the precious rain from heaven to soften the soil. Then he was ready to go out and sow his seed. He carried the seed in a bag or basket over his arm and walked across his fields, scattering handfuls of seed to the right and left as he went.

Some of the seed fell on the wayside, on the edge of the path, where the plough had not broken up the soil. The birds that flew above him as he sowed, swooped down and snatched it up.

Some fell on the stony places. The seed sprang up quickly there, but when the hot sun beat down upon it, it

withered and died away just as quickly, because it had not enough soil to nourish it.

Some of the seed fell amongst thorns, which grew more strongly and quickly than the precious seed of the sower, and choked it.

Some seed, however, fell on good ground. It grew and grew, into strong healthy plants, producing fruit for the sower after all his hard work. The fruitful ears of corn or wheat were just what the farmer was waiting for. This was why he had planted his seed. 5

THE PARABLE EXPLAINED

When Jesus finished telling this parable he said to those who were listening, "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*" (Mark 4:9).

What was the lesson they had to find in this simple every-day story?

The sower is the Lord Jesus Christ. He sowed the good seed, that is, the Word of God, amongst the people (Luke 8:11). The "*seed*" grew well in the hearts of some, but in others it soon withered and died. The four kinds of soil where the seed fell are four different kinds of people who heard the Word of God. 6

(a) THE WAYSIDE

Some men's hearts are hard. When they hear the Word of God, they do not understand it and they will not even try. Their minds are so full of selfish and sinful thoughts that they have no room for the Word of God. The "*seed*" cannot grow there.

(b) THE STONY PLACE

Some people are like the stony ground, where the seed sprouted and grew quickly at first. They are shallow, like the little bit of soil above the stones. As soon as they hear the Word of God, they see straight away that it is the Truth, and "*receive it with gladness*" (Mark 4:16). Soon, however, trials come upon them, as they come upon us all. Because the Word of God has not taken deep root in

their hearts, they “*fall away*” from the Truth (Luke 8:13). They do not understand that “*we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God*” (Acts 14:22).

(c) AMONG THORNS

8 The seed grew up also among the thorns, but thorns grow very strongly, much faster than wheat or corn. In the same way troubles and worldly pleasures can crowd into our minds and leave us no time to think about God. How easy it is to put off our Bible study and Sunday school homework because we are too busy with other things! People like this are interested in the Truth, but their minds are so full of other things that the Word of God is “*choked*” out (Matt. 13:22). When we hear the Word of God, we must listen carefully and put it into practice in our lives. We must not be hearers only, but doers of the Word (Jas. 1:22). Think about the things that might have crowded the Word of God out of your life last week — try to do better from now on!

(d) THE GOOD GROUND

7 The thing we notice about the good soil which was different from every other soil was its fruitfulness. The people who are like the good soil are those who first *hear* the Word of God; secondly, they *understand* the Word; and finally they bring forth the fruit of good works in their lives. These are people who keep God’s commandments.

LESSON FOR US

9 There were only four different kinds of soil and each one of us is like one of these. The important thing to remember is that we can each decide which kind of soil we will be like. Let us try to be good soil by letting God’s Word sink deep down into our hearts. Let us have “ears to hear” and a willing mind to do whatever God wants us to do.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 – 12 years only)

- (a) When Jesus had finished telling the parable, his twelve disciples came and asked him, “*Why speakest thou unto them in parables?*” (Matt. 13:10).

The crowds who listened were not told the hidden meaning. If they were keen to learn, they would think about the story and find it out for themselves. Some of them, Jesus knew, were “*dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed*” (v15). He did not want people like that to follow him. Only those with good and honest hearts would be prepared to search out the Truth and change their ways. His disciples, however, had been specially chosen because they believed in him. To them he said, “*Blessed are your eyes for they see: and your ears for they hear*” (Matt. 13:16). As they followed Jesus, they were seeing and hearing things which the prophets of old would have loved to have seen and heard. So his disciples must listen carefully and learn as much as they could from their Master, for they must later teach these things to others.

- (b) In the parable of the sower, Jesus explained about the seed that fell by the wayside.

“*When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart*” (Matt. 13:19).

In Mark 4:15 we read, “*Satan cometh*”, and in Luke 8:12, “*the devil*”. If you look back at the Additional Notes, Lesson 2, you will find that these words refer to anyone who is an enemy, or who sins against God. So it is in this parable. It is used to explain the kind of mind possessed by those people represented in the story by “*the wayside*”. Their minds will not even listen to the Word of God.

None of us wants to be like that. We must try to understand God’s Word and little by little it will change us. Then we will be like good soil bringing forth good fruit.

QUESTIONS (9 – 12 years)

Short Answers

1. How did the farmer sow his seed?
- ② What happened to the seed that fell on the wayside?
- ③ Why did the seed that fell on stony ground wither and die?
- ④ What happened to the seed that fell among thorns?
- ⑤ How was the good soil different from the others?
- ⑥ Jesus was the sower. What is the “seed”?
- ⑦ If we are good soil, what fruit will we bring forth?
- ⑧ What sort of things can crowd out the Word of God in your life?
9. What must we do to be like the good soil?

Detailed Answers

10. (a) Tell the story that Jesus told about the sower.
(b) Who are the people like the good soil?
11. (a) What sort of hearts do people have who are like the wayside? Why are they like that?
(b) If we are like the thorny ground, what can we do about it? Can we change?

Additional Answers (11 – 12 years only)

12. (a) Why did Jesus speak in parables?
(b) Why did he explain things clearly to his disciples?
13. The people like “*the wayside*” have hard hearts? What does it mean when it says that “*the wicked one*” catcheth away the seed sown in their hearts?

Matt 13. 23

12. A DAY AND A NIGHT OF MIRACLES: FEEDING THE MULTITUDE

*"I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me
shall never hunger"*

Aim

*To show how Jesus fed five thousand and
walked upon the water.*

Jesus had now been preaching for two years. The cities of Israel had heard the gospel of the kingdom and seen the power of God as he moved among them. In the south of Judea, that wicked man, Herod, had put John the Baptist into prison. At a special feast in honour of his birthday Herod agreed to have John beheaded. When the disciples of John had buried their beloved teacher, they went and told Jesus. Saddened by the cruel death of this faithful prophet, Jesus and his disciples went away by boat into a desert place, to be by themselves.

John 6:1-21. See also Mark 6:30-52;
Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17

THE PEOPLE FOLLOW JESUS

Jesus took his disciples across the lake of Galilee to a deserted spot, opposite Capernaum. They were not to be left in peace, however, for lots of people had seen them go. The word passed around that he had gone and thousands ran from all the neighbouring cities until they came to the spot where Jesus and his disciples were seated on the hillside. News of his miracles had spread and the people came to be healed. Though full of grief at the death of John, when Jesus saw all these people in need of his help, his heart went out to them, "because they were as sheep not having a shepherd" (Mark 6:34). So he spent the day preaching the good news of the kingdom of God and healing all their sick. 1
2

THE MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES

As the day drew on the disciples became anxious, for this was a desert place and the people were getting hungry. So they suggested to Jesus that he should send them away to buy 3
food

food (Mark 6:36). Jesus turned to his disciples and said, "Give ye them to eat" (v37). They were astonished. Where would they even find enough money to go and buy food to feed a crowd of this size? Jesus asked Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (John 6:5).

Now Jesus already knew what he would do, but he wanted to test the faith of his disciples. All Philip could say was they would need more than two hundred pennyworth of bread to give all these people even a little bit to eat. It would take a working man months to earn that much money.

4 Jesus sent them to find out if anyone in the crowd had brought food with them. Andrew found a young lad with five barley loaves and two small fish. That was all. "But what are they among so many?" Andrew said (v9). "Bring them hither to me," Jesus replied (Matt. 14:18).

5 Then he told the disciples to make the people sit down on the grass in groups of hundreds and fifties. As the people waited to see what would happen, Jesus took the loaves, and looking up to heaven, gave thanks to God. Then he broke the bread and kept on breaking it and handing it to the disciples to pass around to the people. He divided the fishes in the same way, until there was enough to feed those five thousand people.

6 Philip knew how much it would have cost to give them a little bit to eat, but Jesus had fed them till they "were all filled" (Luke 9:17).

NOTHING IS LOST

7 When the meal was ended there was still food left over. Jesus told his disciples to "gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost" (John 6:12). So they took a basket each and filled them with all that was still left of the five barley loaves - twelve baskets full. They had more food now than when they started.

So God's power was seen in a remarkable way. All day long Jesus had fed them with spiritual food, the Word of God, and now he had also provided them with food to satisfy their hunger.

This is just what Jesus had taught his disciples on the

mountain (see Lesson 10 – God knows what we need). “*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things (our daily food etc.) shall be added unto you*” (Matt. 6:33).

THE PEOPLE WANT TO MAKE JESUS KING

The people were truly amazed at this miracle. It made them remember the words of God to Moses in Deut. 18:18-19, where God promised that one day He would send a prophet like Moses to the people. “*I will put my words in his mouth,*” God had said, “*...he shall speak in my name*”. So the people thought about all they had seen and heard that day and decided that Jesus must be “*that prophet*” whom God had promised. They began to get very excited, but as soon as Jesus realised that they wanted to make him their king, right there and then, he sent his disciples off in their boat. He was indeed “*that prophet*” and he had been anointed by God at his baptism, but it was not yet time for him to be their king. So he sent the crowds away to their homes, while he himself went alone into a mountain to pray to his Father. 8

JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA

While Jesus was on the mountain praying to his Father, the disciples were in their ship on the lake struggling to row against a very strong wind. A storm had blown up on the lake of Galilee and their boat was being tossed with the waves. No matter how hard they rowed they did not seem to get any closer to land. They toiled away for hours making very little progress.

In the very early hours of the morning, somewhere between 3 am and 6 am, called “*the fourth watch*”, Jesus saw them. Seeing their difficulties, he went to them, “walking on the sea”. When the disciples looked up and saw him walking towards them on top of the waves, they were terrified. Full of fear, they cried out, “*It is a spirit!*” (Matt. 14:26). Realising how frightened they were, Jesus immediately spoke to them saying, “*Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid*” (v27). How glad they would have been to hear their Master’s voice. 9

Peter was the first to speak. “*Lord, if it be thou, bid me*

come unto thee on the water" (v28). Jesus said, "Come".

10 So Peter stepped out of the boat into the raging sea and began to walk towards Jesus! Two men actually walked upon the water. Then Peter suddenly became aware of the strong wind around him. His mind had been fixed on Jesus as he got out of the boat, and he had forgotten the storm. Now his courage failed, as his faith wavered and fear rose up inside him. He began to sink. "*Lord, save me*", he cried (v30).

11 Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught hold of him. "*O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*" Jesus asked Peter. As the other disciples watched in amazement Jesus and Peter got back into the boat. Suddenly the wind stopped blowing altogether and they were immediately at Capernaum (John 6:21). Now that Jesus was with them, all their problems disappeared. For many long hours they had struggled against that strong wind, seeming to get nowhere. Then Jesus appeared and the wind suddenly stopped and their boat was safe in harbour.

No wonder they were amazed. "*Of a truth thou art the Son of God*", they exclaimed. Such things had happened that night, that there was no doubt left in their minds.

LESSON FOR US

12 How many lessons there are for us in the events of that day and night. Jesus preached and healed. He had provided food for five thousand men with their wives and children by a wonderful miracle. By a miracle also he walked on the water and caused the storm to cease. As the Son of God, using God's power, he was able to do all those things that day, helping everyone as they needed him. Those he helped believed on him. If we believe, God will provide for us too, both our natural daily food, and that spiritual food in His Word. If we eat *this* food we shall live forever.

Peter believed and was able to walk on the wa^t. When he looked away from Christ, his faith failed him and he began to sink. It teaches us to put our trust in God at all times, no matter how great our problems are.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 – 12 years only)

We are constantly being taught in these stories of Jesus' life, spiritual lessons to help us in our lives to prepare for the coming of the Lord Jesus from heaven.

When the multitude had been fed, the disciples were told to collect the bread that was left "*that nothing be lost*" (John 6:12). Each of the twelve disciples had a basket full of bread. That bread could be used to feed other people. When we remember that the bread represents the Word of God, we can see that Jesus was teaching his disciples that they must preach the Word to many others also. The Word of the gospel was first preached to Israel (represented by the number twelve – twelve tribes, twelve apostles, twelve baskets) and then to the Gentiles.

In John 6, we are told that the people whom Jesus had fed with bread and fish, came all the way back to find him. He tried to teach them the spiritual lessons from the miracle.

Jesus said, "*I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger*" (v35). "*If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever*" (v51) and "*the bread that I will give is my flesh*" (v51).

Because he was perfectly obedient to his Father in all his thoughts and words and actions, people could clearly see in Jesus the Word of God itself. Every commandment God wrote in His Word, Jesus obeyed. So when we study his life and think about what he said and did, we are feeding on him. The last wonderful thing he did to obey His Father's word was when he allowed men to put him to death on the cross. Jesus gave his flesh upon the cross. Those who believe in him, and are baptised, remember this when they eat a little bread together at the Memorial meeting every week.

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

1. Where did Jesus go when he heard of John the Baptist's death?
2. Why did Jesus feel sorry for the crowds who followed him?
3. Why did the disciples want to send the people away?
4. Did anyone in the crowd have any food? How much?
5. What did Jesus do before he broke the bread?
6. How many people did Jesus feed that day?
7. How much food was left over?
8. When the people saw the miracle what did they want to do to Jesus?
9. In the fourth watch Jesus saw the disciples rowing against the wind on the lake. What did he do?
10. Which disciple got out of the boat to go to Jesus?
11. Why did Peter begin to sink?
12. What food does God provide for us?

Detailed Answers

13. When Jesus heard the news of the death of John the Baptist he went off quietly with his disciples. Tell what happened that day.
14. The people wanted to make Jesus king.
 - (a) What did he do when he realised that?
 - (b) Where did he send his disciples?
 - (c) What happened that night?

Additional Answers (11 - 12 years only)

15. God provides natural bread and spiritual bread for us.
 - (a) What is the spiritual bread God provides?
 - (b) What did Jesus mean when he said, "*I am the bread of life*"?
 - (c) What does the bread eaten at the Memorial meeting remind us of?

John 6:35.

Hayley 6, 7, 10, 11, 12. -64

Matt 7:24. Rev 9-12
(2nd of yr rev)

13. THE KIND SAMARITAN

"Go and do thou likewise

Aim

"To show how Jesus answered the question: "Who is my neighbour?"

We have already seen that the Pharisees loved the praise of men. They were self-righteous, proud of their "good works". God was not interested in that kind of "righteousness" at all. He wanted people to humble themselves before Him. The Pharisees and Scribes (sometimes called lawyers), the leaders of Israel, were bad examples to follow. Jesus said, "Do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matt. 23:3).

Luke 10:25-37

THE LAWYER SPEAKS TO JESUS

One day when the Lord Jesus was teaching the people, a man stood up to ask a question. This man was a lawyer, one who had studied the Law of Moses very carefully and knew very well what it taught concerning the way people should live to please God.

Believing he could embarrass Jesus before all the people, the lawyer asked the question to test him. He was not looking for an answer, because he was sure he already knew the answer. "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" he asked, and Jesus answered, "What is written in the Law? How readest thou?" This was no problem to the lawyer, who instantly replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself". His answer was an excellent one, for he had correctly put together two very important verses from the books of the Law – Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. (On a later occasion, Jesus also joined these two scriptures together, and said, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:40).

So Jesus replied, "*Thou hast answered right: this do,*

and thou shalt live"(v28). The lawyer had known the right answer; he could quote the Law off by heart, but Jesus' words showed him that there was something he must *do* if he wanted eternal life. The Lawyer could see that he had not embarrassed Jesus at all. Quite the opposite, for he himself now felt uncomfortable. Hoping to save face in front of the people he asked Jesus, "and who is my neighbour?" (v29).

3. Jesus realised that here was something the lawyer really did not know. So that no-one would make any mistake about his answer, Jesus told a parable.

JESUS ANSWERS THE LAWYER WITH A PARABLE

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves," Jesus began. The road to Jericho was steep and rocky. It passed through mountainous country, full of caves, just the sort of place for robbers to hide in. People used to travel the thirty kilometres to Jericho in small groups so that they could protect themselves from trouble on the way. This man in the parable travelled alone and on the way was attacked by thieves, who "stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead" (v30) by the side of the road.

4. Before long another traveller came along the same road. It was a priest. When he saw the poor man lying there in need of help, he chose to mind his own business and continue on his way.

5. Later a Levite came by. When he saw the unconscious traveller lying on the road, he also passed by.

Both these men, the Priest and the Levite, were well aware that the Law said, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*". They considered, however, that the traveller lying battered on the side of the road had nothing to do with them. Perhaps, since he was "*half dead*", he was past help anyway. So they chose to ignore him and go their way.

5. A little later, a Samaritan came along the same lonely road. When he saw the unfortunate traveller, his heart immediately went out to him. His first thought was to offer help. He went over and examined his wounds. Then he carefully bound them up, "*pouring in oil and wine*", as they

used to do in those days, to soothe and to heal. Having done his best, he lifted him on to his own beast and continued slowly on the way till they came to an inn. There he made him as comfortable as he could. On the next day he gave the inn-keeper two pence (equal to half a shekel in Jewish money), and said, "*Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee*" (v35).

JESUS ASKS THE LAWYER A QUESTION

Having finished the story, Jesus asked the lawyer, "*Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?*" (v36).

There was only one answer. Reluctantly the lawyer answered, "*He that showed mercy on him*" (v37). It was a Samaritan who had shown "*mercy*" to the traveller. Now the Jews had despised the Samaritans for centuries and would never imagine them to be worthy of praise in any way. How pointed Jesus' story was! A Priest and a Levite had failed to do what God required, but a Samaritan had shown "*mercy*".

"*Go, and do thou likewise*", Jesus told that proud lawyer (v37).

LESSON FOR US

There was one thing about the Samaritan that made him so different from those who were proud of their knowledge of God's law. He showed mercy. Many times in the Bible we read of God being angry with Israel because they did not show mercy. God Himself is very merciful (Exod. 34:6-7) and He wants us to show that same quality in our lives.

There are many ways we can show mercy, as the kind Samaritan did. It means seeing what we can do to help others, comforting them, forgiving them, being kind and thoughtful. Above all, we can help people understand the gospel message of salvation. This is the way God has shown mercy to us (1 Pet. 1:3). What greater kindness or mercy can we show than to teach others that Christ is coming again.

The lawyer was right when he said that we must love God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength and with all our mind. The apostle John said: "*This*

is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5:3). The lawyer knew it was right, but Jesus said, "do" it. "Be ye doers of the Word", said James, "and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (Jas. 1:22).

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 – 12 years only)

THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE

As always, this parable of Jesus had a hidden meaning.

- (a) Jesus is *the Samaritan*. He was hated by the leaders of the Jews, who though they knew more about God's laws than he did. Jesus, better than all men, kept the law of God, for he did all those things which God required.
- (b) We are like *the traveller*, as good as dead because of our sins. God has said, "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die*" (Ezek. 18:4). If Jesus did not help us, we would die. He was called "*Jesus*" meaning "*God shall save*", "*for he shall save his people from their sins*" (Matt. 1:21).
- (c) He gave us "*oil and wine*", which represent the gospel message found in the Word of God. It is the Word of God which gives us hope of life eternal. If we listen to its healing message we will live.
- (d) The Samaritan gave the inn-keeper *two pence*, or half a shekel to help save the man by paying for his care. Under the law this amount was the price of redemption. It was money paid to God by every Israelite. Jesus is our Redeemer. The price he paid was his own life blood that we might be saved (redeemed) from our sins (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

QUESTIONS (9 – 12 years)

Short Answers

- Ques 1. What was the question the lawyer first asked Jesus?
- Res 2. What was the correct answer to the question?
- 3. Why did Jesus tell the story of the kind Samaritan?
- 4. What terrible thing happened to the man who travelled from Jerusalem to Jericho?
- 5. How many people came by and saw the man lying on the road? Who were they?

6. Which one of them stopped to help?
7. When Jesus asked which one acted as a neighbour, what did the lawyer say?
8. How was the Samaritan different from the Priest and the Levite?
9. How do we show God that we love Him?

Detailed Answers

- ✓ 10. A lawyer asked Jesus, "*Who is my neighbour?*" Tell the story Jesus told in answer to this question.
11. (a) What did Jesus tell the lawyer to do?
 (b) How has God shown mercy to us?
 (c) What lesson do we learn from this story?

Additional Answers (11 - 12 years only)

12. (a) ✓ How is Jesus like the Samaritan in the story?
 (b) ✓ How are we like the traveller?
 (c) What do the "*oil and wine*" represent?
 (d) What does the two pence stand for?

Luke 10: 27.

Hayley 4, E, G.

Rev. 1 & 2

{ Rev. 3 & 4
 Luke 10: 36-37



14. THE HEALING OF THE BLIND MAN

"I am the light of the world."

Aim

*To show how Jesus healed the blind man
and he believed on him.*

As Jesus and his disciples were walking in the streets of Jerusalem one sabbath day, they came upon a man who had been blind from birth. He was a well-known figure, sitting there begging every day, for there was no other way he could earn his living. When the disciples saw him there, they asked Jesus why it was that this man was born blind. Was it because he had sinned or his parents? Jesus knew however that the man's blindness was not due to his own sin or his parents'! Sickness, disease and death came into the world because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the beginning. Only in the Kingdom age, when men turn back to God and obey Him, will there be *"no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain"* (Rev. 21:4).

John 9

"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

The blind man had lived in a world of darkness from the day he was born. It was no fault of his. Now, as he listened intently to the group of men who stood by, he heard Jesus say, *"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world"*. If this blind man could only see the light, he would be free. He would not have to beg any more.

9b. Jesus saw an opportunity to show once again to his disciples, the wonderful power which God had given him to teach people important lessons. While he had the opportunity he must do his Father's work. *"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day"* (v4).

Soon he would be put to death by wicked men, as he himself knew. Then his work would be finished.

JESUS HEALS THE BLIND MAN

2 When he had answered his disciples' question (v2) Jesus did a strange thing. *"He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the*

clay, and said unto him, *Go, wash in the pool of Siloam*" (vv6-7). So the man went as Jesus told him and washed the clay away and he could see! 3

When his neighbours saw him, no longer blind but seeing, they were amazed. *"Is not this he that sat and begged?"* they said. They had not heard of such a miracle before and found it hard to believe. Some were sure this was the same man but others said, *"He is like him"*. The man himself said, *"I am he"*. He knew better than anyone else that his blindness had been cured by a great miracle.

So the people asked him, *"How were thine eyes opened?"* He answered, *"A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight"* (v11).

When they asked where this Jesus was, they did not know. They thought they had better take him to the Pharisees.

THE BLIND MAN AND THE PHARISEES

Now it was the sabbath day when Jesus healed the blind man. Remember that he had cured a man in the synagogue in Capernaum on a sabbath day. The Law of Moses said, *"Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but on the seventh day is the sabbath of Yahweh thy God"* (Exod. 20:8-11). Curing the blind man was certainly God's work, but the Pharisees would not believe that Jesus had been sent by God. So they accused him of breaking the sabbath law (see additional notes Lesson 9). 8

It always annoyed the Pharisees to see Jesus doing such wonderful things, because they envied him. If they could catch him performing miracles on the sabbath day, they could make it sound as if his good works were evil. So when the man who had been born blind was brought to them and told them what Jesus had done, they said, *"This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day"* (v16). It was they who were blind, those rulers of the Jews! They could not see God's power when the evidence was right before their eyes. Some of them admitted that a sinner could not do such miracles as this. So they were all confused. No-one knew 4

what to think, but the growing hatred of the leaders against Jesus was obvious. It would only get worse, until finally they had him crucified.

THE PHARISEES CALL HIS PARENTS

The Pharisees refused to believe that this man in front of them, who could see, had ever been born blind. So they called his parents.

"Is this your son, who ye say was born blind?" they said, *"how then doth he now see?"* They did not even believe that his parents were telling the truth (v19).

"We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind", they replied. *"But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not"* (vv20-21).

5. They were afraid of the Pharisees, because they knew that anyone who believed that Jesus was the Messiah (the Christ) was put out of the synagogue. If they admitted that Jesus had healed their son, the Pharisees would not let them go into the synagogue again. So they said they did not know. The Pharisees would have to ask him themselves. *"He is of age",* the parents said, *"ask him: he shall speak for himself"* (v21).

Once again they called the man. *"Give God the praise",* they said. *"We know that this man is a sinner"* (v24).

By now the man himself was becoming very impatient with the Pharisees. They wanted to hear the story all over again, to see if they could find a catch in it. But it was a simple story and they refused to believe him. *"One thing I know, that, whereas I was born blind, now I see",* he said (v25). *"If this man were not of God, he could do nothing"* (v33).

6. Such a simple faith made the Pharisees angry. They wanted to prove that Jesus was a sinner, but no matter what they said, people believed on him because of the wonderful miracles he performed. No-one could do such things without God's power. So they cast the man out of the synagogue.

While he had been blind, men had felt sorry for him. Now he could see, men wanted to have nothing to do with him. They would not even let him worship God.

JESUS FINDS THE MAN

When Jesus heard that the man had been cast out of the synagogue, he went looking for him. 7

"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" he said. "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" the man asked. "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee," Jesus told him. "Lord, I believe", the man said, for he recognised Jesus as the one who had healed him (vv 36-38). 8

Now he was happy again. Instead of being cut off from worshipping God because the Pharisees had sent him away from the synagogue, he had found the Son of God and believed on him. Not only could he actually see everything around him, but he could see the Truth. He could see that Jesus was "*the light of the world*".

LESSON FOR US

The Bible speaks in many places of the Truth of God's Word as "*the light*", and of sin and ignorance (not knowing the Truth) as "*darkness*" (eg Psa. 119:105; John 8:12; Eph. 5:8-11; 1 Thess. 5:4-5). Jesus came to bring light into the world. The Lord Jesus Christ is now in heaven at God's right hand. Though he is not amongst us, as he was then, we have God's Word to fill our hearts and minds with "*light*". There is no need for us to be blind like the Pharisees. If we try to understand the Word of God, we will see what wonderful things God has done in the past and will do in the future, when he sends Jesus Christ back to the earth.

JESUS REBUKES THE PHARISEES

Jesus pointed out the lesson of the miracle of the blind man who was healed to all who would listen. Some of the Pharisees realised that he was speaking of them and asked, "*Are we blind also?*"

The trouble with the Pharisees was that they thought they understood God's ways better than anyone else. They thought they could see. To "*see*" in this sense, means to "*know*" or "*understand*". We have already found in earlier lessons that they did not know much about God's ways at all

(Jesus told Nicodemus that, but later on Nicodemus did come to believe in Jesus. See John 3:10-12; 7:50-52; 9:39). Many times Jesus called them "blind guides" (Matt. 15:14; 23:24). Their pride blinded them from believing that Jesus was the Son of God.

What a lesson there is in that for us.

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

1. How long had the blind man been blind?
2. What did Jesus put on his eyes?
3. Where did Jesus send the blind man to wash?
- Rev. 4. Why were the Pharisees annoyed when the blind man came to them?
- ✓ 5. Why were the man's parents afraid of the Pharisees?
- ✓ 6. What did the Pharisees say about Jesus?
- ✓ 7. Who came looking for the man after he had been cast out of the synagogue?
- Rev. 8. Whom did Jesus want the blind man to believe in?

Detailed Answers

- ✓ 9. When Jesus saw a blind man in Jerusalem one day he healed him.
 - (a) Tell how he healed him.
 - (b) Why did he heal this blind man?
10. (a) What did the Law of Moses say about the sabbath day?
 - (b) Why did the Pharisees say that Jesus was breaking the sabbath law?
 - (c) Whose work did Jesus do on the sabbath day?

Additional Answers (11 - 12 years only)

11. Jesus said, "*I am the light of the world*"
 - (a) What did he do first of all for the blind man?
 - (b) What did the blind man learn about Jesus?
 - ✓ (c) What blinded the Pharisees from believing in Jesus?
 - ✓ (d) What fills us with light?

John 9:4-5

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Rev. 11c-d.

Rev. 4-8.

15. THE GOOD SHEPHERD

"The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep"

Aim

*To show that God cares for all those who love His ways;
and that Jesus is the good shepherd.*

In our last lesson we saw how Jesus showed the Pharisees up as "blind" leaders of the people. They themselves could not see the Truth clearly and so they were useless as leaders. Jesus went on to show them what a true leader of God's people should be like. Israel were like sheep in need of a faithful shepherd, and Jesus was that good shepherd who cared for them.

John 10:1-16, 26-28

THE LIFE OF A SHEPHERD: John 10:1-6

The life of a shepherd in Bible days was very different from that of today. The shepherd in Israel had only a small flock and he knew each one of his sheep by name. He raised them from lambs and grew fond of them, for they were his constant companions. During the day he guided his little flock, always searching for fresh pasture for them, leading them to water and sometimes, when the way was rough, carrying the young ones in his arms. He was always on the look-out for wild animals, who might attack his flock, for he was their only protection. They were gentle creatures who had no hope of defending themselves. So he must protect them, even if it meant the loss of his own life.

At night he brought them to a fold, a stone shelter with a door guarded by a porter. The porter opened the door and the sheep went in. There they would be safe from wild animals. The fold was often shared by a number of faithful shepherds known to the porter, but no stranger was allowed through the door. A thief might clamber over the wall to try and steal the sheep, but a faithful shepherd was always on the watch.

In the morning, each shepherd called his sheep by name. The sheep, knowing their master's voice, ran happily to his side, completely confident in his care.

At times it was necessary for a shepherd to hire a servant to care for his sheep. The hireling did not love those sheep in the same way. Sometimes when trouble came, the hireling fled for safety, leaving the sheep to be scattered and devoured by wild animals.

MY PEOPLE HATH BEEN LOST SHEEP

God had always thought of the people of Israel as His sheep (Psa. 11:3). Moses and David, two of the greatest leaders of His people, had been trained as shepherds (Remember how David had saved his sheep from a lion and a bear. See 1 Sam. 17:34-35). So they knew how to lead God's people well. At times, in Israel's history, there had been unfaithful shepherds who did not care for the flock at all, and the people had gone astray from God's ways (Jer. 50:6). That is what the Scribes and Pharisees were like in Jesus' day. Jesus told this story of the shepherd and the sheep as a lesson for them, "*but they understood not what things they were which he spoke unto them*" (v6).

"I AM THE DOOR": John 10:7-10

6 Jesus said, "*I am the door of the sheep*" (v7).

They claimed that they were shepherds of the flock, but shepherds always enter the fold "*by the door*" (v2). A true shepherd of God's people would bring them to Jesus, but the Pharisees hated Jesus. They did not believe in him, and they did their best to stop people coming to him.

They were the thieves and robbers (v8) who came to steal, and to kill and to destroy (v10). (Remember how they did not even care that sick people were cured. We will notice more of this in later lessons).

7 If Jesus is the "*door*", who then is the "*porter*" or the one who opens the door? It is God himself. God will open to those who knock (Matt. 7:7-8).

"I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD": John 10:11-15

8 What a difference there is between a shepherd and a hireling.

The hireling agrees to lead the sheep, but the sheep are

not his. They do not know his voice and he does not show any concern or care for them. They are not safe in his hands. The Pharisees were no better than hirelings. They thought of their own welfare (see Matt. 23:5-7) and looked only for praise and honour from the people.

Jesus on the other hand, is the good shepherd, kind, faithful and compassionate. All those who believe in him are his sheep. He knows them all by name and they know his voice. Those who believe in him always read God's Word and find his voice guiding them and comforting them. In God's Word they find food and water for Jesus said, "*I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never thirst*" (John 6:35; see also Lesson 12). 8 12a 12c 9

He cared so much for his sheep that he gave his life for them. What greater love could he have than that. 12b.

"OTHER SHEEP HAVE I"

Jesus came to the lost sheep of Israel, the Jews (Matt. 15:24). He was "*moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd*" (Mark 6:34), and he wanted to bring them safely back into the fold.

He also said, "*other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd*" (John 10:16). These other sheep are the Gentiles such as ourselves, who are anxious to learn about the Word of God and obey his "*voice*". The fold is the ecclesia which we enter through the "*door*", that is, Christ. The way into the ecclesia is by baptism into Christ. Paul and the other apostles preached the gospel to the Gentiles after Christ had risen from the dead. They were faithful shepherds calling people to come and learn of Christ. Through their preaching God had "*opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles*" (Acts 14:27), so that those who heard the gospel could enter in. There is "*one fold*", that is, one ecclesia, made up of Jews and Gentiles who believe in Christ. 10 11 12d

How blessed we are to hear the Word of God taught by faithful brethren today who invite people to enter into the ecclesia by baptism.

SUMMARY

- * Jesus
 - * The Pharisees

 - * The Ecclesia
 - * Jesus
 - * God
 - * Those who believe in Christ

 - * Gentiles also who believe in Christ
- * The Good Shepherd v. 11. 14
 - * Thieves and robbers (vv1,8) or hirelings (vv12-13)
 - * The fold (v16)
 - * The door (v7)
 - * The porter (v3)
 - * The sheep, who hear the shepherd's voice (vv27-28), first the Jews
 - * Other sheep who hear the shepherd's voice (v16)

LESSON FOR US

What a privilege it is to be counted among God's sheep, having the Lord Jesus Christ as our shepherd and guide. If we continue to listen to his voice, speaking to us out of God's Word, he will always be faithful. The world we live in is full of "wolves", people who would try to destroy us, by leading us into their wicked ways. We must stay within the ecclesia and find our pleasure there, if we want to be safe.

QUESTIONS (9 – 12 years)

Short Answers

1. How would a shepherd care for his sheep during the day?
2. Where did the shepherd lead his sheep at night?
- ✓ 3. How could the sheep enter the fold?
4. Who opened the door to the shepherd?
- ✓ 5. How did robbers enter the fold?
- 6. Who is the door?
- 7. Who is it that opens the door?
8. Who is the good shepherd?
9. Who are Jesus' sheep?
10. Who were the "other sheep" Jesus spoke of?
11. How can we enter Jesus' fold?

Detailed Answers

12. ✓ Jesus told a story in which he called himself "*the good shepherd*".
- (a) How was Jesus like a good shepherd?
 - (b) How did he show his great love for his sheep?
 - (c) Who are Jesus' sheep?
 - (d) How can we become Jesus' sheep?
13. (a) Name two great leaders of Israel who had been shepherds.
- (b) Why were the Pharisees bad shepherds?
 - (c) Why did the Pharisees try to stop the people listening to Jesus "*the good shepherd*"?



John 10:27-28.

Bible marking - write out summary.

Rev. 3 & 5.

Rev. 6 & 7.

16. THE PRODIGAL SON

*"This my son was dead, and is alive again;
he was lost and is found".*

Aim

*To show how Jesus taught in a parable that God is
a loving Father, ever ready to forgive His children.*

Though the leaders of the Jews hated Jesus, the common people were glad to hear him. His words were full of encouragement and showed the people just what God wanted them to do. His teaching was clear and easy to understand, for those who really wanted to please God. It was often "*publicans and sinners*", despised by the Scribes and Pharisees, who crowded around Jesus to listen to his parables. One day he told three parables about something "*lost*" – a lost sheep, a lost coin and a lost son. Many people in Israel were "*lost*" – they had strayed from true worship. Jesus was sent by God to find them and bring them back.

Luke 15:11-32

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SON

A man had two sons. The older one was steady and hard working, but the younger one was restless and discontent. One day the younger son asked his father to give him the inheritance that would one day belong to him. He wanted to go out into the world and spend money, find new friends and live for his own pleasure. The young man's father was no doubt very sad to see his son leave home and go out into the world to mix with strangers.

The son "*gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country*" (v13). He lived wickedly and wasted his money with new-found companions who helped spend his inheritance. In time, the money was gone – and so were the "friends" who had helped him spend it. They had cared nothing for him. Their friendship with him had been selfish. Now with no money and no friends, how was he going to live? To make things worse, there was a famine in the land. At last he found a job feeding pigs. What a hateful job for a Jew (see

Deut. 14:8). How low he had sunk. Once he had been rich and enjoyed the best of everything but now he was reduced to feeding swine. He was so hungry he would gladly have eaten the pods that the pigs ate, *"and no man gave unto him"* (v16).

"I WILL ARISE AND GO TO MY FATHER"

Desperate with hunger and thoroughly ashamed, the young man thought longingly of home and his loving father. He knew that the servants at home never went hungry. His father's servants always had *"bread enough and to spare"*, but here he was dying from hunger. So he decided what to do. He would return to his father and say, *"Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants"* (vv18-19). He was by now so ashamed of his own foolish behaviour that he would gladly be just a servant in his father's house. He knew that his father was kind and generous and hoped that he would forgive him and take him in again. Having made up his mind, he set off at once for his father's house.

4

HIS FATHER MEETS HIM

Now his father had lived in hope of this wilful son returning. He had longed and hoped every day. So it was that, as his younger son trudged homeward *"when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him; and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him"* (v20). How distressed the father was to see his son in such a dreadful state. His son however had only one thought uppermost in his mind – to confess to his father how foolish he had been and to ask his forgiveness.

5

"Father", he said, *"I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son"* (v21). Before he had time to finish his father interrupted. Instead of being angry as the son might have expected, his father was so overjoyed to see him so repentant, that he immediately called his servants to prepare a joyful feast.

"Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: For this my

6

7 son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (v22-24).

What a change there was in this son now. In that far-off country he had been "lost", as good as dead. Only when he had been reduced to hunger and wretchedness did he realise how foolish he had been. His unhappy experiences had taught him a great lesson. His father had no thought of casting him among his servants, but gave him the best robe, and ring and shoes. Together they sat down to a happy feast.

THE ELDER BROTHER IS ANGRY

All this happiness was not, however, shared by the elder brother. He had been out working in the field, and as he drew near the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants to ask what this meant. The servant was only too happy to tell him the good news.

"Thy brother is come and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound" (v27).

8
9 The older brother was not at all pleased. He was so angry that he refused to go in to join his family in their meal. So his father went out to him and begged him to share their joy. All he got was an angry and resentful reply.

"Lo these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends" (v29).

He could not understand how they could be pleased to see that good-for-nothing brother of his back home.

What a mean spirit he showed. It took all the pleasure out of the work he had done for his father.

Yet his father had been grateful and not unmindful of his labours. *"Son, thou art ever with me"*, he said patiently, *"and all that I have is thine"* (v31). Did he not realise that his younger brother had come home because he had realised at last how foolish he had been? *"This thy brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found"* (v32).

LESSON FOR US

We sometimes behave very much like these brothers, don't we.

It is easy to be selfish and foolish and wasteful as that younger son was to begin with. If only he had stayed with his father, where he was secure, all would have been well, but he wanted to enjoy the pleasures of the world. These "*pleasures*" only ended in disaster for him. He was as good as dead. Let us be wiser than that, for we know that there is no true happiness in the world.

Yet if we do sin, let us be humble enough to admit it and change our ways. That is the kind of spirit God wants to see in us. 10

Too often, perhaps, we might show a mean spirit like that older brother. He was resentful and unforgiving. There was no room in his heart to believe that his sinful brother might have repented. Let us always show a generous spirit to those about us, because we all sin against God, and we all need God to forgive us.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 - 12 years only)

What then is the hidden meaning of this parable? God of course, is represented by the father who loved both his sons. God is always mindful of how hard we try to please him and will, we know, reward our labours when He sets up His kingdom. He is also only too willing to forgive those who sin against him as soon as they repent.

The publicans and sinners who were so despised, were like the younger son. They were lost and needed someone to bring them back to God. This was the work of the Lord Jesus Christ who gladly showed them the way to salvation.

The Pharisees, being self-righteous were like the older son. They too, needed to listen to Jesus' words but mostly they were too proud.

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

1. A man had two sons. What did the younger son ask for?
- 2. What did the younger son do when his father gave him what he asked for?
3. What happened when all his money was gone?
- Rev 4. Where did the son go when he realised how foolish he had been?
- 5. What did his father do when he saw him?
6. What did his father tell his servants to bring to him?
- Rev 7. The father said: "*This my son ...*" Finish the sentence.
- ✓ 8. How did the older brother feel when he heard what his father had done for his younger brother?
- ✓ 9. Did the older brother join in the feasting?
- ✓ 10. What can we do like the younger brother that God would be pleased with?

Detailed Answers

- ✓ 11. A father had two sons. Tell the story of the younger son.
 - (a) What did he ask for?
 - (b) What happened when he left home?
 - (c) What happened when he returned home?
 - (d) Why did his father forgive him?
12.
 - (a) What was the older brother like.
 - (b) How did he show his feelings when his younger brother came home?
 - (c) We should not act like the older brother. How should we act instead?
13.
 - (a) What made the younger son decide to go home?
 - (b) What did he decide to say to his father?

Additional Answers (11 - 12 years only)

14. In the parable of the lost son, give the meaning of the parable by showing:
 - (a) Who the father represented.
 - (b) Who the younger son represented.
 - (c) Who the older son represented.

Luke 15:10

Rev. 4-7.

17. THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

"I am the resurrection and the life"

Aim

To show that God gave Jesus the power to raise the dead.

Not far from Jerusalem was the little town of Bethany, where Martha and Mary lived with their brother Lazarus. They were close friends of Jesus, who often called at their home to rest. While Jesus was preaching on the other side of Jordan, tragedy struck this loving family. The Lord used the opportunity to show the great power God had given him and to convince many that he was indeed the Son of God.

John 11:1-46

A MESSAGE TO JESUS

The happy household in Bethany grew suddenly quiet. Lazarus was very ill. Day after day he grew worse. Only a miracle, it seemed, would save him. Mary and Martha knew that Jesus would help. So they sent a messenger to find him and tell him, "*Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick*". When Jesus heard this he said, "*This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby*" (v4). 1 2

Jesus did not return immediately with the messenger but stayed two days longer where he was. In the meantime Lazarus died. He knew that Lazarus would die, and though he could picture the terrible sadness of his dear friends at Bethany, he knew that this would provide him with an opportunity to show God's glory in a greater way than if he had gone at once and healed him. Of course, Jesus did not need to return to Bethany to cure Lazarus, for with God's power he could have "*spoken the word*" and healed him, as he had done with the nobleman's son (Lesson 6), but he chose not to do so this time. 3

LAZARUS IS DEAD

Jesus went on with his preaching on the other side of Jordan and Lazarus died. By the power of the spirit of God,

Jesus had known what would happen. He knew how distressed Mary and Martha would be that he had not come in time to save him. Yet they must suffer for a little while so that God might in the end be glorified.

After two days Jesus said to his disciples, *“Let us go into Judea again”*. The disciples were very worried when they heard him say this for they knew that his life would be in danger there from the angry leaders of the Jews. When they saw that he was determined to go, Thomas said, *“Let us also go, that we may die with him”* (v16). How they loved him.

Jesus told his disciples, *“Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep”* (v11). The disciples were puzzled. If Lazarus was sleeping, surely that was a good sign; surely it would help him get well again. Then Jesus told them plainly what he meant. *“Lazarus is dead”* (v14).

MARTHA'S GREAT FAITH

By the time Jesus and his disciples came to Bethany Lazarus had been dead for four days and they had buried him. When Jesus drew near to the village, Martha ran out to meet him. She had heard that he was on his way. As soon as she saw him she said, *“Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee”* (vv21-22). Jesus comforted her and said, *“Thy brother shall rise again”* (v23). Martha believed that. *“I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day”* (v24). Then Jesus said: *“I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live”* (v25). All men die, but those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and live according to his teaching, will be raised again when Christ returns. Those people shall never die again. They shall live forever. This was Martha's hope too. Without hesitation she confidently replied, *“I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world”* (v27).

Now that she had found the Lord Jesus and been strengthened by her conversation with him, she went off to find Mary and tell her privately, *“The Master is come, and calleth for thee”* (v28). Quickly Mary left the house and went to meet the Lord.

“LAZARUS, COME FORTH”

When Mary met Jesus, her first words were just like Martha's: “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died” (v32). She was very upset and when Jesus saw her weeping and the other Jews who had followed her weeping too, he also wept. He asked them to show him Lazarus' grave. Some of the Jews, who saw Jesus weeping, said, “Behold, how he loved him”, and some said, “Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?” (vv36-37). 7

They all gathered at the tomb where Lazarus' body, bound in linen grave clothes, had been laid. The tomb was probably a cave cut into the hillside. It had a large stone sealing the entrance. Jesus said, “Take ye away the stone” (v38). Lazarus 8 had been dead four days. His body would have begun to decay 9 and Martha was horrified that Jesus should suggest such a thing. Patiently he told her, “Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?” (v40). So the stone was rolled away and Jesus prayed to his Father, thanking God for hearing him and giving him this opportunity to show His power to the people.

Then, with a loud voice, he cried out, “Lazarus, come forth” (v43). To the utter amazement and joy of those standing 10 by, Lazarus walked out of the tomb, still bound up in the grave clothes. 11 “Loose him, and let him go,” said Jesus (v44).

MANY BELIEVE

Many of the Jews believed after seeing this amazing miracle, in which a dead man came to life. Once again Jesus had displayed God's great power, given to him, so that people might believe that he was the Son of God. 12

Some were there that day, however, whose hearts were so hardened, that they refused to believe what their own eyes told them to be true. Instead, they went to the Pharisees and told them what had happened. The chief priests and Pharisees quickly called a meeting of the council (the Sanhedrin) and decided that Jesus must die. They could see that more and more people were beginning to follow him. It must be stopped

or the Romans might interfere. If that happened these leaders were afraid that they might lose their authority over the people. How evil they were. From this time on they plotted in earnest to put him to death (v53).

LESSON FOR US

Mary and Martha were greatly disappointed that Jesus did not come in time to help their sick brother before he died. Later they realised that his delay was necessary that they might see the great lesson of the resurrection of their brother, by which God was glorified.

At times it seems to us, that God does not answer our prayers. He does, but sometimes His answer is not as we expect. Our earthly fathers do not always give us what we ask for, because they know it would not be good for us. So it is with our heavenly Father. One thing we do know as He told us through the apostle Paul, "*All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose*" (Rom. 8:28).

Let us then be like Mary and Martha, who *believed* in Jesus even though their brother had died. As Martha said, we know that Jesus will return to the earth to raise all his sleeping friends and reward them for their faith with eternal life, for he said, "*I am the resurrection and the life*".

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 – 12 years only)

We know that Lazarus continued to live with Mary and Martha until eventually the three of them died. Lazarus was not at that time raised to eternal life, but the three of them shared that glorious hope that, when Christ returned, he would raise the dead and give his faithful followers eternal life.

Some of the leaders of the Jews, called the Sadducees, did not believe in the resurrection. Yet we know that Abraham believed that God would raise the dead (see Heb. 11:17-19) and so did David (see Acts 2:29-31). Abraham must rise from the dead to receive the land of Israel, for God promised it to him and to his seed for ever (Gen. 13:14-15). David must rise from the dead because God promised that his seed, the Lord Jesus Christ, would sit on his throne in Jerusalem for ever and that

David would see him with his own eyes (2 Sam. 7:16). This became one of the most important teachings of the apostles, after Jesus himself had risen from the dead. More than once, when the apostle Paul had to answer for himself before the rulers, he declared: "*touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question*" (Acts 24:21. See also 24:14-15; 26:6-7; 23:6). When he wrote to the Corinthians he said that if there was no resurrection of the dead, we would be of all men most miserable, for all the promises that God has made depend on the resurrection.

Jesus Christ himself was the first to rise from the dead to live forever (1 Cor. 15:20). All of those who believe in him and are baptised will have that same reward when he comes (1 Cor. 15:23).

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

- ✓1. Who were the friends of Jesus that lived in Bethany?
2. What message did Mary and Martha send to Jesus?
- ✓3. Why did Jesus not go to Bethany straight away?
- ✓4. Why were the disciples worried when Jesus said they would go to Judea?
- ✓5. Lazarus was dead, but what did Jesus tell his disciples about Lazarus?
6. What did Jesus tell Martha about himself?
- ✓7. What did Mary and Martha each say to Jesus when they met him?
8. When they came to Lazarus' tomb, what did Jesus tell them to do?
9. How many days had Lazarus been dead?
10. After Jesus had prayed to God, what did he cry out?
- ✓11. What happened after Jesus had cried out with a loud voice?
12. Some people believed. Who did they think Jesus was?

John 11:25-26

Detailed Answers

13. Jesus received a sad message from Martha and Mary telling him that Lazarus was sick. Tell what happened and how the sisters were made happy again.

Additional Answers (11 – 12 years only)

✓ 14. Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life"*

- (a) What did Martha believe about the resurrection?
- (b) Why must Abraham and David rise from the dead?
- (c) Who else will rise from the dead?
- (d) When will the resurrection take place?

John 11:25-26



18. JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM

"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Aim

To show how Jesus loved Jerusalem but spoke of a time of terrible trouble for her people because of their unbelief.

Passover time was near again and the roads leading to Jerusalem were filled with travellers. Many people came through Bethany, which was on the road from Jericho, to see Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead. There in the little village of Bethany, many believed when they saw Lazarus alive and heard the teachings of Jesus. This made the chief priests very angry and they even tried to think of a convenient way to put Lazarus to death too (John 12:9-11). They were prepared to go to terrible lengths to stop people believing in Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus, however, knew that the time was at hand when his work would be finished. He knew the agony that awaited him shortly in Jerusalem, but he was determined to do his Father's will. Five days before Passover he came to the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

Mark 11:1-21. See also Matthew 21:1-22;
Luke 19:28-40, 45-48; John 12:12-15

THEY SET JESUS ON A COLT

Leaving Bethany on the following day (John 12:12), Jesus began to make his way towards Jerusalem. There was great excitement in the air as many people joined him on the way.

He sent two of his disciples on ahead to a nearby village, called Bethphage. *"Go your way into the village over against you",* Jesus said, *"and straightway, ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them and bring them unto me"* (v2). If anyone asked them what they were doing, untying the colt and the ass, they were to say, *"The Lord hath need of them"* (v3). So the disciples went and did as he said and returned with the ass and her colt. No-one had ever ridden on that young colt before, but Jesus now intended to ride on it into Jerusalem. It would be a sign to all the people that he was their king, for from ancient times, kings had done so (see 1 Kings 1:33, 38-39, where Solomon was proclaimed king by David).

JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM

So the disciples set their cloaks on the colt and Jesus rode along the road to Jerusalem. Many of the people who accompanied him were excited when they saw what was happening. They were quick to follow the disciples' example and lay their own cloaks upon the ground in his path, as a sign of honour to the one who rode upon the colt. No doubt the disciples themselves felt that at last Jesus would restore the kingdom to Israel and overthrow the hated Romans who ruled their land. When the people had wanted to make Jesus king before, he had not allowed it. Now, however, he was openly encouraging them to acknowledge him as the King of Israel.

News that Jesus was approaching Jerusalem spread to the villages and homes along the way. Many people cut down branches of palm trees and went out to meet him (John 12:12-13). As the crowd grew, they burst into songs of praise and rejoicing, which were part of the Psalms especially sung at Passover time. "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (Matt. 21:9).

As the procession reached the brow of the Mount of Olives and looked down upon Jerusalem, God's chosen city, *"The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen"* (Luke 19:37).

There were some Pharisees in the crowd and when they heard the psalms being sung in honour of Jesus they became very indignant. *"Master, rebuke thy disciples"*, they said. Jesus replied, "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke 19:39-40).

So Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem, just as the prophet Zechariah had foretold more than five hundred years before (Zech. 9:9 quoted in Matt. 21:4-5). He went into the temple and looked around at all that he saw. Nothing had changed since that first time, three and a half years earlier, when he had overturned the tables and driven the merchants out (see Lesson 5). Those people had been angry when he had interfered that time, but nothing had changed.

Sadly Jesus went out and returned to Bethany for the night.

THE LESSON OF THE FIG TREE

The next morning Jesus returned to Jerusalem. He was hungry, and seeing a fig tree, he went to pick some figs. When he came to the tree, he found that, though it was covered with leaves and appeared to be growing well, it had no fruit at all.

How like the nation of Israel was this fig tree. Wherever Jesus went, there seemed to be interest in the Word of God, and most people were impressed by his miracles. The nation appeared to be godly. It had the outward signs of righteousness, like the fig tree with its lovely green leaves. Yet Jesus knew only too well that the nation was not bringing forth the fruit of good works to God. They were not honouring God in their lives. For three and a half years Jesus had gone amongst the people, looking to see if there was a change of heart among them, but there was not.

“Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever”, Jesus said, cursing the fig tree (Matt. 21:19). Before the astonished eyes of the disciples the fig tree began to wither and die.

Jesus alone knew at this time that the nation of Israel would wither and die within a very few years. He knew that the people who sang his praises the day before would soon join with the leaders of the people in condemning him to die. Such a nation, who put the Son of God to death, was only worthy to be destroyed.

THE TEMPLE CLEANSED

Leaving the fig tree, Jesus went on into the city, followed by his disciples. Once again he made his way to the temple. The scene that met his eyes was just the same as he had seen the day before, the same as three and a half years earlier. And this was God's house. What were the priests doing allowing such trading in God's house? They were just like that fruitless fig tree, all show but no fruit. They had a show of righteousness as they stood about in their priestly robes but their thoughts were far from God. They made themselves rich by allowing such wicked behaviour to go on in the temple.

8

Angrily Jesus overturned the money tables and drove out those who bought and sold, saying: *“It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves”* (Luke 19:46).

The people were amazed at what he did and hung on his words. Here was a leader indeed, one who spoke and acted with authority. So they listened eagerly as he continued to teach them. *“But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him”* (v47). They had already made up their minds to put him to death, but they were afraid of him and afraid of the people and did not yet know how it could be done.

Meanwhile, Jesus left the city with his disciples.

LESSON FOR US

Israel failed to understand the lesson that Jesus was teaching them. It was the same message as John the Baptist had taught, before Christ came: *“Bring forth fruit”*.

We can read the stories from the Bible and learn the answers to the questions, but if we are not changed by what we read and learn, then all our efforts give God no pleasure. It is only an outward show.

Jesus cursed the fig tree because it did not produce fruit. John the Baptist had said: *“Every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire”* (Luke 3:9).

9 { What can we do? If we have been selfish, we must change our ways and learn to be unselfish, thinking of how we can make others happy. If we have been proud and boastful, we must learn to be quiet and praise others only.

In all his life Jesus sets us the perfect example. Soon he will return and see if we have put into practice the things we have learned. Until he comes we must *believe* His word and obey it.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 – 12 years only)

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem like a king, the people were excited and happy expecting something wonderful to happen. Jesus, however, was sad. He was sad, not just because

of the suffering he knew was in store for him, but sad for Jerusalem and her people. As the rejoicing procession of people drew near, he looked down on the city which he loved and wept over it (Luke 19:41). It was the city which God had chosen to put His Name there (Psa. 87:2-3; Psa.132:13-14; 1 Kings 9:3). He called it "*the city of the great king*" (Matt. 5:35), for in that city Christ will one day reign as king on the throne of David, ruling over all the world (Luke 1:32-33).

Yet as Jesus looked down upon that beloved city, he wept, because he knew what was in store for it. Those that stood nearby heard him say, "*The days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another*" (vv43-44).

These things came to pass exactly as he said and only a few years after he spoke them. It was just as he had shown in the parable of the fig tree. The leaders of the nation turned the people against Jesus and finally crucified him, as we shall see in the next few lessons. God would not allow such evil men to go unpunished. No-one thought He would ever allow such a beautiful temple to be destroyed, but the building itself was worth nothing, if the worship inside it was hateful to God.

So in AD70 the Roman armies besieged Jerusalem and the temple was burnt to the ground. Today there is not one stone left upon another. The people who had crowded into the city, believing that they would be safe, died within its walls. Those who escaped fled from the land and remained scattered amongst the nations of the world. Only now, in the lifetime of your parents or grandparents, have Jews begun to return to their land and Israel has become a nation once again. Jerusalem, which has been "*trodden down of the Gentiles*" for nearly two thousand years is once again the capital city of Israel and beloved of Jews all over the world. These things make us very excited, because they are sure signs to us that Christ is near. Yet terrible things lie ahead for Israel and her people, which they do not realise, even though God has spoken of it through the prophets of old (See Zech. 14:2-3; Joel 3:1-2). The wonderful thing is that they shall be saved out of this

terrible time of trouble and their saviour will be the Lord Jesus Christ, the very one whom their fathers rejected and put to death.

How wonderful our God is, to show such mercy to Israel and to give us such a glorious hope. We do indeed long for the peace of Jerusalem, for when Jerusalem is at peace there will be peace in all the world.

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

1. What did Jesus send his disciples to fetch from Bethphage?
- ✓ 2. Why was Jesus going to ride on a colt into Jerusalem?
3. What songs did the people sing as Jesus rode into Jerusalem?
4. What did Jesus say when the Pharisees told him to stop the people singing?
- ✓ 5. What did Jesus see when he went into the temple this time?
- ✓ 6. Why did Jesus curse the fig tree?
- ✓ 7. How was Israel like the fig tree?
8. What did Jesus say when he drove the traders out of the temple?
- ✓ 9. What is the lesson of the fig tree for us?

Detailed Answers

- ✓ 10. Jesus entered Jerusalem a few days before Passover.
 - (a) How did he get a colt to ride on?
 - (b) Why did he ride on a colt?
 - (c) Tell what happened on the way.
11.
 - (a) Tell what happened when Jesus saw a fig tree, as he was on his way to Jerusalem.
 - (b) How were the priests like the fig tree?
 - (c) What did Jesus do when he went into the temple?
 - (d) What did he say about the temple?

mat 21:9.

Hayley 1-5.

Additional Answers (11 – 12 years only)

12. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem the people rejoiced, but Jesus was sad.

- (a) Why was Jesus sad?
- ✓(b) What happened to Jerusalem in AD70?
- (c) Why is it exciting to see Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel today?
- (d) Who will bring peace to Jerusalem and all the world?



19. TWO PARABLES: THE TEN VIRGINS AND THE TALENTS

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant”

Aim

To show how Jesus taught in two parables that we should be faithful servants while he is away and always watching for his return.

Jesus had warned the people of the judgments that God would bring upon Jerusalem and her people, because they had produced no fruit. The cursing of the fig tree was a warning to them all. Yet Jesus was anxious that those who had followed him and listened to his words would be wise and escape the troubles that lay ahead. So he told two parables to show them the need to be diligent and faithful. These parables are especially helpful to us, for we are eagerly awaiting the return of our Lord from heaven. *“Watch therefore”* he said, *“for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come”* (Matt. 24:42).

Matthew 25:1-31

WAITING FOR THE BRIDEGROOM: Matthew 25:1-13

- There were ten young girls, or *“virgins”*, chosen to attend a wedding procession. They had to watch for the coming of the bridegroom and go out to meet him with their lamps, to light
1. his way to the marriage supper. On this occasion the
 2. bridegroom was away longer than they had expected and “they all slumbered and slept” (v5). Suddenly, at midnight, the cry
 3. went out, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him” (v6). Hurriedly the virgins roused themselves and looked
 4. to their lamps. Five of them were at once ready. The other five, however, suddenly found that they had no oil and their lamps were going out.

THE DOOR WAS SHUT

“Give us of your oil”, cried the five foolish virgins, but the wise virgins replied, *“Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves”* (v9). So the foolish virgins hurried away to buy. While they were away the bridegroom arrived and the five wise virgins

accompanied him to the marriage supper. They went in with him "and the door was shut" (v10). 5

Later on the other virgins arrived and finding the door shut, they called out: *"Lord, Lord, open to us"* (v11). But the only answer they heard filled them with shame and dismay: "Verily I say unto you, I know you not" (v12). It was too late. 6
What was the good of lamps that did not shine? They were of no use to the bridegroom now.

THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE

Jesus had begun the parable by saying, *"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins ..."*. It speaks of the time when Christ returns from heaven to set up his kingdom. Christ himself is the *"bridegroom"* (see Matt. 9:15). We are the *"virgins"* waiting for his coming. The *"oil"* in our lamps is the Word of God. 7

We see from this parable that the virgins had to be *ready* with plenty of oil. They all had lamps, but only five of them had taken care to have extra oil. This tells us that all of them had heard the Word of God and believed it. Some of them, however, had not added to what they had first learned and so the Truth was no longer seen in their lives. Jesus said, *"let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matt. 5:16). The apostle Peter tells us that, if we want to enter into the everlasting kingdom of God then we must *"add"* to our faith (2 Pet. 1:5, 11). Daily reading of the Bible keeps us well supplied with *"oil"* and helps us to add all those necessary qualities that God is pleased to see in us. Then when Christ returns he will find us ready to join with him in his kingdom. Those who are not ready will be sent away back into the darkness of the world. *"I know you not"*. He said, for he will not count them among his friends at all.

The final words of Jesus, when he had finished telling this parable, are a warning to us all. "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" 8
(v13).

A MAN TRAVELLING INTO A FAR COUNTRY: Matthew 25:14-30

9 Jesus told another parable about preparing for the kingdom: *“For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called together his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods”* (v14). From this he gave to each servant a large sum of money; to one he gave five talents, to another two and to another one. He knew what each servant was capable of, and while he was away he expected them to work hard with what he had given them.

10 As soon as their master had gone, the man with the five talents and the man with the two talents set to work. They each used what had been left in their care. So faithful were they that both doubled the number of talents which had been given to them by their master. The one who had five talents gained another five and the one who had two talents gained another two.

However, the other servant, who had been given one talent, did nothing useful with his at all. He went and dug a hole in the earth and hid his lord’s money there.

THE MASTER RETURNS

11 After a long time, the lord returned, and called his servants to give an account of how they had served him while he was away. The servant who had been given five talents was able to show his master five more talents that he had gained in his absence. His lord was very pleased. *“Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord”* (v21).

When the servant who had been given two talents came and showed the two extra talents he had gained, the master was just as pleased and rewarded him in the same way.

12 When the third servant came, however, it was obvious how lazy he had been. He had shown no interest whatever in serving his master. He had thought that his master was a hard man and expected too much. So he did nothing with that talent placed in his care. He was a faithless and disobedient servant. The lord was angry with that “wicked and slothful servant”

(v26), and ordered him to be thrown out of his house *"into outer darkness"* (v30). That servant had not realised how just and fair his lord was, but now he got what he deserved.

THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE

The man in this parable who went into a far country is the Lord Jesus Christ, who has been in heaven at the right hand of God for over nineteen hundred years. He has been away *"a long time"* (v19), but he has promised to return. Meanwhile, we who are his servants, have been told to be busy in his service until he comes. He expects each of us to be faithful and will reward us all with everlasting life in his kingdom, as long as we are diligent while he is away.

The lord gave his servants *"his goods"* (v14). So we have been given the Bible to read and to understand. Each servant was given a different number of talents. So God has given us varying abilities but expects us all to use them to the best of our ability in His service.

In the Bible we are told that *"we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* (2 Cor. 5:10). Therefore, whatever *"talents"* have been given to us by God, must be used in His service, to bring honour to Him.

LESSON FOR US

Jesus had said, *"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household?"* (Matt. 24:45).

He told these two parables to show his disciples what he expects of them, and to encourage them. We must take careful note of the meaning of these parables, for we know that Christ our Lord is soon to return.

The first parable teaches us to be *wise* and always *ready*, *"for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come"*. How easy it is to get interested in games and hobbies and forget to keep up our daily reading of the Bible. Let us apply the rule all our lives to study God's Word a little every day. Then we will not be ashamed when Christ comes.

The second parable teaches us to be *faithful* servants

while he is away. We cannot expect the gift of eternal life if we have not shown ourselves to be willing and diligent. There are so many ways in which we can be faithful servants. The first thing we must do is to believe that God means what He says. Then we must obey His commandments.

The apostle Paul always taught: "*Servants, obey your masters*". As the servants of Jesus Christ we must do the will of God "*from the heart*" (Eph. 6:6). "*Whatsoever ye do*", says Paul, "*do it heartily, as to the Lord ... for ye serve the Lord Christ*" (Col. 3:23-24).

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

- ✓ 1. Why did the virgins have to watch for the bridegroom?
2. Why were the virgins all asleep?
3. What cry went out at midnight?
- ✓ 4. How many virgins were ready when the cry went out?
5. What happened while the foolish virgins went to buy oil?
- ✓ 6. What did the bridegroom say when the foolish virgins returned?
- ✓ 7. What is the oil that we must have?
- ✓ 8. What warning did Jesus give at the end of this parable?
9. How many talents did the master give to his servants?
- ✓ 10. What did the master expect the servants to do with what he had given them?
11. Which servants did the master reward and why?
12. Why was he angry with the third servant?

Detailed Answers

13. (a) Tell the parable of the ten virgins.
(b) Who is the bridegroom?
(c) Who are the virgins?
(d) What lessons do we learn from the parable?
- ✓ 14. (a) In the parable of the talents, how did the servants use their master's talents while he was away?
(b) What kind of servants should we be while Christ is away?

Matt 25: 21.

Hayley

17-19.
Rev. Project only.

1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10

Quote John 11: 35.

20. THE LAST SUPPER

"This do in remembrance of me"

Aim

To show how Jesus spent his last night with his disciples

It was the day before Passover and Jesus knew that his time was near, for this year he was to be slain as the Passover lamb. Remember how John the Baptist had pointed him out three and a half years earlier, saying, "*Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29). Now his time had come to be offered, but first he must share a meal with his disciples. He must show them how they should remember him.

Matthew 26:14-30; John 13:4-17. See also
Mark 14:10-26; Luke 22:1-20

JUDAS AGREES TO BETRAY JESUS

The chief priests had made up their minds to kill Jesus. The only problem was — how could they do it without looking like murderers? This had always been their problem — how to make themselves appear righteous to men. There was no thought of God in their hearts. Yet Jesus had committed no crime. In fact, no matter how hard they tried to find fault with him, the people followed him to hear his words and to see his miracles. They had to find something to accuse him of that was worthy of death. If they could arrange it before Passover, it would be very convenient, for then everyone who travelled home after the feast, would take the news with them that Jesus was not the Messiah.

Sadly, it was one of the twelve close friends of Jesus who made it easy for the priests to carry out their plan. It was Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, who offered to betray him. He went to them and said, "*What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?*" (Matt. 26:15). They said they would give him thirty pieces of silver. So Judas agreed, for thirty pieces of silver, to watch for a convenient time, when there were no crowds gathering around him, and he would betray him to them.

GO AND PREPARE

3 { Meanwhile, the other disciples wondered where they would eat the Passover meal with Jesus. So he sent Peter and John to make the necessary preparations. “Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him”, Jesus said. They were to follow him into the house and say to the owner of the house, *“The Master saith, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?”* They would then be shown a large upstairs room, already furnished, where they could make their preparations for the meal (Mark 14:13-15).

THE LAST MEAL TOGETHER

That night, the twelve assembled with Jesus in the upper room for supper. It was the Lord’s very last opportunity to speak to them all together. In a little while he would be taken from them. He knew they would be shocked and frightened later. Now however, they did not seem to understand although he had told them plainly (Luke 9:22).

4 { The events of the last few days had made them hope he might proclaim himself as King. As they thought about the kingdom, they began arguing as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus promised them that they should sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:30), because they had continued faithfully with him for three and a half years. But that would be later, much later than they realised. Now they must learn to be servants, to serve him and to serve one another. This was the best way to prepare them for being kings and judges in God’s kingdom.

“I HAVE GIVEN YOU AN EXAMPLE”: John 13:4-15

5 { Pride had made them argue about who should be the greatest. They still had to learn to be humble, as Jesus himself was humble. Knowing what their thoughts were, Jesus got up from the table, took off his outer clothes and tied a towel around him as a slave would do. Then he poured some water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to dry them on the towel he wore. It was what a slave would do for his master’s guests and here was the Lord himself washing their

feet. They must have felt very embarrassed. Jesus knew that they did not understand why he was doing this. However, they would remember later and then they would understand. When it was Peter's turn he felt ashamed and said, "*Thou shalt never wash my feet*". Jesus replied, "*If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me*" (v8). This was too much for Peter. If the Lord was determined to wash him, then let him wash his hands and his head as well, for he loved him greatly. Then Jesus explained, "*If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet*" (v14). That was how they would show their love for him, by humbling themselves and serving each other.

THE LORD'S SUPPER: Matthew 26:26-29

At the meal table as they were eating, Jesus took the bread in his hands and gave thanks to God. Then he broke it, giving some to each of his disciples. "*Take, eat; this is my body,*" Jesus said (v26). Then he took the cup of wine and gave thanks. It was passed to each in turn, so that they might all drink of the wine. "*This is my blood,*" Jesus said (v28). 6

It was a solemn feast, but they did not yet understand that he was soon to give his body as a sacrifice, and that his blood would be poured out for the forgiveness of sins. The bread and the wine represented his body and his blood.

So it is that even today, brethren and sisters of Christ throughout the world come together, on the first day of the week, to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of him. The apostle Paul told the followers of Christ in Corinth that "*as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come*" (1 Cor. 11:26). 7

TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES: Matthew 26:30-36

When supper was finished, they sang a hymn and went out through the city to the Mount of Olives. 8

Judas had already gone to tell the chief priests where Jesus could be found.

The Lord's heart was heavy as he went across the Kedron Valley to the Mount of Olives. He knew it would be that very night when these friends, who loved him so much, would flee for

9 their lives and he would be left alone. Realising how sad his master was, Peter protested: "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death" (Luke 22:33).

Jesus replied, *"I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me"* (v34). Peter was horrified that the Lord should even think such a thing of him. *"Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee"*, he said, and *"likewise also said all the disciples"*. (v35).

10 It was here, in the garden of Gethsemane, where he often went with his disciples, that Judas came and found him.

LESSON FOR US

11 At the last supper Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you" (John 13:34). This love which Jesus has shown to us was so great that he gave his life in sacrifice for all who believe in him. We must therefore love one another in the same way. As Jesus washed his disciples' feet, so we must learn to serve each other. This means always thinking of others and helping them, sometimes giving up our own pleasure to make others happy. If we value our friends in the Truth, we will always be glad to sacrifice for them. God does not ask us to die as Jesus did, but to show by our actions that we are his disciples.

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

1. Who had agreed to betray Jesus?
- ✓ 2. How much did the chief priests agree to pay?
- ✓ 3. How were the disciples able to find the house where Jesus wanted them to prepare the last supper?
- ✓ 4. What did the disciples argue about?
- ✓ 5. What did Jesus do to show them that they must serve one another?
- ✓ 6. Jesus ate bread with his disciples. What does the bread represent?
- ✓ 7. Why do followers of Christ today come together to eat bread and drink wine?

8. Where did Jesus go with his disciples after supper?
- ✓ 9. Which disciple said he was ready to face prison or death with his Master?
10. Where did Judas find Jesus?
11. What "*new commandment*" did Jesus teach his disciples?

Detailed Answers

12. The night before Jesus died, he ate a special supper with his disciples.
 - (a) What reward did Jesus promise his disciples?
 - (b) What did Jesus do to show his disciples that they must first become servants before they could be rulers?
- ✓ 13. In the upper room Jesus had a special supper with his disciples which we call "*the Lord's supper*".
 - (a) What did he do?
 - (b) The disciples did not understand then, but what did Jesus mean?
 - (c) What do brethren and sisters of Christ do today to remember his death?

John 13: 34-35

Hayley

1 2 7 11

John 13: 34.

End of year rec 17-20
Quote 1 Cor 11: 26.

21. JESUS IS BETRAYED AND ARRESTED

“Not my will but thine be done”

Aim

To show how Jesus was arrested and falsely accused by wicked men and sentenced to death.

The Son of God had been completely obedient to his Father's will all his life. Now he was about to face his greatest test. He had known all his life that this was what God expected of him, for he had read of these things in the prophets. He had tried to prepare his small band of close friends for this time when he would be cut off from them. He had strengthened and guided them, and now suddenly and cruelly he was going to be put to death. Jesus himself knew that he must seek strength from his Father to help him face this last terrible trial. So he took his eleven disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives, where he often went to pray.

John 18:1-13. See also Matthew 26:36-56;
Mark 14:32-49; Luke 22:39-53

IN THE GARDEN: Matthew 26:36-44

1 It was very late at night when Jesus entered the garden with his disciples. It was now the Passover day, the day on which the lamb was slain.

2 He said to his disciples, *“Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder”* (v36), but he took Peter, James and John with him. A little further on he told them to wait and watch for him. He knew the time was short, for Judas was even now in the city gathering a band of soldiers to come and arrest him.

So Jesus went forward a little and fell on the ground and prayed, *“O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt”* (v39).

3 Having poured out his heart to his Father in heaven, Jesus went back to Peter, James and John and found them asleep. They stirred when he spoke to them. He said to Peter, *“What, could ye not watch with me one hour?”* (v40). Before, Peter had been especially eager in saying how he loved Jesus and would even give his life for him. Yet now he was sleeping,

unaware of the danger that lay ahead, only a few minutes away. Jesus knew, and woke them and urged them to pray for strength too. *“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation”* (v41). He knew that though the disciples were anxious to do the right thing, they were often not strong enough to put their words into action. *“The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak,”* Jesus said (v41). The same thing often happens to us. The only way to have strength to put all our good intentions into practice, is to pray to God, following the example of Christ. 3

Jesus went away again a little further into the garden and prayed to God a second time, seeking strength and praying, *“thy will be done”* (v42). *“And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him”* (Luke 22:43). Returning again, he found his disciples once more asleep. So he left them and went and prayed a third time, saying the same words. 5 4

SOLDIERS COME TO ARREST JESUS: John 18:2-6

When Jesus had finished praying three times, he came to rouse his sleeping disciples. Even as he spoke to them the quietness of the garden, late at night, was shattered by the noise of a great crowd bursting in, brandishing swords and torches. Leading the way was Judas Iscariot, *“one of the twelve”*. Judas had known that Jesus often went there with his disciples for rest and quietness. Behind him now came a band of soldiers and officers from the temple guard, sent by the chief priests and Pharisees. } 7 6

Though his disciples were dismayed, Jesus remained calm. His trust was in God. He stepped forward and asked the soldiers, *“Whom seek ye?”* They answered, *“Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them, I am he”*. The soldiers had come expecting trouble and here was the one they had come to arrest quietly giving himself up. There was something about him which struck fear into their hearts and when he said, *“I am he”*, they backed away from him “and fell to the ground” (John 18:4-6). 8

JUDAS BETRAYS JESUS

9 Then Judas came forward and said, "*Master, master; and
kissed him*" (Mark 14:45). This had been the sign he had
agreed to give the soldiers. He came pretending to be a friend,
but at heart he was the worst enemy of all. Later, when he
thought about what he had done — for he knew Jesus was
innocent — he tried to return the thirty pieces of silver, but the
13 priests were not interested. So he went out and hanged himself
(Matt. 27:3-5).

At the sign from Judas, the soldiers stepped forward to
arrest Jesus. When the disciples realised what was going to
happen, they said, "*Lord, shall we smite with the sword?*" (Luke
22:49). Before Jesus could answer, Peter struck out angrily
with his sword and hit one of the servants of the High Priest,
10 cutting off his ear. Immediately Jesus healed him and rebuked
Peter, saying "*Put up thy sword*" (John 18:11). It was not a
11 time to fight. He must face death at the hands of these men,
just as the prophets had foretold.

Then Jesus turned to the soldiers and those of the chief
priests and elders who had come with them. If only they had
realised it, there was no need for the swords and weapons. He
was not a criminal who would try to get away. He knew his
hour had come, the hour when he would give himself into their
hands. "*I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took
me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled*" (Mark 14:49).
There had been many opportunities before, but this was the
time appointed by God.

They hung back a little as he spoke. So he said, "*I have
told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their
way*" (John 18:8). As the Good Shepherd, he would give his life
for his sheep.

12 So they bound Jesus and led him away to Annas, the
father-in-law of the High Priest. But all his disciples "forsook
him, and fled" (Mark 14:50).

LESSON FOR US

How sad this story is, and yet it was only the beginning of
terrible things to come.

Our human nature is so weak. Even with the best of intentions we often slip and fail when the pressure is on us to stand firm. Judas failed, but he had planned it all beforehand. There was no mercy for him. Peter and the other apostles failed, but they had wanted to do the right thing. In their lives afterwards they learned the power of prayer as Jesus had taught them. Many times God strengthened them through prayer so that they were able to overcome their weaknesses, and speak out boldly for Christ and turn many to believe in him.

We, too, must keep trying after we have failed. God will strengthen us through His Word and prayer, if we really desire to serve Him and show a willingness to learn.

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

1. Where did Jesus go with his disciples when they left the upper room?
- ✓2. What did Jesus do in the garden?
- ✓3. When Jesus found his disciples asleep, what did he urge them to do?
4. How many times did Jesus go and pray in the garden?
- ✓5. Who strengthened Jesus there?
6. Who suddenly came into the garden?
7. Who was leading the way?
8. What happened when Jesus told the soldiers, "*I am he*"?
- ✓9. Why did Judas kiss Jesus?
10. What happened when Peter struck out with the sword?
11. Why did Jesus tell Peter to put up his sword?
- 12. What did all the disciples do when the soldiers arrested Jesus?
- 13. What did Judas do later?

Detailed Answers

14. Jesus and his disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane after the Last supper.

- (a) Tell what Jesus did there.
- (b) Tell what the disciples were doing.
- (c) Tell how Judas betrayed Jesus.

✓ 15. When the soldiers wanted to arrest Jesus

- (a) what did his disciples want to do?
- (b) what did Peter do?
- (c) why did Jesus rebuke Peter?
- (d) what did all the disciples do in the end?

Matt 26: 39

Hayley - No detail



22. THE TRIAL OF JESUS

"We have no king but Caesar."

Aim

*To show how Jesus was tried by Jews and Gentiles
and falsely sentenced to death.*

When Jesus gave himself up to the soldiers who had come to arrest him, his disciples did not know what to do. They feared then for their own lives, for if these men put Jesus to death, would they not kill his disciples as well? They did not yet understand that he must first suffer, to fulfil the scriptures, and afterwards he would be glorified. Peter and John, however, could not keep away. They had to find out what was happening to their beloved Master, who was prepared to give his life for them. They were there at the High Priest's house when Jesus was questioned.

John 18:19-40; 19:1-16. See also Matthew 26:57-27:26;
Mark 14:53-15:15; Luke 22:54-23:25.

AT THE HIGH PRIEST'S HOUSE

From this time on Jesus was taken from one person in authority to another. Now that the rulers of the Jews had captured him, they only had the rest of that night and the next day to find a charge against him worthy of death, if they wanted him to be put to death before the feast of Passover began.

So they took Jesus first to Annas, who lived in the High Priest's palace, but though this man questioned Jesus, he could find nothing to help him lay a charge against him.

From there, the soldiers took him to Caiaphas, the High Priest. The chief priests, elders and scribes had been roused as soon as it was day. According to the Law, two witnesses were needed to prove a man guilty (Deut. 17:6). They brought in many false witnesses, but nothing they said against him deserved a death sentence. At last someone found two false witnesses who were ready to accuse him, but their stories did not agree.

(Remember, that on this council were two men who were honest and upright. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who

later took Jesus' body and buried him, would not have approved of the things that were going on. They had no power to stop them, but they knew Jesus was innocent. So those evil councillors, who wanted him crucified, had to pretend to be doing everything legally.)

Throughout his questioning, Jesus remained calm and silent. Caiaphas felt very frustrated. If only they could get him to say something wrong, they could bring a charge against him.

3 Finally, Caiaphas asked him straight out: "Tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God". This was a question that Jesus would gladly answer. "Thou hast said," he replied (meaning, "Yes, I am"), and added, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven".

4 "Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death" (Matt. 26:63-66). From that time on Jesus was spat on and punched and slapped, as the rough soldiers of the high priest, no longer afraid of him, as they had been in the garden, brutally mocked him. Jesus endured it all, without a protest, for he was indeed the Son of God.

JESUS BEFORE PILATE

5 The next morning they hurried Jesus off to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. Now that they had decided he must die, they wanted the Romans to crucify him, nailing him to a tree. According to the Law, anyone hanged on a tree was "cursed of God" (Deut. 21:23). They wanted everyone to be able to look on him and think that God had cursed him.

6 {
7 They told Pilate that Jesus had said he was Christ, a king, setting himself against Caesar, the emperor in Rome. Pilate questioned him, but could find no fault in this man who stood so meekly before him. This made the Jews angry. So they accused him of being a trouble-maker, stirring up the people from Galilee to Jerusalem. When Pilate heard them mention "Galilee" he decided to send him to Herod, who was in Jerusalem at the time, for Galilee was under Herod's control

(Luke 23:2-7).

JESUS BEFORE HEROD

Herod had heard a lot of stories about Jesus. He was glad to have this opportunity to see him. Perhaps Jesus would show him some miracle. Yet though he asked him many questions, Jesus refused to answer this wicked man. The chief priests and scribes stood around watching, shouting out accusations against him. Herod, however, found nothing to accuse him of and when he and his soldiers had mocked him, he sent him back to Pilate (Luke 23:8-11). 8

BEFORE PILATE AGAIN

Pilate was determined to release Jesus, for neither he nor Herod could find any fault in him, and Pilate "*knew that for envy they had delivered him*" (Matt. 27:18). He was disturbed, too, when he received an urgent message from his wife, saying: "*Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him*" (v19). 9

Pilate was now even more anxious to let Jesus go free. It was a custom that the governor pardon a Jewish prisoner at this time of the year, because it was a special feast day. So Pilate used this custom to try to have Jesus released.

There was a prisoner at the time called Barabbas, an evil man, a robber and a murderer. Pilate brought Barabbas out and asked the people, "*Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?*" (v17). He felt sure they would see the difference between the two men. But the chief priests and the elders had already persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus destroyed. He asked them what he should do with Jesus, and they shouted out, "*Crucify him*". Pilate was amazed: "*Why, what evil hath he done?*" This only made them cry out more fiercely, "*Crucify him*" (Mark 15:12-14). Pilate said, "*Shall I crucify your King?*" but "*the chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar*" (John 19:15). 10 11

Pilate wanted to calm the people down, though he knew that Jesus was not worthy of death. So he called for a bowl of water and washed his hands publicly in front of the crowd saying, "*I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to*" 12 13

it". The people did not care. "*His blood be on us, and on our children*", they answered (Matt. 27:24-25). The awful result of these hateful words was that God brought the most terrible judgment on them in AD70 for rejecting His Son and their children have suffered ever since.

"So Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified" (Mark 15:15).

LESSON FOR US

14 The Lord Jesus Christ, in all his dreadful trials, sets us the most wonderful example to follow. When he was accused falsely of evil things, he did not answer back. When he was beaten and mocked, he did not hit back. The apostle Peter remembered these things well and later wrote about them in a letter: "*Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously*" (1 Pet. 2:21-23). He endured all these things (and there was worse to come), because of "the joy that was set before him" (Heb. 12:2). He knew it would please his Father. We will never have to face the things he endured, but God wants us to show the same faith and courage whenever trials come upon us.

There are also lessons to be learnt from the actions of Pilate and the people. Pilate was more worried about his own position as governor, than about doing what was right. What a weak man he really was. The people, too, were easily swayed from what was right by the evil advice of their envious leaders. When we know what is right and true, let us stick with that. We must not let envy blind us to the truth, for envy leads to hatred and hatred can lead to murder, as it did in those days.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 - 12 years only)

One other sad incident happened that night. When Jesus was arrested, all the disciples fled. Peter and John followed "afar off" till they came to the High Priest's house. John went in, for he was known to the High Priest (John 18:15) and then came back and spoke to the servant at the door, who let Peter in.

Not knowing what to do, Peter sat among the servants and officers who warmed themselves at the fire. The maid-servant who had let him in saw him there and looking carefully at him said, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" But Peter said, "I am not" (John 18:16-17). 17a

A little later he moved out to the porch, and someone looked at him and said: "Thou art also of them", but he said, "Man, I am not" (Luke 22:58).

About an hour later, they that stood by said again to Peter, "Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto". Again Peter denied, angrily answering them, "I know not this man of whom ye speak" (Mark 14:70-71).

Just then the cock crowed. At the same moment Jesus, who was inside, turned and looked upon Peter. "And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:61-62).

How ashamed Peter felt, especially after boasting that he was ready to go to prison and to death with his Lord. Yet happily the story does not end there, for Peter became one of the greatest leaders of the ecclesia. He truly repented and later endured many things, including imprisonment and death, for the sake of his Master. 17c

There is a great warning in this for all of us. When Jesus first sent his disciples out to preach the kingdom of God, he told them what hardships they would endure. "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake", he said (Matt. 10:22). But they were not to be afraid, for if they spoke up and confessed that they believed in Christ they would be rewarded at his coming. "But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny" 17b

before my Father which is in heaven" (v33). That is the warning. We must show our love for him in all things as Peter later did.

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

- H ① When Jesus was arrested, where was he taken first?
- H ② Two councillors did not like the way the trial was held. Who were they?
- 3. What question did the High Priest finally ask Jesus?
- 4. What did the High Priest accuse Jesus of?
- H ⑤ Who was the Roman governor of Jerusalem at the time?
- 6. Why did the Jews want Jesus to die by crucifixion?
- H ⑦ Did Pilate think Jesus was guilty?
- 8. Why was Herod glad to see Jesus?
- 9. What message did Pilate receive from his wife?
- 10. There was another man in prison that the people wanted Pilate to release. Who was he and why was he in prison?
- ✓ 11. What did the people want Pilate to do with Jesus?
- ✓ 12. What did the chief priests say when Pilate said, "*Shall I crucify your king?*"
- ✓ 13. What did Pilate do to show that he thought Jesus was innocent?
- 14. Why did Jesus endure all these things?

Detailed Answers

- ✓ 15. The Jewish council said that Jesus was worthy of death.
 - (a) What did the High Priest say that Jesus had done wrong?
 - (b) What did they accuse Jesus of when they brought him to Pilate?
 - (c) Why did Pilate want to let Jesus go?
 - (d) Who did the people want Pilate to release?
- 16. (a) What did Pilate do when the people wanted Jesus crucified?
 - (b) Show how the people did not care.
 - (c) Show what a weak man Pilate really was.

Additional Answers (11 – 12 years only)

17. (a) Tell how Peter denied Jesus at the High Priest's house.
(b) What lesson do we learn from Peter's behaviour?
(c) How did Peter change?

Heb 12:2.

23. THE CRUCIFIXION

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do".

Aim

To show how Jesus was crucified and buried.

Once Pilate had agreed to have Jesus crucified, he was treated like a common criminal by the soldiers. He was scourged, or cruelly thrashed, and mocked. They dressed him in a purple robe, and crowned him with a sharp ring of thorns and pretended to honour him, bowing and saying, "*Hail, King of the Jews!*" Pilate himself was still uneasy, but when he made one last attempt to release Jesus, the Jews called back to him, "*If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend*". Pilate weighed up what he would lose if he angered these Jews, and gave in.

John 19:16-42; Matthew 27:31-60; Mark 15:20-47; Luke 23:26-

53

LED TO GOLGOTHA

They prepared the huge wooden stake which Jesus was forced to carry, and led him through the streets to the north side of the city, to the hill of Golgotha. Two other prisoners were to be crucified the same day. By now Jesus was exhausted. He had not slept all night and had put up with the strain of wicked men questioning him, soldiers mocking him, as well as beatings and thrashings. He could scarcely carry his cross. They found a man along the way called Simon, a Cyrenian, and made him carry the cross for Jesus. Behind them some women followed, weeping and mourning. Jesus turned and spoke to them: "*Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children*" (Luke 23:28). He knew only too well what suffering lay ahead for Jerusalem, because they had rejected and killed their Messiah.

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

At about 9 o'clock in the morning, Jesus was cruelly nailed by his hands and his feet to the wooden stake. The soldiers roughly lifted it up and set it upright in a hole in the ground and left him there to die. The two thieves were also crucified,

one on his right hand and the other on his left. Above his cross Pilate had put a placard, written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, so that everyone passing by could read it: "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS". When the chief priests read it, they wanted Pilate to change it. *"Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews"*, they said. But Pilate would not. *"What I have written, I have written"*, he replied (John 19:19-22).

4

"FATHER, FORGIVE THEM"

Even in the midst of his great agony and pain, Jesus remained calm and clear thinking. He thought of his Father in heaven and remembered the Psalms and the Prophets which had shown what suffering he would endure.

Gentle and forgiving to the end, he looked on the group of wicked men around him and prayed: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). This was what he had taught his disciples, when he said, *"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you ... and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"* (Matt. 5:44).

5

MOCKED BY THE PEOPLE

The three men were crucified in a public place, so that many people passed by and many stopped to stare. Some shouted insults, taunting him. "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Matt. 27:40). The chief priests and scribes and elders were loud in their mockery. "He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him" (Matt. 27:42).

6

7

Four soldiers who were left there on guard divided his clothing amongst them as their *"reward"*. When they came to his coat, which was woven in one piece without a seam, they cast lots for it (John 19:23-24).

8

"BEHOLD, THY MOTHER"

Among those who watched was a little group who loved him dearly. There was John, his beloved disciple, and Mary his mother and some of the women who had believed on him. Mary

9 had been so happy thirty three and a half years earlier, when her Saviour-son was born, but now she was overcome with great sorrow. Caring for others as he always did, Jesus gave her into the care of John, who from that time took her into his own home (John 19:25-27).

“IT IS FINISHED”

10 At about noon, when the sun is normally at its brightest, an eerie darkness covered the land. A strange quietness settled over the scene. The darkness lasted for three hours, till Jesus
11 uttered his last words, “It is finished”, and he bowed his head, and died (John 19:30).

Suddenly an earthquake shook the land. Rocks were split and stones that covered the opening to some of the tombs were torn away, leaving the graves open. Later many bodies of the saints came alive (after his resurrection) and they went into the city and were seen by many.

12 At the same time, as the priests who had crucified their Messiah were about to slay the Passover lambs in the temple court, the veil of the temple, between the Holy and Most Holy place, was rent – from the top to the bottom. No human hand could have done that (Matt. 27:51-53).

Outside the city, at Golgotha, the Roman centurion who stood on guard was amazed at the things that had happened and at the way in which Jesus had calmly endured it all. When Jesus cried with a loud voice to God and suddenly died, the centurion knew that he had witnessed strange things that made him very afraid. *“Truly this man was the Son of God”*, he said (Mark 15:39).

THE BURIAL

At 6 o'clock that night, the special sabbath feast day would begin. The Jews, now that they had got what they wanted, asked Pilate to take the bodies down. So the soldiers went to break the legs to hasten death, but when they came to Jesus, they were surprised to find that he was already dead. Like the Passover lamb on the night that Israel left Egypt, not a bone of his body was broken (Exod. 12:46). One of the soldiers took a spear and pierced his side, but God had been merciful to

His son and he had already died (John 19:31-34).

Another councillor came to Pilate at this time. It was Joseph of Arimathea. He came and asked if he could take down ¹³ the body of Jesus and bury him. Pilate consented and Joseph went with Nicodemus and wrapped the body in linen with spices. There was a garden nearby and they took him and buried him in a "*new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid*" (John 19:38-42). So Joseph and Nicodemus, now both disciples of Jesus, honoured him in his death. A little group of women followed them and saw where he was laid, determining to come back with spices and ointments after the feast day was over.

LESSON FOR US

When Jesus died upon the cross, he finished a life of perfect obedience to his Father. Because of this, God raised him from the dead and gave him immortality. Obedience is what God expects of all His children. "*If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him*", Jesus said (John 14:23). By his sacrifice, Jesus opened the way to life eternal for us. He was the only one worthy to receive it, yet God will give the same reward of immortality to all those who follow him to the end. If we believe him and obey him to the best of our ability, then God will forgive our sins and strengthen us to face any trials that come upon us.

What love God has shown for us in giving His only beloved Son as a sacrifice for us, that we might be saved. Jesus told Nicodemus of God's great love for us: "*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16).

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 - 12 years only)

Jesus knew many details about his crucifixion from the Old Testament scriptures. Here are some references from Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 which he would have read. Compare them with what happened.

"All they that see me laugh me to scorn ...saying, He trusted in Yahweh that He would deliver him: let Him deliver him, seeing He delighted in him " Psa. 22:7-8

"Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said...He trusted in God; let Him deliver him now, if He will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God" Matt. 27: 41-43.

"They pierced my hands and my feet" Psa. 22:16

They crucified him, and in so doing pierced his hands and feet (Matt. 27:35)

"They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture" Psa. 22:18

The soldiers parted the garments between them, but cast lots for his coat (John 19:23-24).

"Despised and rejected of men" Isa. 53:3

They rejected him as their king (John 19:15).

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth" Isa. 53: 7

When Pilate questioned Jesus, *"Jesus gave him no answer"*, even though Pilate had afflicted him by scourging him (John 19:1-10)

"He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death" Isa. 53: 9

Jesus was crucified between two thieves (Luke 23:32). Yet he was buried in the tomb of the rich man, Joseph of Aramathea (John 19:38-41; Matt. 27:57-60)

From these Old Testament quotations we can see how accurate the prophecies were relating to the crucifixion of Jesus. Israel rejected their Messiah, but they will recognise him when he returns to them. *"They shall look upon me whom they have pierced"* and ask, *"What are these wounds in thine hands?"*. Then, instead of rejecting Jesus, they will accept him as their Messiah and King. What a wonderful time this is to look forward to (See Zech. 12:10; 13:6).

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

- ✓1. Where was Jesus crucified?
2. Why did Jesus tell the women to weep for themselves?
3. Who were crucified on either side of Jesus?
- ✓4. What was written above his cross?
- ✓5. What wonderful words did Jesus say from the cross about those who killed him?
- ✓6. What did the passers-by shout out at him?
7. ← How did the chief priests mock him on the cross?
8. ← What happened to Jesus' coat?
9. Who did Jesus ask to look after his mother?
10. What strange thing happened about noon?
11. What were Jesus' last words?
12. What amazing thing happened in the Temple when he died?
13. Who buried Jesus?

Detailed Answers

14. In the midst of all his suffering on the cross Jesus thought of others. How did he show his love for
- (a) his enemies?
 - (b) his mother?
 - (c) his Father in heaven?
- ✓ 15. (a) Describe some of the strange things that happened while Jesus hung on the cross.
- (b) What did the Roman centurion say when he saw all that happened?
16. The Jews wanted the bodies of the men who were crucified taken down before night. Tell what happened and how Jesus was buried.

Additional Answers (11 - 12 years only)

17. Tell of three Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in the death of Jesus.

John 19:15

Isa 53:7.



24. THE RESURRECTION

*“Why seek ye the living among the dead?
He is not here, but is risen”.*

Aim

To show how Jesus rose again on the third day and showed himself to many of his disciples.

Jews and Gentiles had joined together to put Jesus to death. Wicked hands had taken him and nailed him to the stake till he died, but loving hands had buried him. The Father in heaven watched over all of these things. He loved His Son because he had done all that his Father had asked. Now the grave could not hold him and after three days he rose again. He appeared to many of his beloved friends and disciples, who at first were so overcome with grief at his death, that they could not believe he was alive.

Luke 24:1-48. See also Matthew 28:1-15;
Mark 16:1-14; John 20:1-29

THE TOMB SEALED AND GUARDED: Matthew 27:62-66

The leaders of the Jews had got what they wanted. Jesus was now dead and buried, but they felt very uneasy. As they thought about the strange things that had happened on the previous day — the eerie darkness which overshadowed the land for three hours, the earthquake, and the torn veil of the temple — they were a little afraid. Jesus' miracles and his warning were still fresh in their minds. What troubled them most however, were Jesus' own words, that he would rise again the third day (Mark 8:31-32; Matt. 27:63). They thought that possibly his disciples might come and steal his body and then spread the news that he had risen. So they asked Pilate for soldiers to guard the tomb for three days. “Go your way, make it as sure as ye can”, Pilate said (v65). “So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch” (v66).

Though the enemies of Jesus remembered his words that he would rise again from the dead, his disciples had forgotten. They were full of grief that their beloved Lord had been crucified. They had believed that he was about to set up the kingdom of God and now all their hopes were shattered. They

were filled with sadness and disappointment. While Jesus was with them, his warning about his death seemed unreal. He had strengthened and guided and comforted them. Now he was gone, and they were left weak and helpless, not knowing what to do next. They did not understand what the prophets had written about Messiah, that he must first suffer and then be raised to glory.

THE WOMEN VISIT THE SEPULCHRE

2. The little group of women, who had followed him from Galilee to Jerusalem caring for his needs on the way, followed him to Golgotha and stood "afar off" to witness his crucifixion (Matt. 27:55). Two of these women, whose faith and love made them follow him, had watched as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus carefully laid their Lord in the tomb. They "*beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid*" (Luke 23:55). They had planned to do one last thing to show their love. The next day was the feast day, a sabbath, but on the day after they would go and buy the precious spices and ointments to anoint his body (Mark 16:1).

Early upon the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came with some of the other women to the tomb.

THE STONE IS ROLLED AWAY

3. That very night, at the end of the sabbath, a great earthquake rocked the city. God had sent His angel to roll back the heavy stone that sealed the entrance of the tomb where Jesus had lain for three days and three nights. He sat upon the stone and the guards who had been sent to watch the tomb were terrified at his appearance. "*His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow*" (Matt. 28:3).

A. When the women came to the tomb they found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. Suddenly they saw two angels in shining garments standing there and they were afraid. The angels spoke to them saying, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen". Then the women remembered Jesus' words that he should "*rise again on the third day*", and they believed (Luke 24:5-8). Excitedly they hurried off to tell his disciples that the Lord had risen from the

dead. Though afraid by what they had seen, their hearts were filled with joy at this exciting news and they ran to tell the disciples.

THE FALSE REPORT: Matthew 28:11-15

While the women ran off with their joyful news, the terrified guards fled. Some went straight to the chief priests with the amazing story of what they had just seen in the garden. Realising what could happen if such a story got about, the chief priests called the elders together to hastily decide what should be done. The guards had obviously been terrified. The only way to make them change their story was to bribe them with a large sum of money. So the chief priests and elders persuaded the guards to say, "His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept" (v13). In actual fact, if a guard was caught sleeping on duty he was to be put to death, but these evil Jews would fix that too, if the story reached the ears of the governor.

5.

So the soldiers spread that false report and many of the people believed it. But all the lies in the world could not change the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead.

PETER AND JOHN SEE THE EMPTY TOMB

When the excited women came and told the disciples the amazing news of the empty tomb and the angels and the resurrection, it all seemed unbelievable. "*Their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not*" (Luke 24:11). But Peter and John got up and ran to the sepulchre. John got there first, and stooping down to look inside, he saw the linen graveclothes lying there. Then Peter came running up behind him and went inside the tomb. All there was to see were the neatly folded linen clothes and the napkin that had been used to cover his head, which now was set aside by itself. Then John went into the tomb "*and he saw, and believed*" (John 20:3-8).

6.

The Lord indeed was not there, but apart from John, the disciples did not yet understand that Jesus had risen from the dead and would live for evermore.

JESUS APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE: John 20:11-18

- Poor Mary was not sure what to believe. She went again to the sepulchre and saw indeed that the stone was rolled away. She stood there weeping, not knowing what had happened to the Lord. As she wept, she stooped down to look inside. Two angels in white were sitting there, *"one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain."* *"Woman, why weepest thou?"* they asked her. *"Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him"*, she said (v13). She turned around and saw a man standing behind
7. her. She thought he was the gardener and when he also asked her why she was weeping, she said, *"Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou has laid him, and I will take him away"* (v15). She had not known, through her tears, that the one she was speaking to was the risen Lord himself. But he
8. spoke one word and she instantly knew him. *"Mary"*, Jesus said. She recognised that familiar voice. *"Rabboni"*, she exclaimed (meaning 'My teacher') (v16). Now Mary was sure and she must do as he said and go and tell his *"brethren"* that he had risen.

MANY WITNESSES TO HIS RESURRECTION

That same day, the first day of the week, Jesus also revealed himself to two disciples as they went to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35).

- Later, in the evening, Jesus came and found his chosen apostles and said, *"Peace be unto you"*. When he saw that they were afraid he showed them the marks in his hands and his side, to prove that he was indeed the risen Christ. *"Behold my*
9. *hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see"*, he said (Luke 24:39). They were overcome with joy, scarcely able to believe what their eyes could see. Then Jesus asked for a
10. *piece of fish and some honeycomb* and ate it in front of them. *"Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord"* (John 20:19-20).
11. Thomas was not there at the time. When the others told him, he doubted. *"Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe,"* he said (John 20:25).

Eight days later, Jesus appeared to them all again and Thomas was there. Jesus showed him his wounds and immediately ¹² Thomas believed. *“Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed”*, Jesus said (v29).

Later he showed himself to five hundred disciples who had assembled together (1 Cor. 15:6).

There were so many witnesses who saw and believed, that the lies taught by the leaders of the Jews could not stop the wonderful news that Christ had risen indeed. A few weeks later, on the day of Pentecost, Peter announced that joyful message to thousands who had gathered in Jerusalem for the feast. *“This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses”*, he said, and three thousand more on that day believed (Acts 2:32, 41).

LESSON FOR US

Why is the resurrection of Jesus so important? The apostle Paul explained it to the Corinthians: *“If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain”* (1 Cor. 15:17). All the things that we believe in about the coming kingdom of God on earth, all our hope for the future, would be useless if Christ had not risen from the dead. We would be *“most miserable”* if that were so. Not only that, but all those who believed in him in the past who now sleep in the graves, would stay there in the dust of the earth. But, thankfully, we have something much more wonderful to look forward to for *“now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept”* (v20).

He was the *“first-fruits”*, the first to come out of the grave to be given immortality. When he returns, those who are dead, “in Christ” will also be raised (1 Thess. 4:16). Together with ¹³ those of us who are alive and believe in him, they will all be changed to immortality too, if they have been faithful till his coming.

So, since we have a living Saviour, who can die no more, let us put our trust in him and look forward to being with him for ever, as much as his disciples did.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 - 12 years only): Luke 24:13-35

Let us see what happened on the road to Emmaus on that first day of the week.

Two disciples were travelling down from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus, about eleven kilometres away. They were sad, these two men, as they walked along solemnly going over the events of the last few days. A stranger joined them on the road – at least it was not a stranger, but Jesus himself, though they were so absorbed in their sorrowful thoughts that they did not recognise him. He was the last person they would have thought to meet and they were deep in conversation. Shortly *“the stranger”* asked them what it was that they were so earnestly discussing which seemed to make them so sad. The two disciples were surprised. They thought he must be the only one in Jerusalem who had not known what had happened there in the past three days. *“What things?”* he asked them. *“Concerning Jesus of Nazareth”*, they said and went on to describe his cruel death. *“But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done”*. They told him how the women had found the tomb empty and said they had seen angels, who had told them Jesus was alive. They also told of the disciples who went to the sepulchre and found his body gone, but did not see him anywhere.

When *“the stranger”* had listened to their sad tale, he spoke to them both. *“O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?”* His words must have taken them by surprise, but he went on to show them from the scriptures, beginning at Moses and going through all the prophets, *“the things concerning himself”*. How intently they would have listened, as they began to understand what God had written in His Word.

Eventually they reached Emmaus. It looked as though their companion would go on further, but they begged him to stay with them. So he came in and they all sat down to a meal. There was bread on the table and he took some and gave thanks to God and broke it and gave to the two disciples.

Immediately they recognised him. It was Jesus himself.

No other person broke bread and gave thanks in that way. He was alive, as the women had said. Without another word, he disappeared from their sight.

Now they realised why they had been so moved as he taught them out of the scriptures, while they were walking along. They were so excited that they hurried straight back to Jerusalem to tell the eleven disciples.

QUESTIONS (9 - 12 years)

Short Answers

- ✓ 1. What made the Jews decide to ask Pilate for soldiers to guard the tomb?
2. Some women saw where Jesus was buried. What did they plan to do later?
3. What did God send His angels to do at the end of the sabbath?
4. What did the angels say to the women who came to the tomb?
5. What did the chief priests persuade the guards to say?
- ✓ 6. Which two disciples ran to the tomb and what did they find?
7. Mary Magdalene did not recognise Jesus. Who did she think he was?
8. What did Jesus say that made Mary recognise him?
- ✓ 9. What did Jesus show his chosen apostles when he appeared to them?
10. What did Jesus eat in front of them?
11. Which disciple doubted?
12. What made him at last believe?
- ✓ 13. Christ was the first to be given immortality. Who else will be given it?

Detailed Answers

14. The chief priests wanted a guard placed at the sepulchre where Jesus was buried.
- (a) Why did they ask Pilate for a guard?
 - (b) What happened in the garden at the end of the sabbath?
 - (c) What did the guards do?
 - (d) What did the chief priest do then?
15. (a) Tell what happened when the women came to the sepulchre.
- (b) Tell what Peter and John did when they heard the news.

Additional Answers (11 -- 12 years only)

- ✓ 16. Tell what happened on the road to Emmaus.

Luke 24:5-
(from: why seek
ye) 6



Hayley:
No detail.

25. JESUS ASCENDS TO HEAVEN

"This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner".

Aim

To show how Jesus ascended to heaven and promised that he would return.

After Jesus rose from the dead, he spent forty days with his disciples, before being taken up into heaven to the right hand of God. During this time he taught them many things as he prepared them for the great work which lay ahead of them.

John 21; Acts 1:1-12

THE MIRACLE OF THE FISH: John 21:1-13

After Jesus' resurrection, the angels at the sepulchre had told the women to go and tell his disciples that Jesus would go before them into Galilee. There he would meet them on a mountain (Matt. 28:7, 16).

A group of seven of the apostles, led by Peter, went down to the Sea of Galilee. *"I go a fishing"*, said Peter and the others decided to go with him. But that night, although they worked hard, they caught nothing. At daybreak someone stood on the shore (it was really Jesus), and asked if they had caught any fish. They answered, *"No"*. He suggested they try the other side. *"Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find"*. So they cast their net and immediately it was so full they could not draw it in, but the net did not break. Suddenly John realised who the person on the shore was. "It is the Lord", he told Peter. They remembered that first time when they had caught a miraculous net-full of fish (Luke 5:4-7). When Peter saw it was Jesus, he jumped into the sea and made for the shore. The other disciples followed in a little boat, dragging the heavy net behind them.

Jesus had a fire ready on shore and was already cooking fish. Happily they sat down to a meal of fish and bread with their Lord.

It was at this time that Jesus turned to Peter. "Feed my

4 sheep", Jesus told him. As Jesus had been the Good Shepherd, giving his life for his sheep, so the apostles must carry on the important work of feeding and caring for his flock. Peter proved to be a faithful shepherd, always remembering what Christ had done for him. He encouraged others also to "*Feed the flock of God*", knowing that "*when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away*" (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

JESUS INSTRUCTS THE ELEVEN: Acts 1:1-5

5 During the forty days before Jesus was taken up into heaven, he appeared to many of his disciples. He spoke to the eleven of the things concerning the kingdom of God. No doubt he told them of the glorious time when Israel would be the chief among the nations, and he would sit upon the throne of David in Jerusalem, ruling over the whole world.

6 They must now wait in Jerusalem, for God would give them the power of the Holy Spirit to help them preach in his Name. After that, they were to spread the gospel into all lands, to people of all nations. "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved*" (Mark 16:15-16). The word "*gospel*" means "*good news*". It is the good news about the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.

THE LAST MEETING: Acts 1:6-12

8 By now, the disciples were eagerly looking forward to the fulfilment of the things Jesus had spoken about. As they left Jerusalem and walked to the Mount of Olives, they asked him saying, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (v6). But Jesus answered them, "*It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power*" (v7). God alone at that time knew the appointed time for Zion to be exalted. Meanwhile, when they had received the power of the Holy Spirit, their work was to preach the gospel, for they were to be his witnesses "*in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*" (v8).

JESUS ASCENDS INTO HEAVEN: Acts 1:9-12

When Jesus had finished speaking, he was suddenly taken up from their midst. As they stood there watching in amazement, a cloud took him from their sight. Still they gazed after him, not wanting him to leave them. Then they noticed two men standing by them in white apparel. They were angels, who had been sent to give them hope and encouragement. "*Ye men of Galilee,*" they said, "*why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*". What a wonderful hope is expressed in these words, for the angels clearly stated that Jesus Christ will return to the earth. He has ascended into heaven to the right hand of his Father, where he will remain until God sends him back to establish the kingdom. Encouraged by the angels, the apostles realised that there was no need of sorrow, for they knew that he was alive for ever and would watch over them and strengthen them. Joyfully they returned to Jerusalem to await the giving of the Holy Spirit, which God had promised to send to help them preach in his name.

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LESSON FOR US

Not many years after Jesus ascended into heaven, many who had been looking for his return grew impatient. "*Where is the promise of his coming?*" they said (2 Pet. 3:4). Peter told those scoffers that God would certainly keep His promise to send Jesus back. For those who grow impatient or tired of waiting, "*the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night*", Peter said (vv9-10). So he warned Christ's followers to be always watching and waiting, for Jesus will only surprise those who are not expecting him. If we are busy following the ways of the world, instead of doing God's will, the Lord will come and find us like those foolish virgins. How sorry we would be then and very ashamed. So let us take no notice of people who laugh when we tell them that Christ is coming soon. Let us show that we believe the angels' words that "*this same Jesus*" shall come again from heaven. Let us remember his own words of encouragement "*Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be*" (Rev.

11

22:12). May he find us patiently working and waiting and studying God's Word, so that we shall go with joy to meet him.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (11 – 12 years only)

Though many people do not believe that Christ is going to come again, the Bible gives us very clear signs that his return is very near. We live in evil days and the wickedness of the world surrounds us, yet we can be very thankful that God has shown us those wonderful signs, just as Jesus gave his disciples signs that helped them believe.

Let us consider some of these clear signs.

- *The return of the Jews to the land of Israel.*
 - * Because of their disobedience, God scattered Israel into all the nations of the world. The Jews were driven out of their land when Jerusalem was destroyed in AD70 and remained scattered and persecuted for more than 1800 years. The prophets who spoke of their scattering also said that God would regather them into their own land (Jer. 31:10; Ezek. 37:21-22). Jesus also said that Jerusalem would be "*trodden down of the Gentiles*" until the days just before his return (Luke 21:24).
 - * In 1948 the Jews announced to all the world that Israel was once again a nation, dwelling in the land.
 - * In 1967, Jerusalem once again came under the control of the Jews. It is now the capital city of the nation of Israel.

- *Men's hearts failing them for fear because of the threat of terrible wars.*
 - * Jesus prophesied that before his return people would be fearful because of wars on every hand (Luke 21:25-26). The prophets spoke of world war in the Middle East (Joel 3:9-12). Russia would become a mighty power in the earth and come with many nations against the land of Israel (Ezek. 38:3-23; 14-16). God would gather all nations against Jerusalem for war (Zech.

14:2).

* Threat of world war is very real to everyone today. Men speak openly about "Armageddon", which is indeed that great battle in the Middle East spoken of by the prophets (Rev. 16:16). The nations are piling up huge stocks of weapons, some of which could wipe out life on the earth altogether. How blessed we are to know that God will not let that happen, but will send His Son.

- *Men shall be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.*
* The apostle Paul warns us of the wickedness that will be found in the world "in the last days" just before Christ comes. "*Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy ... lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God*" (2 Tim. 3:1-5).
* What a true description that is of today's world, particularly in western countries, such as Australia, America and Britain. The shops have so much to offer us, that we can easily become covetous, always wanting something new, and not thankful for what we have. Children blaspheme the name of Christ as easily as adults. Teachers have little control over their students because those children are disobedient to their parents and to anyone in authority.
We must be careful not to fill up our time with the pleasures of the world, for then we will not have time to please our God.

- *There shall be scoffers, saying, Where is the promise of his coming?*
* The apostle Peter showed that "in the last days" people would not believe in the return of Christ. They would look around them and say, "*all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation*" (2 Pet. 3:3-4).
* So people today are not interested to hear of Christ's return. They laugh at the idea. Peter goes on to give a warning to those who do look for his coming:

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (v14).

QUESTIONS (9 – 12 years)

Short Answers

1. After Jesus rose from the dead, why did the disciples go to Galilee?
2. Who was the first to recognise Jesus on the shore?
3. What made the disciple sure it was Jesus?
- ✓ 4. What special work did Jesus say that Peter must do?
5. How long was Jesus on earth after his resurrection?
- ✓ 6. Finish the words of Jesus: *“Go ye into all the world...”*
7. What questions did the disciples ask Jesus about the kingdom?
- ✓ 8. From which mountain did Jesus ascend to heaven?
9. Who told the disciples that Jesus would come again?
10. Why were the disciples not sad this time when Jesus left them?
- ✓ 11. What must we do while Jesus is still in heaven?

Detailed Answers

12. Tell what happened at the lake of Galilee, when Jesus’ disciples went there after his resurrection.
13. Tell what happened on the Mount of Olives, when Jesus was with his disciples for the last time.

Additional Answers (11 – 12 years only)

- ✓ 14. Tell briefly four signs which prove to us that the Lord Jesus Christ will soon return to the earth.

Acts 1:10-11

Hayley: No detail.