

LUKE

You, God, and a KJV Bible

By Eric Neumann

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Quotations

The only material quoted in this book is the Word of God in the King James Version. No commentaries or scholars are quoted, because God's Word is important, not man's word. As such, I encourage all readers to be good Bereans by searching the scriptures to see if what I have said is true (Acts 17:11). It is okay if you do not agree with what I say, but it is not okay if your disagreement is not based upon the Word of God in its proper context, which involves "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

Goal

The goal of this Bible study is to cast "down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and [bring] into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5) so that members of the body of Christ may "come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4).

Contact the author

Therefore, the author encourages any disagreements be brought to his attention so that future versions of this commentary can be changed if deemed necessary.

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Books by Eric Neumann

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Luke Introduction

The book of **Luke** shows Jesus as the perfect man. It covers much of the same information as Matthew does but with more detail at times. Luke is the only one to give detail surrounding John the Baptist's birth (1) and to go into detail on the believing remnant's reaction to Jesus' birth (2:25-38). Since Luke shows Jesus as a man, His genealogy goes all the way back to God and Adam (3:23-38). The good Samaritan (10:30-37), the lost sheep (15:1-7), the lost coin (15:8-10), the lost son (15:11-32), the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31), the persistent widow (18:1-8), the Pharisee and the publican (18:9-14), and Zacchaeus (19:1-10) are stories only found in Luke, because they are examples of how the men of Israel should respond to the perfect man, Jesus.

Jesus sets His Own example of the perfect man by praying so earnestly that, with regard to the cross, He only overcomes the flesh by sweating "as it were great drops of blood" (22:44). Only Luke records this detail. Luke is also the only one to record Jesus speaking to the two men on the road to Emmaus (24:13-32), as it shows how a believing man in Israel is to share scripture with the lost sheep of the house of Israel (24:27, 44-46), so that they may believe, too. Finally, Luke is the only gospel to share Jesus' ascension (24:51), as a sign of how believing Israel will not perish with this world at Jesus' second coming.

Summary: The Christ comes as Israel's man, living a sinless life and dying as her kinsmen redeemer, while also performing physical miracles to demonstrate the spiritual healing (forgiveness of sins) that God wants to give them to bring them into the kingdom.

Key passage: (This passage explains the one-year ministry of the Holy Ghost in Acts 1-7.) **13:6-9** (6) He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. (7) Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? (8) And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: (9) And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

1 The 400-year famine in Israel of hearing the word of the Lord is over (Amos 8:11)! The Messiah's forerunner is born (vs. 57-67); the Messiah's birth is foretold (vs. 26-38); the believing remnant rejoice over their redemption (vs. 46-55); but Israel, as a whole, will not be saved until Jesus' second coming (vs. 62-79).

1:1-4 Many people wrote accounts on Jesus' life, but only four of them made it into the Bible, because they were the four that God wrote through them. Many of these accounts were written secondhand. There must have been some error in these accounts because Luke writes his gospel to set the

record straight, since he has "perfect understanding of all things from the very first."

Looking at the gospel writers from the perspective of man helps us understand why we should listen to preachers, in addition to doing our own Bible study. All four writers wrote the truth, but they wrote different aspects of the truth, depending on what God had them do. Similarly today, the Holy Spirit teaches us God's Word as we read it rightly divided (I Corinthians 2:9-16), but we each have our own perspective. Therefore, you may see something that I may miss and vice versa. Sharing this information, then, orally and in writing, exposes us to ideas that we did not originally see. We can then be good Bereans and search the scripture to see if what the other person says is so (Acts 17:10-11). Then, we can believe the truth and reject the falsehoods. This helps us grow in the knowledge of the truth, and this appears to be the method that Luke used to write the gospel of Luke.

1:5 I Chronicles 24:6-19 lists the 24 courses of the priests, meaning that each course took their respective turn during the year in the temple of the Lord. Luke 1:5 says that Zacharias was "of the course of Abia," which corresponds to Abijah, who had the eighth course of the year. If Elisabeth got pregnant shortly after his course was over (1:23-24), her pregnancy would have begun around June 25. Since Mary became pregnant with Jesus about six months after Elisabeth became pregnant with John the Baptist (1:35-36), Mary's pregnancy would have begun around December 25, which means that Jesus was born around September 25. Although Jesus was not born on December 25, the real miracle is His supernatural conception, not necessarily the birth, and His conception may have actually taken place on December 25.

Luke tells us that John the Baptist was a Levite through and through, having priestly blood on both his father's and mother's side. This also flies in the face of Christianity's theory that, by the time of Jesus' birth, no one knew what tribe they were from. The Levitical tribe was maintained such that even the individual courses of Levites were still known.

1:6 John the Baptist's parents were part of the believing remnant, the little flock. Note that it does not say that they followed the traditions of the Pharisees. Rather, they walked "in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" in SPITE of the Pharisees' traditions.

1:7 Elisabeth's barren womb shows that the son born of her will be of God. It is a picture of the spiritual seed of Abraham being continued through Israel. Abraham (Genesis 11:30), Isaac (Genesis 25:21), and Jacob (Genesis 30:1) all had barren wives, who had male babies by the hand of the Lord, showing that Israel is God's nation. (Jacob's barren wives are both Leah and Rachel, because God opened up the wombs of both Leah (Genesis 29:31) and Rachel (Genesis 30:22), meaning that all 12 tribes of Israel are of God.)

1:7-8 Numbers 4:3 says that a person was to be a priest from age 30 to age 50. Here, we see that Zacharias is “well stricken in years.” Therefore, he is probably too old, according to the Mosaic law, to be a priest, yet he is still a priest, probably because the next generation was so rebellious against God that they refused to do it.

1:11 The angel appearing to Zacharias is God's first intervention in the affairs of the nation of Israel in 400 years. This ends the famine of the hearing of the words of the Lord, spoken of in Amos 8:11-12, that occurred between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament.

1:13 Zacharias' son is the first person in the Bible ever named "John." John means "God is gracious." It is only by God's grace that the famine from God ends, and He sends the forerunner of the Messiah to Israel (3:2-4).

1:15 The fact, that John the Baptist was not to drink any strong drink, shows that he would be a Nazarite from birth. The details of a Nazarite are found in Numbers 6:1-8. The purpose of being a Nazarite was to be separate and holy unto the Lord. Thus, John's being a Nazarite is a demonstration of how the nation of Israel was far from God, being steeped in religion, and so John would be separated from that system, such that his ministry would be in the wilderness even though, being in the priestly line, he would normally work in the temple. In fact, 1:80 says that he stayed “in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.”

1:16 John would prepare the way for the Messiah by turning many in Israel away from religion and toward God.

1:17 John the Baptist came to fulfill Malachi 4:5-6—to be Elijah for Israel so that they would be ready to enter the kingdom. If Israel would have received the kingdom of God, John would have been Elias (Matthew 11:14). Since they rejected the kingdom, John came only "in the spirit and power of Elias." This shows that, before the kingdom was ever offered to them, God knew that Israel would reject the kingdom offer. Therefore, John only fulfilled Isaiah 40:3, and not Malachi 4:5-6.

Turning "the disobedient to the wisdom of the just" refers to turning Israel away from the religion of the Pharisees, but they did not have the faith for this to happen (7:6). Turning “the hearts of the fathers to the children” may mean the same thing, since Israel was supposed to have childlike faith in God’s Word to them, and so John came to take the hardened hearts of the fathers (Jeremiah 7:25-29) and turn them into hearts of faith like little children (18:16-17).

1:18 Although Zacharias was righteous and faithfully obeyed God's law covenant (1:6), he lacked the faith to believe that he would have a son. As such, Zacharias is a picture of the believing remnant during Jesus' day, who

had the faith to believe the gospel of the kingdom, but they did not believe in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, and other truths that contradict the traditions of the fathers.

I think it is funny that Zacharias asks, "Whereby shall I know this?" Wasn't having an angel of the Lord stand on the right side of the altar of incense (1:11) and speak to him enough of a sign that he would have a son in his old age?

1:19 The word "gospel" means "good news" or "glad tidings." There is more than one gospel in the Bible, because God gives good news throughout scripture. The "gospel," here, is that God is sending someone to prepare Israel for their Messiah. This is not a saving gospel in the sense that believing or not believing that God will send John the Baptist does not affect the eternal life of anyone. However, it is good news that God is preparing the way for the Messiah, because this means that the kingdom of heaven is now at hand (Matthew 3:2).

1:20 1:13 says that Zacharias had been praying for a child. Now, that God answered his prayer, he does not believe! Zacharias' being dumb means that he could not share these glad tidings with the rest of Israel. This is a picture of how many of the believing remnant during the tribulation period will not have the faith to share the gospel of the kingdom to the rest of Israel as well. Instead, they will slumber and sleep (Matthew 25:5).

1:21 The people, waiting for Zacharias, is a picture of the lost sheep of the house of Israel waiting for the little flock to share the gospel of the kingdom with them. Yet, many will not share it because of unbelief. Therefore, they will "not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (Matthew 10:23).

1:24-25 We are not told why Elisabeth hid. For whatever reason, God wanted to keep her pregnancy a secret, as demonstrated by the fact that even her cousin Mary did not know she was pregnant (1:36). Perhaps her hiding is to show how God separated John the Baptist from religion from the moment he was conceived.

1:28 The Catholic church has exalted Mary to a position that is even higher than the Lord Jesus Christ, making her a perpetual virgin who never sinned! They do this because Satan has had his counterfeit religion of Babylon operating since Genesis 10, and it involves the worship of a female deity known as "the queen of heaven." This queen was even worshipped by Israel (Jeremiah 7:18 and 44:17). To make his religion more believable, Satan had the virgin Mary become this queen. She is worshipped today in the Catholic church, and she is probably the image to the beast that is worshipped in the last half of the tribulation period (Revelation 13:14-15).

However, the angel Gabriel says that Mary is blessed among women, but she

is no deity. She is still an ordinary woman. In fact, she is not even the most blessed woman in the Bible. That distinction belongs to Jael, who killed a king to help out Israel. We are told she is "blessed ABOVE women" (Judges 5:24), while Mary is only blessed "AMONG women." Perhaps this is because Mary has not done anything to help Israel's cause, while Jael did. Mary is chosen to carry Jesus Christ in her womb because she is a virgin, thus fulfilling Isaiah 7:14, and she has the faith to believe that she will be the mother of Jesus through a miraculous conception by the Holy Ghost. Those are all good characteristics, but she is still a woman who sins, just like everyone else.

1:31 The human name of the Messiah was not revealed to man until given to Mary here. "Jesus" is the Greek word for the Hebrew "Joshua." As Joshua brought Israel into the promised land, Jesus will bring saved Israel into God's eternal kingdom on earth.

1:32-33 Before Jesus is even conceived in Mary's womb, we are told that He will be the Son of God and will fulfill the Davidic covenant by also being David's Son, Who will have an everlasting kingdom (II Samuel 7:12-13). It is also a united kingdom, as Ezekiel 37:16-23 states. We see that here by the fact that we are told that He will reign over the house of Jacob, and not just over Judah.

We are also told that His kingdom will be an everlasting one, which shows that His kingdom is God's everlasting kingdom, to replace man's kingdoms, as prophesied in Daniel 2:44.

1:34 Zacharias' question of Gabriel was one of unbelief, asking for proof that what he said would come to pass. Therefore, he was punished with muteness for his unbelief. Mary's question is not of unbelief. She wants to know how she will have a child, which is a very legitimate question, given that she will give birth while remaining as a virgin. Therefore, she is not punished. Also, Zacharias, as a priest in the temple, should have had greater faith than a virgin girl had.

1:35 People say that "that holy thing" is a bad translation in the KJV, because Jesus was a person and not a thing. Therefore, all modern translations change it. NKJV and NIV say "holy one," and the NLT says "the baby to be born will be holy." However, by changing the correct translation from "that holy thing" to something else, an important truth is missed.

"That holy thing" is the correct translation because the "holy thing" being created is the holy nation of Israel under the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the generation of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1) being born, i.e., saved Israel becoming "born again" into Christ (John 3:7). Jeremiah 31:22 says, "the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man." This woman is saved Israel compassing the Lord Jesus Christ in the kingdom, as God makes the new covenant with Israel just nine

verses later. Therefore, by not changing God's holy word, the truth of the beginning of this new, holy thing with Jesus Christ's birth is seen here.

1:36-37 In its immediate context, "With God nothing shall be impossible" refers to the physical miracles of: 1) A barren woman having a child, and 2) A virgin woman having a child. However, in Luke 18:27, Jesus says that it is impossible for men to save themselves, but all things are possible with God. Therefore, the broader context of the statement here in Luke 1:37 is that the salvation of the nation of Israel, which is "that holy thing," is only possible with God.

This phrase should NOT be used to say that God can do anything, because God limits Himself by His Word. For example, God said that the spiritual gifts would pass off the scene once His Word was completed (I Corinthians 13:8-10 and Ephesians 4:11-13). Therefore, when I say that God will not heal someone today through a divine healer or that He will not cause someone to speak in tongues today, I am not limiting God, but I am having faith in His Word. Conversely, when someone says that God can do these things today, than he is calling God a liar, and God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

1:38 Mary's faith is seen here in that she believes that she will have a child while remaining a virgin, while Zacharias asked for a sign (1:18). Mary's faith is confirmed in 1:45, where we are told that she believed.

1:39-41 The Holy Ghost comes upon Elisabeth's womb once Mary comes into her presence, because "that holy thing" is being prepared by John the Baptist and will be accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, this is a sign of how the Holy Ghost will come upon the holy nation of Israel both at the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) and in the eternal kingdom by coming into their hearts and causing them to obey the law (Ezekiel 36:27).

1:42-45 Since John the Baptist is filled with the Holy Ghost in Elisabeth's womb (1:15), Elisabeth is also filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesies here. She prophesies that Mary's baby is the Lord Himself. She also confirms what the angel said in 1:28 that Mary is blessed among women, not above women, men, and God, as the Catholic church would have you believe.

"The mother of my Lord" (v. 43) does not mean that God has a mother, because God has no beginning or ending. Rather, Jesus, the man, is Elisabeth's Lord, as Acts 2:36 says that "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

John leaped for joy in Elisabeth's womb (v. 44), and John was "filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" (v. 15). These verses clearly show that abortion is murder, since John was alive as a human being while still in Elisabeth's womb.

1:46-55 Although we are not specifically told so, it appears that the Holy Ghost speaks through Mary here. Otherwise, she would not have such in-depth understanding of what Jesus' birth means to Israel.

1:46 Although Mary will be the mother of the Lord, she magnifies the Lord, not herself. The Catholic church should take a clue from their beloved Mary and magnify the Lord, not Mary.

1:47-48 Although Mary is also poor materially speaking, Mary's "low estate" refers to her spiritual state (v. 48). All of Israel, including Mary, is Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24), even though she has faith in God. Mary is rejoicing that her faith, and all of the believing remnant of Israel's faith, is rewarded by a Saviour (v. 47) to lead captivity captive (Psalm 68:18 and Ephesians 4:8) and into the kingdom.

1:49 The Lord Jesus Christ is the true mighty man, delivering Israel from Satan, the one stronger than Israel (Jeremiah 31:11 and Luke 11:22). The way He does this is because His name is holy. If He were not holy, He would not be stronger than Satan.

1:51 "The arm of the Lord" (Isaiah 53:1) refers to the Messiah. God is making "bare His holy arm" (Isaiah 52:10) by bringing the Messiah on the scene. Therefore, God showing "strength with His arm" shows God defeating Satan through the Messiah's death, burial, and resurrection.

1:52 The mighty being put down from their seats refers to Satan and his minions being cast out of their positions of power. Satan said that he would "sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north" (Isaiah 14:13), which is God's seat. Instead, the Lord Jesus Christ wins the victory on the cross, and Satan will fall from the seat that he does occupy (Isaiah 14:12). (Colossians 2:15 states that the Lord Jesus Christ spoiled principalities and powers and triumphed over them in the cross. Ephesians 1:21 says that the Lord Jesus Christ is now "far above all principality, and power.")

Those of low degree being exalted refers to the believing remnant, brought low by the Antichrist during the tribulation period, but exalted to high positions of power in God's kingdom. (Jesus said in 14:11, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.")

1:53 This refers to Jesus establishing His kingdom at the end of the tribulation period. The little flock will be physically hungry during the tribulation period because they cannot buy food since they will not take the mark of the beast. More importantly, they will hunger and thirst after righteousness and be filled by God (Matthew 5:6). The rich are the apostate nation of Israel, who will become rich by joining themselves to the Antichrist.

1:54 “His servant Israel” refers to the believing remnant of Israel. He helps them at His first coming by offering the sacrifice to redeem them from their sins. He will bring them into the kingdom at His second coming. Note that they are servants (Leviticus 25:55). They do not become sons until Jesus’ second coming (Revelation 21:7). Contrast this with us in the dispensation of grace, who become sons the moment we trust in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for our sins (Galatians 4:5-7).

1:56 Mary either stayed with Elisabeth until John the Baptist was born, or she left just shortly beforehand.

1:59 John the Baptist is circumcised on the eighth day, just like the law commanded (Leviticus 12:3). The number eight pictures a new beginning. This is a new beginning for the nation of Israel. Therefore, Matthew 1:1 is NOT the beginning of Christianity, but it signals the beginning of the at-hand phase of God’s kingdom for Israel in their program under God’s covenant with Israel. They are still under the Mosaic law (Matthew 23:1-3).

1:62 Zacharias could not speak (1:20). This verse makes it sound like he also could not understand what was being spoken to him, since they had to make signs to him to find out what his son’s name should be. His inability to speak is a sign of many believers in Israel in the tribulation period not sharing the gospel. His inability to hear is a sign of how the nation as a whole will not have the spiritual ears to understand the gospel (Zechariah 7:11).

1:63-64 All of the people marvelled when Zacharias wrote down John’s name. It appears, then, that, in their culture, the firstborn son was automatically named after his father. Therefore, calling him “John” shows the faith of Zacharias. Once his faith becomes sight, he can now speak. Similarly, many in Israel will not demonstrate their faith in the gospel of the kingdom until the Lord Jesus Christ’s second coming. Then, they will be saved and begin praising God.

1:65-66 Fear comes upon Israel, because God has not intervened like this with Israel in about 400 years. Their unbelief in God’s Word to them is shown in that they wonder what manner of child John will be. If they had known their Old Testament well, they would have expected the forerunner of the Messiah to come on the scene shortly, as did the believing remnant in Jerusalem (2:38).

1:67 Zacharias’ being filled with the Holy Ghost after he believed God is a picture of how, once in the kingdom, believing Israel will have the Holy Ghost in them as part of the new covenant (Ezekiel 36:27).

1:68-69 The Messiah will not be born for another six months, but the Holy Ghost prophesies through Zacharias in the past tense, saying that God has

already redeemed His people from being Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24) and has already raised up the Messiah to be the king over Israel, fulfilling the Davidic covenant (II Samuel 7:12-13). This is God calling "those things which be not as though they were" (Romans 4:17). The first prophecy (1:68) refers to Jesus' first coming, and the second prophecy (1:69) refers to Jesus' second coming.

1:70 The gospel of the kingdom to Israel is prophecy. It stands in contrast to the mystery program of grace that is going on today. Israel's program was spoken about "since the world began." The mystery program "was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25).

1:71-73 God is NOT starting something new in the "New" Testament. Rather, He is continuing the Abrahamic covenant. He is remembering "His holy covenant; the oath which He swore to our father Abraham." That was His promise to make of Abraham a great nation and bless him (Genesis 12:2). This is not God abolishing the Mosaic law, abandoning Israel because of their unbelief, and then giving Israel's promises to believing Gentiles, as reformed theologians would have you believe.

1:76-77 Since most of Israel does not believe their Bibles, God specifically tells them, through Zacharias, that John the Baptist will fulfill Isaiah 40:3 in preparing the way for the Messiah. Therefore, they should now know that the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The way in which John did this was that he preached the gospel of the kingdom for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4) so that, when the Messiah started His ministry, He would have the faithful in Israel ready to join Him in reaching the rest of Israel to be a kingdom of priests to the Gentiles (Exodus 19:5-6).

1:79 Isaiah 9:1-2 and Matthew 4:15-16 tell us that the territories of Israel where the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali dwell is the place referred to in this verse. Israel is Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24) such that they are sitting in complete spiritual darkness. John the Baptist comes to bear witness of the Light, while the Messiah is the true Light (John 1:6-9).

1:80 Note that John the Baptist grew in the desert until "the day of his shewing unto Israel." This "day" would have been when his ministry began at the age of 30. Zacharias was not in the desert with him, since he served in the temple (1:5,8). Therefore, God Himself raised John the Baptist out in the desert.

40 days after his birth is when his parents would have presented him to the Lord in the temple (2:22), and it is probably at that time that God took Him into the desert to raise him. God had said that He would dwell in the temple, but the temple was so corrupted by the Jews' religion that God had long since left the temple (Ezekiel 10:18-19 and 11:22-23). Therefore, God raised

John the Baptist in the desert. This shows how bad Israel was in that he could not be raised in the temple. Contrast this with Samuel, who was raised in the temple by the priest (I Samuel 2:11,18), where the Lord was (I Samuel 3:1,4). Zacharias was a priest in the temple, but he could not even raise his own son there because God was not there any more!

In other words, God had established the Jewish religion to save Israel, and man had corrupted it so much that Israel could only be saved by separating themselves as far away from the Jews' religion as possible.

2 Jesus is born in an animal feeding trough (v. 7) to a poor family (v. 24). Israel is in such bad shape that, by the age of 12, Jesus outsmarts the most learned religious people in Jerusalem (vs. 42-47)! Yet, there is a faithful remnant looking for God's redemption of them (v. 38).

2:1 Jesus' first coming was when there was one, world government (the Romans). His second coming will be the same way, with the Antichrist ruling over the world in Israel at the time.

2:4,3:23 2:4 tells us that Joseph was in David's line. 3:23 says that Joseph was the son of Heli, which was really Mary's father, showing that Mary was also of the lineage of David. (Joseph's father was really Jacob, according to Matthew 1:16.) Thus, Jesus had royal blood from Mary's side and from Joseph's side.

2:7 Being God, Jesus could have been born any way He chose. Most kings are born in luxury. God chose to be born to a poor family, wrapped tightly in clothes, and placed in a feeding trough for animals. The fact that there was no room for Him in the inn is a picture of how there was no room for Him in Israel. Religion had crowded their Messiah out.

Mary was Jesus' mother, and God was His Father (John 3:16). Note that Jesus was Mary's "firstborn son," which implies that she had at least one more son. Matthew 13:55-56 tells us that Mary had at least 4 more sons and 2 daughters after she gave birth to Jesus, which means that she did not remain a perpetual virgin as Catholicism teaches.

2:8 Shepherds are the first to hear of the birth of Israel's Messiah and Lord. God refers to the religious leaders as shepherds (Ezekiel 34). He says that they feed themselves (Ezekiel 34:2), such that the "sheep were scattered, because there is no shepherd" (Ezekiel 34:5). If they were good shepherds, they would have been there at the birth of their Messiah. Instead, no religious shepherds are found, only physical shepherds. These physical shepherds watching their flock at night are a picture of how the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 10:11), came to the little flock to bind the strong man, i.e., Satan (Matthew 12:29), and give them the kingdom (Luke 12:32).

2:9 The glory of the Lord shining round about the shepherds is like when the children of Israel in Moses' day built the tabernacle and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-38). Israel did not travel unless the glory of the Lord was with them. With the Messiah's coming, the glory of the Lord is not in the tabernacle any more because it is corrupt with religion. Rather, it is in the country among some shepherds. If they knew their Bible, they would follow their Messiah wherever He goes, because the glory of the Lord is with Him.

2:10 God's plan in Israel's program was to send the Messiah to save Israel only (Matthew 15:24), and then saved Israel would preach the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles (2:32 and John 4:22). As such, the "good tidings of great joy...SHALL be to all people," but they are only to Israel at the moment.

2:11 In this one verse, the shepherds are told that Jesus is: 1) Their King, 2) Their Saviour, 3) Their Messiah, and 4) Their Lord.

2:13-14 For a brief moment, a part of the kingdom of heaven is on the earth with the heavenly host and with God in the flesh.

The peace and good will that the Lord Jesus Christ brings refers to peace and good will with God. Those, who believe the gospel of the kingdom and receive this peace with God, will have tribulations with man, for Jesus said in Matthew 10:34 that He "came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). It is only in God's kingdom on earth that the little flock will have peace with both God and man.

2:15-16 The shepherds must have been supernaturally guided by God to the manger, as there were probably many mangers in Bethlehem. Perhaps they followed the star that the wise men followed.

2:17 The first witnesses of the Messiah's birth were physical shepherds, because the religious shepherds had led Israel astray. The religious shepherds have their chance to see the Messiah two years later, and they still will not go unto Him then (Matthew 2:4-8)!

2:18-19 If Israel knew their Old Testament, they would have known that the birth of their Messiah meant that God was redeeming His people. They would not wonder about what is going on. Contrast these people with Mary, a representative of the believing remnant. She keeps these things in her heart and ponders their meaning. She probably believes the Messiah will come and set up His kingdom immediately, and so she is trying to make the things that have happened fit into her mentality of who the Messiah would be. She probably ends up maintaining her belief that the Messiah would overthrow the Romans and set up His kingdom right then because she later probably considers Jesus to be crazy and tries to commit Him to the funny farm (see Mark 3:21,31-35).

And so we see two groups in Israel when Jesus was born. The one group is in unbelief. The other group is the believing remnant, but even the believers have a different view of the Messiah than what scripture says. They are expecting their Messiah to be King right now (Isaiah 43:15) instead of being the suffering servant first (Isaiah 53:11).

2:21-24 Again, we see that Jesus is not eliminating Judaism and starting Christianity at His first coming. Rather, He is continuing the old, law covenant that God had with Israel. Jesus is circumcised on the eighth day, ACCORDING TO THE LAW (Leviticus 12:3). Mary continued another 33 days as unclean, “ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF MOSES” (Leviticus 12:4). They then offer a sacrifice, ACCORDING TO THE LAW (Leviticus 12:6).

The fact that Joseph and Mary bring “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons” shows that they are poor because they cannot afford to bring a lamb (Leviticus 12:8), unless you consider that they brought “the Lamb of God” with them (John 1:29). God chose to have His Son born to a poor family because it is faith that God values most, not material riches. The poor family represents the little flock, who will be poor in the tribulation period, because they will not be able to buy and sell because they will not take the mark of the beast.

If today’s churchgoers would just read and believe their Bibles, it would be clear to them that Israel’s program continued with Jesus in Matthew – John. They would then stop following Satan’s ministers (II Corinthians 11:13-15), who just want their money (I Timothy 6:9-10).

2:25-26 There is still a believing remnant in Israel at the time. Even among the corrupt religious rule of the Pharisees in Jerusalem, there is a man with the Holy Ghost, and he is waiting for Israel to be delivered from her misery. Since the Holy Ghost said that he would see Christ before he died, Simeon must have been looking at the seventy weeks in Daniel 9:24-27 and have figured out that the Messiah would be born soon.

2:32 Jesus Christ will bring salvation to Israel, and, through Israel as a kingdom of priests, He will bring salvation to the Gentiles. This is how “God so loved the world” (John 3:16) in Israel’s program. As such, John 3:16 does not apply today. Simeon quotes Isaiah 42:6, which is part of the chapter that shows Jesus as the servant (Isaiah 42:1). He has come as a suffering servant, not as a conquering king.

2:33 All modern translations change this verse to say that Jesus’ father and mother marveled at what was spoken. That is blasphemy, because God was Jesus’ father, not Joseph. Only the KJV says that “Joseph and his mother marvelled.”

2:34-35 The Holy Ghost tries to set Mary straight through the prophecy of

Simeon. Rather than looking for Jesus to become king immediately, they should be looking for His crucifixion. “The fall and rising again of many in Israel” refers to them falling over Jesus’ crucifixion, which is the stumbling stone (20:17-18). They are to rise again after His resurrection through the ministry of the Holy Ghost in the little flock. Because Israel still did not believe the gospel in early Acts, the rising again of Israel was delayed until after the rapture of the body of Christ (Romans 11:25-26). The cross is what reveals the thoughts of the hearts of the Jewish religious leaders. They secretly do not want their Messiah, and this is revealed to the nation as a whole when they have Him crucified.

2:36-37 Anna is another example of the believing remnant. God miraculously kept her alive so that she could see the Messiah born. She was a widow for 84 years and had been married for 7 years, which means she was probably about 110 years old at this time. The fact that she “served God with fastings and prayers” makes her a type of the little flock with their forced fasts during the tribulation period because they will not take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16-17). The numbers of 7 and 84 in this passage are no coincidence. 7 is the number of spiritual perfection. Israel will have to go through the 7-year tribulation period to attain spiritual perfection in God’s kingdom on earth. 84 is 7 times 12, which is spiritual perfection and governmental perfection. Governmental perfection will be attained in God’s kingdom, which will not come about until the spiritual perfection is attained through the tribulation period.

2:38 Those, believing in God’s Word, knew from Daniel’s 70 weeks (Daniel 9:24-27) that it was time for the Messiah to appear. Therefore, they were looking “for redemption in Jerusalem.” These are the ones spoken about in Malachi 3:16. They “feared the Lord”, and “spake often one to another.” This little verse is the bright spot in the apostate religion of the Jews found at Jesus’ first coming. It shows that Israel really did have a chance to enter the kingdom. All they had to do was believe the gospel, as this remnant had done.

Also, note that God did not use the slick talking political leaders or the smooth talking religious leaders of the day. Rather, He used a 110 year-old woman to tell those in Jerusalem that their Messiah had come.

2:39 Again, Joseph and Mary are obeying the law covenant that God made with Israel. They are not following something new, because God did not start something new until He called Paul in Acts 9.

2:39-40 Unlike John the Baptist, Jesus grew up in Nazareth. Note how Luke emphasizes His humanity. Being fully man, He had to study the scriptures and become wise in them just like any other man would have to do. Isaiah 50:4-6 says that Jesus had morning Bible studies with the Father every day so that He could learn God’s Word.

If Jesus did not know God's Word inside and out, He never would live a perfect life and be able to die on the cross to save mankind of his sins. Since Jesus had to spend so much time studying God's Word, why do churchgoers let dust accumulate on their Bibles and think that they are in the center of God's will if they go to a "worship" service every Sunday and "feel God's presence" during the singing?

2:41-42 Joseph, Mary, and Jesus kept the feast days under the law because they were still under the Old Testament law. Exodus 23:4-17 required that all males appear before the Lord for three feasts each year.

2:42-47 Jesus is 12 years old, and He is already having a battle with religion. He is in the temple in Jerusalem where the most learned men are. He sits in the midst of doctors with their PhDs. However, He knows more than they do, not because He is the Son of God, but because He believes God's Word, while the doctors are caught up in religion. The doctors talk their religion (v. 46), and so Jesus asks them questions because what they are saying does not line up with God's Word (v. 46). Then, He answers His Own questions from God's Word (v. 47)! At the age of 12, Jesus is putting the top dogs of religion to shame, and He does this for at least 5 days. Joseph and Mary went one day's journey (v. 44); it took them one day to get back; and it took them three days to find Him (v. 46). Where did Jesus get food for 5 days? He did not need food, because His meat was to do the will of His Father (John 4:34). For at least five days, Jesus shows the people in Jerusalem that God is not looking for people to follow in the religion of the Pharisees. Rather, they just need to trust the scriptures as their final authority.

2:48-50 Mary is rebuked by her 12 year-old Son. She is rightly rebuked for trying to stand against what the Father wants Jesus to do. We also see that she is now embarrassed by Jesus' virgin birth, because she claims that Joseph is Jesus' father. Jesus corrects her by saying that He is about His real Father's business, and not His supposed father. He has now surpassed both the religious elite and the believing remnant in the knowledge of God's Word.

This story is the only one we have of Jesus before age 30. Christians like to guess as to what Jesus did during the first 30 years of His life. Really, there is no need to wonder, because these verses tell you. He was learning His Father's business. Because His Father was God, He was not learning carpentry from Joseph. Rather, from the time He was born until age 30, He had to be focused on God's Word at all times. If not, He would have succumb to a temptation to sin at least once, especially given that He was living with Joseph, Mary, four younger half-brothers and at least two half-sisters who all sinned, just like everyone else. Being sinless, you know His siblings picked on Him and would have driven Him crazy without being grounded in God's Word. Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). To accomplish that, He was studying God's

Word every day to the point that He knew it frontwards and backwards by the time He was 30.

By the way, a lot of Christians wonder if He did any physical miracles while He was growing up. The answer is no. There are two reasons we know this: 1) He did not receive the Holy Spirit until He was baptized by John (3:21-23), which means He did not have the ability to do any miracles until that time, and 2) John 2:1-10 tells of how Jesus turned water into wine, and John 2:11 says, “This BEGINNING of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee.” Therefore, we know that He did not do any miracles at home while He was a child.

2:51 Jesus was subject unto Joseph and Mary, even though He knew better what to do than they did. This shows how important roles are to God. God said, “honour thy father and thy mother” (Exodus 20:12), and so Jesus obeyed Joseph and Mary, even though He was wiser than they were.

2:52 Only Jesus, the man, could increase in wisdom, stature, and favour. He did so in a dry ground (Isaiah 53:2), meaning that He did not have great instructors in God’s Word. Rather, He had to learn it Himself by studying with the Father. Similarly today, because of the great apostasy of the church, the most profitable study of God’s Word usually comes from reading it by ourselves and allowing the Holy Spirit to teach it to us.

3 John the Baptist’s ministry begins (v. 3) and ends (v. 20), Jesus is baptized to begin His ministry (vs. 21-22), and Jesus is shown as being the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15) to bring redemption to mankind (vs. 23-38).

3:2 John the Baptist’s living in a bubble for 30 years is now over. The time of his showing to Israel has arrived. God gives him the gospel of the kingdom, and he begins preaching it to Israel.

3:3 The gospel of the kingdom is to repent, which, in this context, means for Israel to change their mind about being self-righteousness and trust in God’s imputed righteousness instead. Second, according to Leviticus 26:40, they needed to confess Israel’s sins. Finally, they needed to be water baptized to be ordained as a priest (Exodus 19:5-6), as prescribed by Exodus 29:4. How, you may ask, did I put such obscure passages together to come up with the gospel of the kingdom? I did not, but God did.

Remember that John was raised by God in the wilderness (1:80; John 1:6), and so God told him what to preach. In fact, 3:2 specifically says, “the word of God came unto John.” Matthew 3:2,6 says that John preached for Israel to repent, which included confession of sins and water baptism. Primarily, this means that Israel needed to abandon the religion of the Pharisees and trust God’s Word instead.

3:4-6 John the Baptist's ministry is summed up in this quote of Isaiah 40:3-5. John was to make the spiritual path straight for the Lord. The first two items refer to bringing down religion or human good. Valleys being filled refer to the humble, religious people, who are really prideful, being brought up so they can be exposed for the frauds that they are. This is exemplified by the Pharisees who would fast by disfiguring their faces, showing their mournful, sad state (Matthew 6:16). The mountains and hills being brought low refer to bringing down the self-righteous, religious people in Israel. The crooked being made straight and the rough ways being made smooth refer to destroying human evil. Satan had full control of Israel through both human good and evil, and John's ministry's goal is to get rid of those things and bring everyone back to their need for God's redemption so that Israel would "see the salvation of God."

3:7-9 Matthew 3:7 tells us that these comments were directed at the Pharisees and Sadducees. They are coming to John to be baptized as a religious ceremony (like people who are water baptized today). However, they are Satan's people (generation of vipers) because they do not bring "fruits worthy of repentance." In other words, the doctrine they teach is bad (Matthew 12:34-35). They "reject the commandment of God" in favor of their own tradition (Mark 7:9). Because they have not abandoned their traditions, they have not repented or changed their minds. Therefore, they have not believed the gospel of the kingdom. They must believe first before they can be water baptized in order to be saved. John warns them that their religious system is about to be cut down by God and destroyed at the end of the tribulation period. They must repent and abandon their religious system in order to enter God's kingdom.

"We have Abraham to our father" (3:8) speaks of the religiosity of the Jews. They thought they were God's people just because they were physical descendants of Abraham. We see the same statement by the Pharisees to Jesus in John 8:39. However, because they do not have faith in God, Jesus tells them that they are of their father, the devil (John 8:44). That is the same idea, here, with John.

With regard to raising up children to Abraham from these stones, saved Israel is seen as stones. I Peter 2:5 calls the believing remnant "lively stones." I Peter 2:6 says that the Lord Jesus Christ is the "chief corner stone." The idea is that the Messiah came to build a holy temple (Zechariah 6:12-13) out of believing Israel as the eternal resting place for God.

Therefore, what John is saying in 3:8 is that the Jewish religious leaders should not think that they will be in the kingdom, just because they are the leaders now. If they do not believe, they will not be in the kingdom, and God will give the kingdom to the common people of Israel (raise up children unto Abraham of these stones), who have come to John's baptism. We find out that that is exactly what happened, when we put together what the Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 21:43 and Luke 12:32.

3:10-14 Three groups are seen here coming to John's baptism. The first group are the religious leaders (3:10-11). They are told to get rid of their possessions. Otherwise, they will continue their apostasy when the Antichrist shows up, and they will join his side, not becoming part of God's kingdom, since they will not be willing to give up their possessions when the mark of the beast is instituted (Revelation 13:16-17). The second group are the tax collectors (3:12-13), who often took more money than they were supposed to, as we will see with Zacchaeus in Luke 19:8. Doing so meant breaking God's law covenant. Therefore, John tells them to stop doing this. The third group are the soldiers (3:14), and John tells them things specific in the law to their occupation that they must follow. All told, it is clear that they are still under the law. They need to change their mind, confess their sins, be water baptized, and follow the law covenant God had with Israel in order to enter into God's eternal kingdom on earth.

3:16-17 John points to the Messiah, Who has two baptisms for Israel. All will be baptized with one or the other. Those believing the gospel and being water baptized will receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost in Acts 2. Only 120 people are in that group initially (Acts 1:15). The others will be baptized with fire. This means they will be thrown into the lake of fire at Jesus' second coming. Much to the chagrin of today's Pentecostals, the fire is NOT associated with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, as verse 17 makes clear.

Why would John want to unlatch Jesus' shoes? The reason is because Jesus came as Israel's kinsmen redeemer. They had been taken captive by Satan (Isaiah 49:24-25), and Jesus came to bind Satan (Matthew 12:29), "preach deliverance to the captives" (4:18), and redeem Israel (1:68, 24:21; Revelation 5:9). Ruth 4:7-8 says, "Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel. Therefore, the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe." Boaz was the kinsmen redeemer of Ruth, and another kinsman took off Boaz's shoe to confirm that Boaz was redeeming Ruth. Therefore, what John the Baptist is saying is that, not only is he not the Messiah, but he is not even worthy to be a part of the kinsmen-redeemer process of Jesus redeeming Israel.

3:19-20 Herod put John in prison because John spoke out against the fact that he had taken his brother Philip's wife to be his own wife (Matthew 14:3-4). John reproved Herod for all the evils he did. If John was giving the gospel of grace today, he would have told him to trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection to be saved. Instead, since Israel is still under the law covenant, John points Herod back to the law, showing that he needs to obey it.

Matthew 4:12 says that, when Jesus heard that John was cast into prison, Jesus went into Galilee, and most of His ministry was in that region. The

reason is that John's imprisonment signaled the Jewish religion's intolerance for the truth, such that the Pharisees in Jerusalem would have tried to kill Him a lot sooner than the evil Jews in Galilee would. This demonstrates a principle that is always true, regardless of dispensation: Lawbreakers hate religious people, and religious people hate people who stand for the truth.

3:21-22 Before John was cast in prison, he baptized Jesus. This was the passing of the torch, so to speak. John must decrease, while Jesus increases (John 3:30). John "decreases" by being cast into prison, and Jesus begins His earthly ministry (Matthew 4:12,17). Jesus was baptized by John to be anointed as a priest to begin His earthly ministry. He did not have to repent because He did not have anything to repent from—His mind was already stayed on doing the Father's will. The Holy Ghost also came upon Him. Thus, He was washed with water and anointed with oil (the Holy Ghost) as someone anointed as a priest under the law would be anointed, as Exodus 29:4,7 describes.

3:23 Jesus began His earthly ministry around the age of 30. The parenthetical reference in this verse is important. Joseph was not Jesus' father. People just assumed that Joseph was His father. In actuality, God was His Father.

3:23-38 Luke lists more names in Jesus' genealogy than the other gospels do. Because Luke is showing Jesus as the perfect man, he traces Jesus' lineage all the way back to Adam and then to God. This shows Jesus as the second Adam, which means He is only the second human being who was created in the image of God. Luke shows Jesus' genealogy through Mary's line. Although Joseph is mentioned in 3:23, it is Mary's father, Heli, who is mentioned after Joseph (Joseph's father is Jacob, according to Matthew 1:16.). It is important that Mary's line is shown because it is the seed of the woman through whom God would bring a redeemer (Genesis 3:15). Psalm 91:13 also states that the Messiah is the One Who would fulfill Genesis 3:15.

4 After overcoming all categories of temptations by Satan (vs. 1-13), we are given two cities to which Jesus proclaims the gospel. The reaction of Nazareth represents the religious leaders' rejection of Jesus as their Messiah (vs. 22-30), such that He cannot perform any miracles. The reaction of Capernaum represents Israel's reaction as a whole, where they come to Him for physical, but not spiritual, healing (vs. 40-41).

4:1-2 Jesus begins His ministry by doing what Israel failed to do. He journeys in the wilderness for 40 days until He reaches the Promised Land. By contrast, Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years, because of their unbelief (Hebrews 3:19), before they entered the Promised Land. Also, while Israel almost immediately complained about only having manna to eat (Numbers 11:4-6), Jesus went the ENTIRE 40 days without eating ANY food.

His food was to do the will of the Father (John 4:34), and He already stated at age 12 that He was about His Father's business (2:49). And, He had been doing His Father's business for 18 years since then! Not only did He not eat anything for 40 days, He did not complain about having no food, which would have been sin since He would not have been trusting in the Father's provision (God says that Israel tempted Him ten times while in the wilderness (Numbers 14:22), going against God's command (Deuteronomy 6:16).) Jesus did not even get hungry, because it was only afterward that He hungered, even though Satan tempted Him with food for the entire 40 days.

By the way, the famous "Lord's Prayer" says, "lead us not into temptation" (11:4). But, 4:1-2 says that the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness where He was tempted by the devil. That is because Jesus had to be "in all points tempted like as we are" so that He could "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:15) and make intercession for believing Israel (Hebrews 7:25).

4:3-13 The same three temptations are mentioned here as in Matthew 4, but the order is different. Here, the order is bread, kingdoms, and authority. In Matthew 4, the order is bread, authority, and kingdoms. The reason for the difference is that Luke is listing three temptations the devil gave Him DURING the 40 days in the wilderness, because Luke 4:13 says that the devil "departed from Him for a season." Matthew is recording the temptations AFTER the 40 days were over, because Matthew 4:11 says "then the devil leaveth Him."

Satan's temptations always fall into one of three categories: 1) Lust of the flesh, 2) Lust of the eyes, and 3) Pride of life (I John 2:16). Satan tempted Jesus with one temptation from each category. The bread is the lust of the flesh; the kingdoms are the lust of the eyes, and the authority is the pride of life. As such, Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Thus, He overcame all temptation, making Him worthy to receive His Father's kingdom.

4:3 "If Thou be the Son of God" shows that Satan is trying to trick Jesus into disobeying His Father. In other words, the devil is looking for proof. 11:16 shows Jews asking for a sign from Jesus, and the verse notes that their request was a temptation. Jesus says in 11:29 that only an evil generation seeks a sign. The proof that Jesus is of God comes from His doctrine, not from His miracles (Matthew 7:15-23).

4:4 Jesus thwarts Satan's temptation attempt by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3. That scripture says that God suffered Israel to hunger so that they would learn the truth to live by God's Word. Jesus learned this while in the wilderness. In this way, "learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). If Jesus made the stones into bread, He would not be trusting in God's provision, which means He would be saying that God is evil. That is why this is a temptation to sin.

4:5,9 These two verses show us some of the power that Satan has. He has the ability to time travel, showing Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time." He also has the ability to move people from one location to another, since he brought Jesus "to Jerusalem, and set Him on a pinnacle of the temple." Therefore, if someone today truly levitates from one location to another, who do you think did it?

4:5-8 Jesus has suffered greatly, walking through the desert without food. God had promised Him that, after He accomplishes all of the Father's will as the Messiah, He will sit down at the Father's right hand until He destroys His enemies (Psalm 110:1). However, Satan offers an easier way. He tells Jesus that He can have all the kingdoms of the world right now without suffering. This would not be a temptation if the devil could not legitimately offer all the kingdoms of the world to Jesus. Therefore, Satan did own all the nations, including Israel (Isaiah 49:24-25), whom God had set apart to be His people (Deuteronomy 7:6). If Jesus worships Satan, Jesus will be the ruler over the earth without having to suffer, and God the Father's plan would not work, because there would be no redeemer to save mankind from Satan. The problem with this is that Satan would be the **unholy** God over a fallen creation. God thought it unthinkable that man would live forever in such a fallen state (Genesis 3:22), and so does Jesus. Therefore, Jesus relies on the Father's will, because the Father's plan gives the earth back to God, maintains God's holiness, and makes man holy in Christ. Therefore, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13 and moves on.

4:9-12 Satan now tempts Jesus with the pride of life. Jesus could show everyone in Israel that He is the Son of God by casting Himself from the temple in Jerusalem and having the angels keep Him from being harmed. This is the trickiest of the three temptations because now Satan himself misquotes scripture (Psalm 91:11-12) to convince Him to yield to the temptation. How often does Satan use scripture to try to get us to justify succumbing to one of his temptations?

While it is true that the angels would keep Jesus in all His ways, His time to prove He is the King will not be until His second coming. At His first coming, He came as the suffering servant. Therefore, if He did jump from the temple, He would be testing God, meaning that He would not have faith in God's plan for Him, which means He would be disobeying God's will. Satan tried to mask this truth by adding the phrase "at any time" to the text of Psalm 91:11-12. However, because Jesus knows that He has God's preserved Word without error, He trusts His Bible to be true, over Satan's misquote. Therefore, He recognizes the temptation of Satan and states that, if He did cast Himself from the temple, He would be disobeying the commandment of "thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy 6:16).

4:13 This verse shows that the devil would continue tempting Jesus throughout the 40 days in the wilderness and at the end, since he only left

Him "for a season" here.

4:14-15 Matthew 4:12 says that Jesus had His ministry in Galilee, once John the Baptist was put in prison. Matthew 4:23-25 says that great multitudes followed Jesus as He taught in the synagogues in Galilee, because He physically healed all of those brought to Him. Therefore, the reason that the fame of Jesus went out in all of Galilee, here in Luke 4:14, is because of these physical miracles He is doing.

4:16 "As His custom was" tells us that Jesus would go into a Jewish city, teach in the synagogue, and then do physical miracles to confirm that the Word He preached was true (Mark 16:20). In other words, Jesus' focus was on preaching the gospel of the kingdom so that the lost sheep of Israel may be saved (Matthew 15:24). The physical healings were just a means to this end.

4:17-21 Now, Jesus tells the congregation in Nazareth Who He is. He is the Messiah that was to come. He reads Isaiah 61:1-2a. Note that He closes the book after reading "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Everything up to that point describes the Messiah at His first coming. The rest of verse 2 and all of verse 3 describe what the Messiah will do at His second coming. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ is giving a very important clue to His audience that there will be two comings of Messiah—one in which He preaches the gospel and delivers the believing remnant from Satan's grasp and a second coming in which He destroys the wicked and brings the tribulation saints into the kingdom. Unfortunately, His audience does not grasp the significance of His closing the book of Isaiah at that point.

Unfortunately, people today do not grasp this either. Christianity, as a whole, rejects right division, but yet Jesus was a right divider, dividing His Own ministry into what He would accomplish at His first coming and what He would accomplish at His second coming. Note the different focuses of the two comings. In the first coming, He brings spiritual healing by preaching the gospel, healing hearts, and giving spiritual sight to the spiritually blind. In His second coming, He physically comforts them, makes them physically beautiful, and physically establishes them in the Promised Land in God's eternal kingdom (Isaiah 61:2b-3). However, men want things in the opposite order. They want the physical to prosper, and they do not care about the spiritual. Therefore, Israel crucified their Messiah.

4:22 Since Jesus was subject to Joseph and Mary (2:51) until age 30, Jesus probably went with them to this synagogue every sabbath day. However, because the Jews were so steeped in religion, Jesus probably did not participate much in the synagogue, which is why the people ask, "Is not this Joseph's son?" They have had the Messiah, born of a virgin, in their midst for 30 years, and they do not even recognize Him as being virgin born! They also have no clue about scripture. They should have been anticipating the Messiah's coming. Instead, they have no idea what Isaiah 61:1-2a

means. This, again, shows the apostasy of Israel.

The way they see it is here is a guy they have known all His life, Who left for a 40-day trip in the wilderness without food to eat. When He came back, He got the notion that He is their Messiah, and He started doing a bunch of miracles. They must think He has gone crazy. Therefore, they go back to their frame of reference about Him and choose not to believe the Word of God since they know Him as "Joseph's son."

4:23-24 Jesus could do no miracles in His own country, because of the unbelief of the people. He tells them they will beg Him to come back and heal them after He heals people in Capernaum. The problem is that Israel does not care about being spiritually healed. They only care about the physical. Therefore, when He reads them "gracious words" (4:22) from scripture, they cast Him out, but, when they find out He can really heal people physically, they will beg Him to come back. Since Jesus is only concerned with their spiritual healing and they are unbelievers, not willing to believe, He does not do any miracles in Nazareth.

4:25-27 Elijah did not help any widows in Israel during the 3 ½ years of famine because of their unbelief. He only helped a Gentile widow. Elisha did not heal any of the lepers in Israel during his day. He only healed a Gentile leper. Jesus is saying that the same thing is happening with Him. He has come to bring spiritual healing to Israel (v. 18), but they will not accept it. Therefore, He will not bring any physical healing to Nazareth, and they Israel will remain Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24-25). Instead, He will go to "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Matthew 4:15) and heal them.

Although not revealed at the time, this is actually a sign of what happens with Israel's program. God offered salvation to Israel, but they were in unbelief. Therefore, God will set Israel aside in Acts 7 at the stoning of Stephen, and He will start a new dispensation with Paul in Acts 9 and save the Gentiles instead.

4:28-30 Jesus' change from gracious words (4:22) to condemning words (4:23-27) turns the synagogue against Jesus. So much so, that they immediately try to kill Him. They pick Him up, bring Him to a hill, and try to throw Him head first into the valley below to kill Him. However, it is not His time to die yet; therefore, He gets away. The Father probably miraculously parted the crowd for Him to get away safely, much like He parted the Red Sea for Israel to escape the Egyptians on dry land. This murder attempt against Jesus shows how Satan had control over the Jewish religious people in Israel, such that he is able to enrage them enough to try to kill their Messiah in His hometown, just because Jesus told them that He would not do any miracles there. This shows how religion is. Religion will do everything in its power to keep the truth from being spoken.

4:31-32 The Word of God is powerful (Hebrews 4:12). Since the Pharisees

taught the traditions of the fathers, rather than the Word of God, the congregation is amazed when they actually hear the powerful Word of God coming from the mouth of their Messiah. Unlike those in Nazareth who immediately tried to kill their Messiah, the people in Capernaum give Jesus a chance.

4:33-35 Therefore, Jesus gives them a sign of the kingdom by casting out an unclean devil. This is a sign of what God wants to do spiritually for the nation of Israel. He wants to cast the devil out of their midst so that they receive deliverance from their captor, Satan (4:18), rather than continuing to be Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24).

We should note the presence of Satan in the synagogue. So bad was the religion of the Pharisees that some of them were, no doubt, physically possessed by devils. Their going to the synagogue on the sabbath was like going to a Satanic church. The difference, on this particular sabbath, was that the Word of God was preached. Therefore, the unclean devil cries out. The devil declares that Jesus is the Son of God. Initially, this may seem like a proof that Jesus is the Son of God. However, Satan is a deceiver, and his minions are full of lies. Satan is hoping that, by telling the truth, people will follow the man with the devil, rather than the doctrines of Jesus, so that they will be seduced by doctrines of devils (I Timothy 4:1). To keep this from happening, Jesus commands the devil to be quiet, come out of the man, and not hurt the man.

4:36-37 The people spread the news of Jesus' authority over the Satanic realm to all around them. No doubt those in Nazareth got the word and, as Jesus said they would, beg Him to come back and cast out devils there (4:23), but too little, too late.

4:38-39 Today, if people claim a miraculous physical healing by God, it is likely to be something like this, where a fever leaves. However, Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed, and she immediately arose and started serving all the men in her house. Today, a person would take it easy after "God healed them" of a fever. The reason is because God did not heal them of a fever, and they need time to recuperate fully.

We also see from these verses that Simon was married. It is very likely that all 12 apostles were married, and they forsook their wives and children to follow Jesus. This is seen in Peter's statement in Matthew 19:27, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" This was a requirement to serve God during the at-hand phase of the kingdom (9:57-62).

4:40-41 After casting out a devil from one man (4:33-35), Jesus is thronged with people looking for healing. He performs the two signs that the kingdom of heaven is at hand: 1) Healing the sick, and 2) Casting out devils. Healing the sick represents the condition of Israel in the kingdom, being healed from

their infirmities. Casting out devils represents the power of God to bind the strong man (Satan) (Matthew 12:29), release the believing remnant from being Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24-25), and lead them into God's kingdom after Jesus' second coming.

It is significant that Jesus does these healings "when the sun was setting," symbolizing the nearness of the night of the tribulation period, and, subsequently, God's kingdom on earth. Also, note that Jesus did not heal only those who had the faith to be healed; He healed "every one of them." This flies in the face of conventional Christian-DUMB, which says that the reason someone is not physically healed today is because they did not have enough faith. Note, again that Jesus commands the devils to stop speaking, not because they are not telling the truth, but because they are telling the truth in order to seduce people to follow their doctrines, rather than the doctrines of God (I Timothy 4:1).

4:42-44 In Matthew 15:24, Jesus says, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." In Matthew 10:5-8, Jesus sends His disciples to preach the gospel of the kingdom only to the lost sheep of Israel. In Matthew 10:23, Jesus says, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." Exodus 19:5-6 says that Israel is to be a kingdom of priests to the Gentiles. Therefore, the goal of Jesus' ministry, and all those who follow Him in the at-hand phase of Israel's kingdom, is to preach the gospel of the kingdom so that all the lost sheep of Israel may be saved (Romans 11:26) so that they can preach the gospel to the Gentiles during the millennial reign so that they may also be saved so that all of the earth is reconciled back to God.

Therefore, Jesus does not care AT ALL about performing ANY physical miracles. The only reason He does miracles is so that the lost sheep of Israel will believe the gospel He preaches. Therefore, once He preaches the gospel and confirms it with signs following (Mark 16:20), He moves on to the next city to do more of the same. The problem is that the Jews only care about the physical, and so they want Him to stay so He can continue to heal them physically. So, too, today, Christianity longs for physical miracles from God, when God is only concerned about saving them and having them "come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4).

5 The Jewish religious leaders reject God's offer of spiritual healing (vs. 17-26), and so Jesus calls others to replace them as God's leaders in His future kingdom on earth (12:32).

5:1-3 The people were actually there to hear the Word of God. When religious people hear the Word of God, they are initially excited because they are learning things that their religion has not taught them. However, there will come a time, maybe right away or maybe later, where something will be taught that is contrary to what their religion has taught them. When that takes place, they have the opportunity to believe God's Word as their final

authority. However, most people will stick with their religion and leave or persecute the teacher. Therefore, it is probably a good idea that Jesus taught the people from the boat, lest they have the same reaction as those in Nazareth and try to kill Jesus.

5:4-7 Simon did not catch any fishes all night long, but he catches "a great multitude of fishes" by obeying God's command. Similarly, when Jesus sends them out to "catch men" (5:10), i.e., go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the gospel, if they speak the self-righteous words of religion (man's way), no one they speak to will be saved no matter how hard they try (see Matthew 23:15). If they obey God's command and preach the gospel of the kingdom (Jesus' way), those saved will be more than they could imagine. Launching out into the deep is a picture of the disciples going to find the lost sheep of Israel because Satan's realm is pictured by the deep. They will be going through Satan's domain to snag out the lost sheep (or fish) for God.

5:8-9 This is probably the time when the Father teaches Peter that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16), because he recognizes that he is sinful, but Jesus is holy. This is the first confession of Jesus as Lord other than a devil speaking through someone or the Holy Ghost prophesying through someone. This may be why Peter is the leader of the church in early Acts.

Simon Peter's statement also shows us that the catch of fishes was a miracle. There is no natural way of explaining this.

5:11 We are told that Peter, James, and John forsake all to follow Jesus. It took just one miracle for them to give up their occupation, their possessions, and their families to build the kingdom of God. This shows their faith and explains why Jesus sometimes only took Peter, James, and John with Him, such as to the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8) and to the garden to pray (Matthew 26:36-38). In their dispensation at the time period they are in where the kingdom of heaven is at hand, forsaking all was required in order to receive eternal life (Matthew 19:29). Peter, James, and John forsake everything, at the hardest time for them to do so, because they have never had so many fish before, but they will receive 100 fold in God's kingdom (Matthew 19:29). Similarly, believing Israel will be required to forsake all at the time when many in Israel are aligning themselves with the Antichrist for power and wealth.

5:12-14 This man has the proper attitude. He cannot heal himself. It is only by God's will that he will be healed of leprosy. Similarly, spiritually speaking, the nation of Israel needs to humble themselves and rely upon God's imputed righteousness to save them, rather than striving to meet the righteousness of the religious leaders (Matthew 5:20). Once this man is cleansed of his leprosy, he needs to obey the law by showing himself to the priest (Leviticus 13:13). Similarly, those saved by the gospel of the kingdom will need to not take the mark of the beast and endure unto the end of the

tribulation period in order to enter God's kingdom (Matthew 10:22).

The fact, that this man was to show himself to the priest, shows that Israel is still under the old covenant with God. Jesus did not begin Christianity here. The body of Christ does not start until Acts 9, because Paul says “that in me FIRST Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting” (I Timothy 1:16). Therefore, it is not until Acts 11:26 that the term “Christians” was first used to describe believers.

In addition to obeying the law, Jesus also has this man show himself to the priest because the priests were the religious leaders of the nation. As the religious leaders, they should be leading the people to the Messiah. When the priest sees that this formerly leprous man is now clean, the priest should know that this is a sign that the Messiah has arrived (Psalm 103:3). Therefore, he should ask the man to lead him to the Messiah so that he can lead the nation into following Him. Sadly, this does not happen with Israel's religious leaders.

5:15 Since it is up to the religious leaders to point the people to the Messiah, Jesus tells this man "to tell no man" about being healed (5:14). If the religious leaders have faith in God, they will recognize Jesus as the Messiah, and they will lead Israel to come to Jesus for SPIRITUAL healing. Instead, this man probably told common Jews, and so they thronged Him for PHYSICAL healing instead.

5:17 Although the cleansed leper appears not to have told the priest about his healing, we still see the Jewish religious leaders coming to Jesus from all over. They are "sick" with their religion. They will not enter God's kingdom because they are trusting in their religion, rather than in God's law, for salvation. They have an opportunity, here, to be healed spiritually by changing their mind about their religion, i.e., repenting, confessing the nation's sins, and being water baptized. They can then lead Israel into believing in Jesus as their Messiah and being the holy nation that God called them to be. Unfortunately, these religious leaders are only here to interfere with what God is doing. They did not come to be born again.

5:17-19 Not only are the religious people not going to enter into the kingdom, but they are also keeping others from entering in through the Pharisees' religious system that keeps Israel from believing the gospel of the kingdom. The man sick of the palsy is a type of the believing remnant. In order to believe the gospel of the kingdom, they have to overcome the religious system of the Pharisees to get to Jesus' message of salvation. This is pictured in that the multitude is standing in their way of getting to Jesus. Most in Israel will not go to the lengths that the man sick of the palsy goes to, and, consequently, will not enter into God's kingdom due to the religion of the Pharisees. Therefore, we only see 120 men waiting for the Holy Ghost to come in Acts 1:15, instead of seeing the whole nation there.

5:20 Although physical healing of the man's palsy is important, of a far greater importance is his spiritual healing so that he can live forever in God's kingdom. The Jewish religious system is standing in his way, but he will not let them stop him.

5:20-24 This is probably the most critical part of Jesus' earthly ministry. A multitude of religious leaders is with Jesus, "and the power of the Lord was present to heal them" spiritually (5:17). If they believe the gospel of the kingdom, they will be saved. They can then, as the religious leaders, jettison their religion and guide the entire nation of Israel into believing the gospel of the kingdom as well so that the nation can be a kingdom of priests for God (Exodus 19:6). Since the power of God is present to heal them spiritually, Jesus shows them that their sins can be forgiven by His forgiving the palsy man's sins.

Jesus' point to the Pharisees is that He has the power to forgive sins because He healed the man's palsy AFTER He forgave his sins. If Jesus did a physical miracle by Satanic power, as the Pharisees did (Matthew 12:27), God would not have allowed Him to heal the man physically after He pretended to heal the man spiritually. That is why Jesus says to them: "That ye may KNOW that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins" (v. 24). The fact that Jesus can forgive the man's sins proves that the gospel of the kingdom is true, and the Pharisees can be forgiven of their sins by believing, as well. Unfortunately, the Pharisees accuse Jesus of blasphemy; they are not forgiven of their sins; and the nation will continue in its apostate state in spite of the physical presence of their Messiah.

We should also note that, while Jesus' power to forgive sins is from God, it is Jesus, the man, who forgives their sins. He says that "the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins," not "the Son of God." So, too, when the believing remnant goes to Israel during the tribulation period, they will have this same power to forgive men's sins (John 20:23), since they will have the Holy Ghost within them (John 14:26; 16:7), just like Jesus had (Luke 3:21-22). Therefore, the disciples will continue Jesus' ministry of going to the lost sheep of Israel during the tribulation period.

Note that the Pharisees said, "who can forgive sins, but God alone?" (5:21). They are claiming that Jesus is a mere man. He is not the Messiah, and He does not come from God. The reason they make this claim is because they want people to come to them for forgiveness of sins. That way, they control whether people have eternal life or not, and they can lord this over the people in order to receive their money. This is exactly what the Catholic church does today by saying they are the channel by which God forgives sin, when scripture says it is by faith in the blood of Christ (Romans 3:25).

5:26 Contrast the Jew's reaction of "we have seen strange things to day" with Simon Peter's reaction of "I am a sinful man, O Lord" (5:8). The former

means they will go on with their lives as if nothing happened. The latter means Simon Peter will forsake all and follow Jesus (5:11).

5:27 With the Jewish religious leaders continuing in their unbelief and apostasy, Jesus immediately begins gathering up leaders to replace them. Therefore, Levi (also called Matthew, the writer of the gospel of Matthew) is called to be one of His 12 apostles, who will sit on a throne in God's kingdom on earth, as the new leaders of Israel, judging the 12 tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28).

5:28 Levi does just what Peter, James, and John did—he left all to follow Jesus. That means leaving his job as a tax collector, and all of the money involved with it.

5:29-32 The publicans and sinners were the lowest of the low in the mind of a scribe or Pharisee. They would not even eat with them. But, as Jesus points out, the Pharisees have rejected the gospel of the kingdom, thinking they will make it into God's kingdom based on their own righteousness. The only ones who will make it into God's kingdom are those receiving imputed righteousness by believing the gospel of the kingdom. Therefore, Jesus moves on from "the [self-]righteous" and calls "sinners to repentance." Perhaps Jesus found a couple of other men from this gathering of publicans and sinners to be part of His 12 apostles.

5:30-32 Note how Satan uses the religious leaders to try to steer Jesus' disciples back into Satan's realm by trying to get them to question that Jesus is really the Christ. Jesus steps in with an answer. As such, this is a type of the tribulation period. The apostate nation of Israel joined to the Antichrist will try to steer the little flock astray. Only by trusting in Jesus' words (the Bible) will they endure unto the end of the tribulation period.

5:33 Matthew 9:14 tells us that the disciples of John ask this question. But, why would the disciples of John fast? After they repented and were baptized, they were to be part of the little flock, sharing the gospel of the kingdom to the rest of Israel during the tribulation period. When John the Baptist was put in prison, they should have begun following Jesus, who came eating and drinking (Luke 7:34). Instead, they must have started following the Pharisees, for they are grouped here with the Pharisees as people who fast oft. Therefore, we see that many of those who believed the gospel of the kingdom under John the Baptist were probably later led astray by the Pharisees and became one of Jesus' opponents, rather than His followers.

5:35 The days in which Jesus' followers will fast refers to the great tribulation period, when they will not be able to buy food because they will not take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17). The Pharisees fast to be seen of men (Matthew 6:16), but the little flock will be forced to fast.

5:36-39 This parable of the old and the new refers to religion. Israel is steeped in the Pharisees' religion, which is the old. God is going to replace these old, religious leaders with the new—those who believe the gospel of the kingdom and follow Jesus (Matthew 21:43). Jesus is showing how, if He tried to put the new followers of Jesus into the old religious system, “the new agreeth not with the old” (v. 36). As such, the new would burst out of the old, and the new would be no good (v. 37), i.e, they would be spoiled by religion. Therefore, the old religious system must be replaced with the 12 apostles and the believing remnant operating outside of that system (v. 38).

Furthermore, the religious leaders will not believe the gospel because they say “the old is better” (v. 39). In other words, those steeped in the religious system will not abandon it. This is a warning that Jesus is giving to the disciples of John. They believed the gospel of the kingdom and are now trying to get it to fit in with the established religious system by aligning themselves with the Pharisees. Jesus says that will not work, and they will end up abandoning the gospel for the religion of the Pharisees if they continue down that path. That is what the context of these verses tells you they mean. They do NOT mean that God is abandoning the old covenant for the new covenant, because the new covenant will not be in operation until God's kingdom is on earth. Until then, they are still under God's old, law covenant.

6 Jesus appoints 12 apostles (vs. 12-16) and gives them instructions to endure unto the end of the tribulation period in such a way that the lost sheep of the house of Israel will also be saved and enter God's eternal kingdom at Jesus' second coming (vs. 17-49).

6:1-2 There is nothing unlawful about plucking ears of corn, rubbing them, and eating them on the Sabbath. However, it does go against the tradition of the fathers that the Pharisees are propagating. This tradition is causing the Pharisees to break the law of Moses themselves. By going through the corn fields, plucking ears of corn, and eating what they can find by rubbing them in their hands, the disciples are gleaning the fields for scraps of food they can eat. When Ruth gleaned for food, she did so among the ears of corn, just like the disciples are doing here (Ruth 2:2).

Therefore, the disciples are poor, because they had forsaken all to follow Jesus. Israel was commanded not to take every last scrap of food, but save some “for the poor and stranger” (Leviticus 19:9-10). The religious leaders were supposed to help the poor (Deuteronomy 15:7-8). However, by the Pharisees' trying to get the disciples to stop gleaning the field for food, they were robbing the poor of the food they need to survive. Therefore, not only are the Pharisees falsely accusing Jesus' disciples of breaking the law, but the Pharisees are breaking the law themselves by trying to keep the poor from getting food to eat. This is an example of how the Pharisees made “the Word of God of none effect through [their] tradition” (Mark 7:13).

6:3-5 Jesus turns the Pharisees away from their traditions and toward the scripture by saying “Have ye not read?” If David can enter the temple and eat shewbread that is only lawful for priests to eat, then surely Jesus’ disciples can eat corn that is lawful for anyone to eat. Note that Jesus says in verse 5 that “the Son of man” is Lord of the Sabbath. He did not say, “the Son of God.” Therefore, He is not pulling rank on them and saying that, as God, He is giving the disciples an exception from the law to pluck and eat ears of corn. Rather, He is saying that any man can go glean some food from the field on the Sabbath, rather than going hungry the whole day, because the Sabbath was made for man to enjoy, not for man to be enslaved by it and starve.

6:6-7 Man was not to work on the Sabbath, except, of course, the priests, who had their busiest work day of the week when the people came into the temple. Anyone who has prepared a sermon knows that teaching is a lot of work. It is certainly more work than having God perform a miraculous healing through you! The Pharisees do not count preaching as work because they do that on the Sabbath all the time. However, healing is “work” according to them, even though it is God doing all the work, not man. The reason healing is work, according to them, is because they are trying to find fault with Jesus. They do not care that He is the Messiah. They want to render Him powerless.

6:8 The man with the withered hand represents the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel. “The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17), but Israel cannot grasp it, because their hand is withered by the traditions of the Pharisees.

6:10 God heals the man’s withered hand through Jesus as a clear demonstration to those gathered in the temple on the sabbath day of how God wants to heal the nation of Israel so that they may enter God’s kingdom on earth. Yet, we do not read of anyone believing the gospel of the kingdom here.

6:11 Instead, we read of the reaction of the Pharisees of how they are trying to figure out what they should do with this Jesus fellow. Note how the Pharisees are “filled with madness.” This means they are so passionate about destroying Jesus that they have abandoned all reason, which is obvious, because any reasonable man would conclude that Jesus is of God and should be followed, rather than destroyed.

6:12-13 With the Pharisees having rejected God’s offer to heal them spiritually, Jesus had already begun gathering disciples. Now, He is faced with the difficult task of choosing eleven men, who will follow Him through to His ascension and His sending of the Holy Ghost to them, and one man who will betray Him. Being fully man, Jesus spends all night in prayer to make sure He follows His Father’s will in choosing the correct 12 men. (We also see Jesus praying to the Father in 5:16.)

I can see Jesus stating His reasons to the Father as to why He is picking or not picking certain people before settling on the final list. In Acts, when the disciples pick the person to replace Judas Iscariot, there appear to be only two men, who are qualified (Acts 1:21-26). This means that Jesus had to pick 11 men, who would follow Him throughout His ministry, and, of all of His followers, only 13 of them would do this. Jesus was correct with every pick. This shows He is the perfect man.

You can see the difference between the words “disciples” and “apostles” here. His disciples are those following Him. His apostles are “sent ones,” or ones He chooses to send out to the lost sheep of Israel with the signs and gospel of the kingdom (9:1-2).

6:16 “Judas the brother of James” wrote the book of Jude, being also known as Jude.

6:19 “Healed them ALL” means that faith was not required by the sick person, in order to be healed. In fact, we see people starting to add religion to Jesus’ physical healings. In 4:40 and 5:13, Jesus touched people to heal them. Now, people are touching Jesus to be healed by Him. This is a sign of religion. Instead of it being about what God alone would do to heal them. Now, they have invented their own contribution to God’s healing of them. In other words, they have added work, or religion, to the physical healings God is performing through Jesus.

6:20-49 Matthew 5-7 is commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount. This passage in Luke is a different occasion because He is standing in the plain (6:17), rather than teaching from a mountain (Matthew 5:1-2). The instructions given here are similar. The disciples rarely understood anything that Jesus says; therefore, it is no surprise that He has to repeat Himself here. Also, note that, in Matthew, He only taught His disciples. Here, in Luke, He also only teaches His disciples (6:20), but the rest of the people are in the audience, as well (7:1).

6:20-26 The “beatitudes” here are rarely read, while the ones in Matthew 5:3-12 are very popular. That is because the ones here in Luke are harder to twist to apply to today, and the three “blessed”s are offset by four “woe”s. Therefore, people do not like them.

6:20-22 These blesseds show that ALL of Jesus’ disciples would be poor, hungry, and hated under the Antichrist, before they are blessed in God’s kingdom. That is because of the circumstances of the tribulation period. Since they will not take the mark of the beast, they will not be able to buy food. Therefore, they will be hungry. Their material wealth will be taken from them as well, because they will not be able to participate in the Antichrist’s economic system. Therefore, they will also be poor. They will also be hated because many in Israel will believe the Antichrist is the Christ. The

Antichrist will peg those believing in the gospel of the kingdom as heretics and persecute and even kill members of the believing remnant. As such, the apostate nation of Israel will hate the little flock, separate from them, and call good “evil.”

6:23 However, if the little flock realizes that they are storing up “a treasure in the heavens that faileth not” (12:33), they will “leap for joy” (6:23) when men hate them and steal their wealth and food (12:33) for “their reward is great in heaven” (6:23). In fact, some of Jesus’ disciples have already forsaken all to follow Jesus (5:11,28) realizing that real treasure is in heaven (Matthew 6:19-20), in the New Jerusalem, that will come down on earth for God’s eternal kingdom here (Revelation 21:2).

Since God’s way and thoughts are higher than man’s ways and thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9), I guess it should come as no surprise that God says that the most joyful a man should be is when men hate him, steal from him, and persecute him.

6:24-26 Most Jews will end up joining apostate Israel in following the Antichrist. This makes sense since, if they followed Christ’s miracles and not His doctrines, they will be willing to follow the Antichrist’s “signs and lying wonders” (II Thessalonians 2:9) when his doctrines feed the flesh, making him a more popular “Messiah.” Given this, Jesus pronounces four woes upon those who would follow the Antichrist.

6:24 The Antichrist will offer riches to apostate Israel, but they will get rich in Satan’s world at the expense of riches in God’s kingdom. Therefore, Jesus pronounces woe upon those who are rich, because they have received their reward. “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark 8:36-37).

6:25 Jesus pronounces woe upon those who are full and laugh now, because, when Jesus comes and judges them, they will be mourning and weeping in the lake of fire for all eternity and will hunger there.

6:26 The last woe Jesus pronounces is upon those who use man’s appraisal of doctrine as their guide rather than God’s appraisal. The warning is that bad doctrine has always been praised by religious Jews, while those declaring good doctrine are persecuted. Therefore, if men speak well of them during the tribulation period, woe is upon them from God for believing doctrines of devils.

6:23,26 Note how Jesus uses the term “their” fathers. The little flock and the apostate nation of Israel are both groups of Jews, but, spiritually speaking, they are two, different groups. The fathers of the apostate nation are part of the generation of vipers that follow Satan. It is the vipers’ fathers who hated God’s prophets, while they spoke well of the false prophets.

Therefore, when Jesus is speaking of “their” fathers, he is referring to that generation of vipers (Matthew 23:33-36), still Jews (John 8:37,44), but separate from the little flock of Jews that trusts in the gospel of the kingdom.

6:27-30 The generation of vipers hate the little flock and will falsely accuse them (6:22). The little flock’s response to this treatment should be to love them and do good to them. The main way that they can do good to them and bless them is by praying for them that they may repent, i.e., change their mind, and believe the gospel of the kingdom. The way that these prayers are more likely to take effect is if the little flock can demonstrate Christ’s love for them. They do this by not fighting back when they are persecuted. When they are persecuted, they should let the persecution continue. This will show the apostate nation that they are no threat to them. They just want them to enter God’s kingdom on earth just like the little flock will.

Note also, from 6:27, that Jesus is saying these things, “unto you which hear.” The ones, who hear, are the ones with the spiritual ears to hear (8:8), which leads to them having faith in what God tells them, because “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17).

6:31 The context of this so-called “Golden Rule” is that the little flock is to love those of Satan’s kingdom (vs. 27 and 35). What this means is that, when Satan’s people persecute them, they are not to fight back, and they are to pray for them. By doing so, they will “heap coals of fire upon [their] head[s]” (Proverbs 25:22). In other words, they will be showing apostate Israel that continuing in their apostasy will cause them to spend eternity in the lake of fire. They will see the coals of fire coming upon their heads by the love that the little flock shows them. They will then have a decision to make either to continue in their selfish ways or to repent and be baptized so that they may live forever in God’s kingdom on earth. We, too, in today’s dispensation of grace, should love our enemies—not because Jesus said it to Israel here, but because Jesus said it to us through our apostle, the apostle Paul in Romans 12:19-21, which says that you overcome evil by doing good.

6:32-34 These verses say that sinners only love those who love them, do good to those who do good to them, and lend to those who lend to them. Specifically, this type of behavior can be seen by apostate Israel in the tribulation period. They are in the Antichrist’s clique, and they take care of each other. This is a natural reaction of the flesh. The unnatural reaction of the flesh is to love, do good, and lend to those who are your enemies. This is how the believing remnant of Israel can show God’s love to the apostate nation so that they may believe the gospel of the kingdom. The little flock’s goal should not be to get all they can get in this world and do what is fair. It should be to lead others into the kingdom. This takes place by being willing to give up what they have in this world and to be treated unfairly so that apostate Israel will look beyond the Antichrist’s temporary kingdom, “where thieves break through and steal” (Matthew 6:19) and see the opportunity

they have to be a part of God's eternal kingdom on earth, "where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matthew 6:20).

6:35 We can see a difference in atonement between the dispensations by the phraseology Jesus uses here. He says that IF the little flock loves their enemies THEN they "SHALL BE the children of the highest." Their salvation is contingent upon enduring unto the end of the tribulation period (Matthew 24:13). Today, in the dispensation of grace, we ARE already "children of light" (Ephesians 5:8 and I Thessalonians 5:5) because we have ALREADY received the atonement (Romans 5:11).

The last phrase of this verse is good to share with people who ask why there is so much evil in the world if there is a God. It is because "He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." Also, note that this verse defines the unsaved as "unthankful and ... evil." In 6:32-34, Jesus said that, if the little flock does not show love, do good, and lend to those who hate them, the little flock has no thanks. In other words, the little flock is unthankful. Therefore, by doing these things to unbelievers, they show thanks to God for their salvation, which may cause unthankful, apostate Israel to desire the same "gift" of thanks from God to give to others. If so, then they will believe the gospel of the kingdom and become part of the thankful "children of the highest," who will be in the kingdom.

6:37 People like to use the Matthew version of this verse to say that we have no right to judge others for their contrary beliefs because Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). However, the context of this verse is Israel's program. With their conditional salvation, if they did not forgive others, their heavenly Father would not forgive them (Matthew 6:15). Today, in the dispensation of grace, we have already received the atonement (Romans 5:11), and we are to forgive because we have already been forgiven by God (Ephesians 4:32). Therefore, we cannot lose our salvation today if we do not obey this verse, because it is not written to us.

Secondly, the context of this verse is the little flock during the at-hand phase of the kingdom. During Jesus' first coming, He preached the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. In Luke 4:17-21, Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2a, closed the book, and said that He came to fulfill that scripture. The place, where He stopped reading, was just before: "the day of vengeance of our God." God's vengeance would take place in His second coming, not His first coming. Therefore, Jesus did not condemn unbelievers to hell during His first coming, but He will pour out God's wrath against them at His second coming.

Similarly, Jesus commissioned His disciples to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 10:5-8). In the kingdom, the 12 apostles will "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28), but they were not to judge until then. That is because Satan will be ruling the world through the Antichrist during the tribulation

period. If the apostles are judging and condemning others during the at-hand phase of the kingdom, it means they must have aligned themselves with the Antichrist in order to get that position of judgment now, rather than waiting for Christ's kingdom. If that is the case, then they will be condemned to hell when Jesus comes back, because they have forsaken God. That is what is meant by "judge not, and ye shall not be judged" (6:37).

This verse does NOT mean that believing Israel cannot judge whether an action or belief goes against God's Word. In those cases, Jesus told them to "judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). Therefore, even if we set aside the dispensational change, Luke 6:37, does NOT say we are not allowed to judge. Rather, Jesus told His disciples to judge doctrines taught to determine if they line up with God's Word. If they do not line up, they were to discard them as heresy.

Similarly today, we are ambassadors of Christ, and our goal should be to reconcile others to Christ (II Corinthians 5:18-20), being constrained by Christ's love for them, which means we are not to judge them according to the flesh (II Corinthians 5:14-16). At the same time, we are told to reject people as hereticks, when they refuse to believe sound doctrine (Titus 3:10), and avoid associating with them (Romans 16:17-18). What this means is that Christians are not called to go on moral crusades to stop people from sinning. Rather, we are to give the gospel to unbelievers so that they might be saved, and we are to give sound doctrine to saved people, so that they may come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). We are then to disassociate ourselves from those who refuse to believe the truth, whether it be the gospel or sound doctrine (II Corinthians 6:14-18). Even if we do not follow these instructions from Paul's epistles, we still have eternal life in heavenly places in Christ, because God has already forgiven us of all of our sins, since we are "NOW justified by His blood" (Romans 5:9).

6:38 People like to take this verse out of context, as well. Some pastors like to say that, if you give to their church, God will give back to you even more than what you gave them. This is the health-and-wealth gospel, where preachers fleece the flock, by falsely alleging that God promises a greater monetary return on their gifts than the best mutual-fund manager ever has provided.

The context of this verse is, again, the little flock during the at-hand phase of the kingdom. When the Antichrist's forces take away their cloaks, they are to give unto them their coats also (6:29). They are to "give to every man that asketh of" them (6:30). This giving is a way to show Christ's love to Satan's forces so that they may see that the Antichrist is not the true Christ because his doctrines are contrary to God's Word. ("Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20).) This giving to others will culminate in having to give all of their possessions to the Antichrist for not taking the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16-17).

If Israel does this and makes it into the kingdom, 19:17 says that they will be given authority over cities. Isaiah 61:6 says that, in the kingdom, they “shall eat the riches of the Gentiles.” Therefore, “good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over” that men will “give into [their] bosom” (6:38) takes place in the kingdom. It refers to what they will receive in the kingdom from those they rule over. If they do not give to others, then they must have taken the mark of the beast, and so even what they have will be taken away from them (19:26), which means that they will not even make it into the kingdom. If they give, but they do not give as much as others, they will not rule over as much (19:18-19), which means they will receive riches, but not as much as the more giving members of the little flock will receive. This is what is meant by: “For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (6:38).

6:39 Now, Jesus gives the reason the little flock needs to love their enemies. The apostate nation of Israel is blind, and they are leading the rest of Israel into the lake of fire. However, the disciples can see spiritually, because they have the truth of God’s Word with them. If they show others God’s Word, they may enter into God’s kingdom, rather than the lake of fire. And, the way they show Israel God’s Word when they are persecuted is by loving those persecuting them. Observing this, Jews may think, “Wow! They are willing to die for the gospel they preach; maybe it is true after all.” The little flock does not become the official, religious leaders of Israel until God sets up His kingdom on earth, but they can still lead Israel by their example, following the gospel they preach to them.

6:40 The idea behind this verse is that, since apostate Israel persecuted Jesus, they will also persecute the little flock (Matthew 10:23-25).

6:41-42 Jesus’ illustration about the mote and the beam in eyes has to do with having eyes to see what is going on spiritually. If Israel trusts in God’s Word, they will be able to see what is going on in the tribulation period. Then, when they preach to the lost sheep of Israel, they can also see what is going on spiritually with them. However, if they go to Israel without believing the gospel of the kingdom first, they will not be able to lead the lost sheep out of the lake of fire and into the kingdom. Similarly, if they do not have faith in what Jesus has taught them, they will not be able to overcome the mountain of religion standing in their way to reach the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 21:21). Therefore, Jesus’ warning, here, is to believe the gospel of the kingdom and believe what Jesus has taught, over what the Pharisees have taught, so that they will clearly see spiritually in order to help the lost sheep of Israel see clearly that the gospel of the kingdom is true.

6:43-45 In the tribulation period, both the little flock (9:1-2) and apostate Israel (Matthew 7:22-23) will be performing miracles. Therefore, the fruit cannot be physical miracles. Rather, the fruit is saved souls that come from the gospel of the kingdom being taught and edified souls that come from sound, kingdom doctrine being taught. That is why it is so essential that the

little flock gets the beam out of their own eye so that they teach a clear, gospel message to the lost sheep of Israel and sound doctrine to fellow members of the little flock. Then, the lost sheep can be a fruit inspector between the religious leaders and the little flock and determine, by the sound doctrine, i.e., good fruit, of the little flock that the gospel of the kingdom is true so that they will believe it and enter God's kingdom.

6:46-49 Jesus concludes His Sermon "in the Plain" (6:17) by warning the people listening that they need to stop following Him just for the miracles. They need to obey what He says, because He speaks God's Word. If they follow Him for the miracles but do not take in the sound doctrine He teaches, they will end up following the Antichrist when he performs miracles. Jesus likens this to the foundation of a house. Without sound doctrine, they have no solid foundation. If they are following Jesus for the miracles, they have not believed the gospel of the kingdom. Therefore, when the Antichrist performs "signs and lying wonders" (II Thessalonians 2:9), they will follow him and be ruined. However, if they have the solid foundation of the gospel and doctrine of the kingdom, it is like having a rock foundation (Christ is the Rock (I Corinthians 10:4).), which will stand firm even when the great flood of the tribulation period comes to whisk them away.

7 Jesus finds great faith from a Gentile (vs. 1-10), while the Jews only follow Jesus for entertainment (vs. 11-50).

7:2-5 This centurion is a Gentile, and Jesus is only sent to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). However, according to the Abrahamic covenant, Gentiles are blessed by blessing Israel (Genesis 12:3). This centurion has blessed Israel by building them a synagogue, and he goes through the proper channel of appealing to the religious leaders of Israel to get to Jesus with his request. Therefore, Jesus goes to heal his servant. This centurion, the wise men (Matthew 2:1-18), and the woman of Canaan (Matthew 15:22-28) serve as examples of Gentiles, who have more faith in the God of Israel, than Israel did. Also, the fact, that the servant "was ... ready to die" (7:2), may indicate that the servant had faith in the God of Israel, as well.

7:6-10 Jesus has come to save Israel, but we previously saw that the Jewish religious leaders do not have the faith to be saved (Luke 5:17,21). By contrast, this Gentile is on the wrong side of the middle wall of partition (Ephesians 2:14), meaning that he grew up in spiritual darkness and had to feel after God to find Him (Acts 17:27), yet He did find God, and His program of blessing Israel, and has a faith response to God by blessing Israel. As such, he brings shame to the Jews, who grow up in spiritual light, yet they do not have faith in God. Not only that, but, unlike the Jews, who have started throwing their own works into God's miraculous healings by touching Jesus in order to be healed (Luke 6:19), this centurion knows he can do nothing to add to God's miraculous healing of his servant. Therefore,

he tells Jesus to "say in a word, and my servant shall be healed." He even says that he did not even think he was worthy to come unto Jesus himself (7:7), since he knew that, being a Gentile, he was a dog in Israel's program (Matthew 15:26). That is why Jesus marvels at the centurion and tells those following Him that he has "not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Therefore, the centurion is an example to the nation of Israel of what they should do, i.e., have faith in God's message to repent, confess their sins, and be water baptized in order to enter God's kingdom.

7:11-15 Jesus raises a young man from the dead. In fact, they are carrying him away on a bier to be buried when Jesus sees the young man. He is a dead man outside the city's gates. Therefore, he is a type of Israel being dead in their sins and needing to go outside the camp of religion unto Jesus in order to receive the gift of eternal life (Hebrews 13:12-14). He is the only son of his mother, just like Israel is the only son of God among the nations (Exodus 4:22, Numbers 23:9, and Deuteronomy 7:6-8). Jesus raises the boy from the dead, just like Jesus wants to do spiritually for the nation as a whole.

7:11,16-17 "Much people" of Israel see Jesus raise the young man from the dead, yet they do not see it as a sign that they should believe the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus preaches.. They just think that Jesus is "a great prophet" that rose "up among" them. They do not see Him as the Messiah sent from God to save them from Satan and bring them into the kingdom. As such, they do not expect Him to bring spiritual healing to them. They just think "that God hath visited His people"—past tense—rather than, "God is here to save us." That is why 7:11 identifies two groups of people following Jesus: 1) "His disciples," and 2) "Much people." "His disciples" are believers, while "much people" are unbelievers.

7:18-19 John the Baptist is not doubting that Jesus is the Messiah by his asking "art Thou He that should come?" After all, John has already said of Jesus that He is the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29), and that He is the Christ (John 3:28-31). Rather, John the Baptist sees Jesus trying to heal the nation, but he does not see Him proclaiming "the day of vengeance of our God" (Isaiah 61:2). Therefore, he asks Jesus if He will fulfill right now all that is spoken about the Messiah in the Old Testament, or should Israel look for another coming of Messiah to fulfill the rest. That is what John means by the question: "Look we for another?"

7:21-22 Jesus does not say directly that there will be another coming of Messiah, because there is a crowd around Him, and the answer to that question is only for those who have "ears to hear" (8:8). Rather, He tells John the Baptist to look at what he sees. He sees the gospel preached, and miracles done. Since he sees no "vengeance of our God," the answer to John's question is that, "Yes, there will be another coming of Messiah to take care of the vengeance part." Jesus has come to restore Israel as God's son, rather than being Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24). Executing God's

judgment will come later.

7:23 Israel was looking for their Messiah to: 1) Execute God's vengeance upon the Romans for taking Israel captive, and 2) Start God's kingdom on earth with the Jews ruling over the world. However, that is what Jesus will do at His second coming. At His first coming, He came to save Israel so that they would be fit to enter God's kingdom on earth. Because He was doing what Israel did not expect Him to do, many would be offended by His first coming and not believe the gospel of the kingdom. Therefore, they would be cursed for all eternity. However, those, who are not offended by Him, will believe the gospel of the kingdom, resulting in them being blessed by having eternal life in God's kingdom on earth.

The ironic thing is that, because the Jews were secure in their position in the kingdom based upon their physical descent from Abraham (John 8:33,39), they believed that "the day of vengeance of our God" (Isaiah 61:2) would be the Messiah destroying the Romans and making Israel rulers of the world. However, because their spiritual descent was from the devil (John 8:44), if Jesus did bring God's vengeance right then, Israel would actually be condemned to hell for their unbelief (Matthew 23:33), which is why a second coming of the Messiah is necessary.

7:24-30 Now that Jesus has told them Who He is, He tells the people who John the Baptist was. He was not "a reed shaken with the wind" (v. 24). In other words, he did not change his doctrine based upon how he was treated. John always taught God's Word, being filled with the Holy Ghost from the womb. He was also not a rich man in power (v. 25). These two things differentiate John from the Pharisees, because the Pharisees were rich, regally clothed, and changed their doctrine to gain man's favor.

John was not just a prophet, like the people thought, but he was the greatest prophet to date. What makes him such is that John brought the greatest message that a prophet had ever brought: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). But, preaching ABOUT the kingdom is not as good as actually ENTERING the kingdom. Therefore, Jesus says, "he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he" (v. 28). Jesus' point about bringing up John is that, since believing the gospel that he preached would get them into the kingdom of God, all of those listening to Jesus actually have the opportunity to be greater than John. Yet, once John was put in prison, most did not carry through and follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead, they joined the Pharisees (5:33). By joining the Pharisees, those baptized by John have gone from justifying God (v. 29) to rejecting the counsel of God (v. 30). Why would they confuse John with the Pharisees since John's doctrine did not change, and he was not adorned in fancy garments?

7:28 Note the phrase "born of women." All people ever born to this day are "born of women." The greatest (John the Baptist) born of women is less than

the least in the kingdom of God. Therefore, this verse shares about how being born of the Spirit is greater. All are born of women, but "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). This is what makes the least in the kingdom of God greater than the greatest outside the kingdom. Those, in the kingdom, are part of "that holy thing" (Luke 1:35)—the generation of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1) that will be in God's eternal kingdom on earth.

7:31-32 The reason why people flocked to John the Baptist and were baptized by him and then flocked back to the Pharisees when John was put in prison is because there is no true belief among the Jews, who are of the generation of vipers. Instead, they are looking for entertainment. John entertained them on the "crazy" side, so, they went along with him. Once he was put into prison, he could not entertain them any more, so, they went back to the temple for the Pharisees to entertain them. They will do the same thing with Jesus. Great multitudes are following Jesus for the entertainment value of seeing physical miracles. Once He goes to the cross, most all will abandon Him, leaving only 120 men on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:15).

7:33-35 Because "this generation" is the generation of vipers, they will find fault with everyone who is on God's side. Therefore, they make excuses to dismiss the ministries of both John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ, even though the excuses contradict each other. That is because the fruit, that Adam ate, was of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:17). The Pharisees used their knowledge of good to say that John the Baptist was not of God, because he did not participate in the Jews' religion, i.e., he would not eat or drink (v. 33). The Pharisees used their knowledge of evil to say that Jesus was not of God, because he ate and drank with sinners (v. 34).

The good news is that, in addition to this generation of vipers, there is also a much smaller generation in their midst—the generation of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1). This is the little flock who believes the gospel of the kingdom and sticks with it. Rather than being children of entertainment, they are children of wisdom, and only the wise will make it into God's kingdom. It is not that they have to be wise by the world's standard, but they are wise spiritually in that they trust God's Word over what man says.

In fact, the book of Proverbs is written about these two types of wisdom: 1) The world's wisdom, and 2) God's wisdom. God's wisdom tells Israel: "Keep My commandments, and live" (Proverbs 7:2). The world's wisdom says, "I have peace offerings with me" (Proverbs 7:14). Therefore, we can do whatever we want to do ("Let us take our fill of love" (Proverbs 7:18)).

7:36-50 We have just been told by Jesus of how the generation of vipers around Him are like kids looking for entertainment. We are now given an example of this. This Pharisee, who invites Jesus to his house for meat, does

not have much faith because he says that Jesus is no prophet (v. 39). He also does not treat Jesus well because he does not have his feet washed by one of his servants. He has invited a bunch of his Pharisee friends over to watch the show, and they conclude that Jesus cannot forgive sins (v. 49). Therefore, even if Simon, the Pharisee, is sincerely trying to do a good deed for Jesus, the other religious leaders seem to be there just to have Jesus entertain them. They probably figure they will get a good laugh out of the "crazy" things Jesus says. These things are only "crazy" because Jesus speaks the Word of God, while the Pharisees are children of the devil (John 8:44). Similarly, if you speak the truth of God's Word to religious Christians, they will also label you as being "crazy."

Also, note that no mention is made of Jesus' disciples being with Him. The 12 disciples were not invited, because they were not "good enough" to dine with the upper-class Pharisees.

7:37 This is a different anointing than the one at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry that prepared Him for His burial (Matthew 26:7-13). The way we know this is by noting the differences. In Luke, the woman stood behind him weeping, anointed His feet with oil, wiped His feet with her hair, and kissed His feet. She is identified as a sinner, and Jesus forgives her of her sins. In Matthew, the woman pours the oil on Jesus' head, and Jesus said that she did it for His burial.

7:37-39 The fact that this woman "STOOD at His feet," washed His feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, and kissed them shows that Jesus had to have been sitting in a chair on a level above her. This was probably typical of a rich man's house, where a servant could come and wash his dusty feet. But, for Jesus, no feet washing was done (7:44).

7:39 Simon basically says in this verse that a godly man would not allow a sinner to touch him. However, Romans 3:23 and 5:12 say that "all have sinned," which means that everyone is a sinner. Evidentially, the Pharisees do not believe this. They believe they are righteous on their own, and so they do not need God's help to make it into the kingdom (18:11-12). That is why Jesus said, "that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20).

7:39-40 Simon has thought "within himself" that Jesus is no prophet. The fact that Jesus answers him, even though he never spoke, should be proof to Simon, in itself, that Jesus is much more than a prophet; He is the Son of God.

7:41-50 When we are saved, we are to "know ... no man after the flesh" (II Corinthians 5:16). "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7). In other words, unsaved man looks at man's fleshly performance as a way to justify himself before God, while

saved man looks at the inward man to see if it has already been justified by God or not. Simon, the Pharisee, has judged this woman a sinner. Jesus has looked at her inward man and has concluded that she is a saint, because she has faith in God to bring her into the kingdom.

By giving this parable, Jesus is showing the difference between Simon the Pharisee and this woman. This woman has shown Jesus much greater hospitality than Simon has. That is because she has been forgiven much more than Simon has. The point in the parable that most people miss is that, although the woman's sins are forgiven by Jesus and she loves Jesus greatly, Simon's sins had also been forgiven. If Simon was not a forgiven man, he would not be identified in the parable as a man whose debt was forgiven by his creditor. Simon certainly is lacking in his sanctification and does not appear to have joined the little flock in following Jesus and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. However, he is still a forgiven man, according to the parable.

This demonstrates that salvation, during that dispensation, was by believing the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom meant to change your mind about following the religion of the Pharisees, and follow God's law covenant instead. Then, be water baptized. There is nothing in that gospel about what someone thinks of Jesus. People in that program did NOT trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as the gospel to save them. Moreover, according to this passage, not only did they not have to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, but they also did not have to believe He was a prophet, because Simon was forgiven even though he thought that Jesus was not a prophet (7:39). All that was required to enter into God's kingdom was to put yourself back under God's law covenant and be water baptized. This is important because most of Israel, that makes it into the kingdom, falls into this category.

We are told in Matthew 25 that half of Israel believes the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 25:2); they do not work through the tribulation period (Matthew 25:5); but they still make it into the kingdom (Matthew 25:10), thanks to the little flock (Matthew 25:6). As such, this story of Simon and the woman represents the two groups of saved Israel at the end of the tribulation period. The woman represents the little flock, who will watch the signs to determine when Jesus will come back. Simon represents the second group, who believe the gospel of the kingdom but do nothing else, yet they squeak into the kingdom thanks to the faithful walk of the little flock.

7:48-50 Jesus forgives the woman's sins in verse 48. Then, in verse 49, we are told that the Pharisees are in a state of unbelief. They have rejected the gospel of the kingdom and will continue to depend upon their own religious system. Note that Simon is specifically excluded from the rest of the Pharisees, because he does believe the gospel, just nothing else. Jesus told His disciples that, when they go from city to city to preach the gospel of the kingdom, they are to flee from a city, once they are persecuted there

(Matthew 10:23). The same holds true for Jesus. He sees that He will be persecuted by these unbelieving Pharisees. That is why He tells the woman again in verse 50 that her sins are forgiven her and to depart in peace. She may have not been done washing Jesus' feet, but Jesus was about to leave, so, she should leave, too.

8 Jesus begins concentrating on bringing edification to the little flock. Israel is still following Jesus around for the miracles He does, but they have rejected the gospel of the kingdom. Therefore, Jesus speaks in parables so that the little flock will learn the mysteries of the kingdom, while apostate Israel will be left in the dark (v. 10).

8:1-3 The lost sheep of the house of Israel need to be saved before Jesus' second coming; therefore, Jesus goes from city to city, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and "shewing" it, as we are told here, which means doing the signs of the kingdom, which are casting out devils and healing the sick. The 12 apostles follow Him from city to city but so do many women. Most of these women have money of some form or another, which they use to cover the expenses of all those in the group as they travel from city to city. Women were primarily the ones who financed Jesus' earthly ministry.

8:4 Matthew mentions the blasphemy of the Son of man that the Pharisees commit (Matthew 12:24-32). From then on, Jesus concentrates on edifying the members of the little flock. He will not share the mysteries of the kingdom with others because they have rejected the kingdom. Therefore, He begins speaking in parables (Matthew 13:11-16) so that others will not understand what He is talking about. Since Luke has already shown us that the Pharisees have rejected the gospel and that the common Jews have done the same by just following Jesus for entertainment, he now goes right into Jesus' ministry of edifying the little flock without giving us the details just mentioned from Matthew.

8:5-15 Since Jesus now starts to concentrate on ministering to the little flock only, He tells them why by showing that most people, who have heard the gospel of the kingdom, either have rejected or will reject it. This will also help the 12 apostles when they go from city to city within Israel, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and doing the signs of the kingdom, after Jesus' ascension. In this parable, the sower is God, and His seed is the Word of God. The seed falling by the wayside represent those, who hear the gospel, but they do not believe it, because they continue to hold to the traditions of the fathers. That is, these are the religious people. "The fowls of the air" devouring the gospel represent the Pharisees, who, we are told here, are nothing more than Satan's minions.

The seed among the rock represent those initially believing the gospel of the kingdom, but they ultimately reject it for the Antichrist's religion when they realize they will be persecuted and maybe even killed if they do not side with apostate Israel. The seed among the thorns represent those who believe the

gospel and reject the Antichrist at first, but then they get a better offer of material wealth and power in the Antichrist's religious system, and so they abandon God and His gospel. Then, there is the little flock, the believing remnant. Because they have "an honest and good heart" toward the gospel of the kingdom, they endure through the tribulation period. They also preach the gospel of the kingdom, resulting in people being saved, which Jesus calls here "bring[ing] forth fruit." Thus, Jesus tells His disciples that they will be in the minority through the tribulation period, but they will be okay as long as they keep trusting in God's Word over what man says.

We should note that 8:13 says that the seed among the rock "fall away" in time of temptation. "Fall away" is only used one other time in scripture, and that is in Hebrews 6:6, which says that it is impossible to renew to repentance those who fall away. Therefore, we know that these rocky-ground people lose their salvation when they abandon the gospel for the wealth of this world.

8:10 Nearly every Christian commentary will tell you that the reason Jesus told parables was to make complicated truths simple to understand. However, this verse tells us that the opposite is true. Jesus purposely concealed the mysteries of the kingdom in parables so that only the believing remnant would understand them. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing" (Proverbs 25:2).

8:16-18 People use verse 17 to say that, on judgment day, God will reveal all the secret sins of men. However, that is taking the verse out of context. This passage refers to the mysteries of the kingdom (v. 10) and how only those with "ears to hear" (8:8), i.e., the little flock, know those mysteries during the tribulation period. When Jesus comes back, He will reveal those mysteries to all people (Isaiah 11:9). Therefore, it is the mysteries of the kingdom being secret that will be revealed later that is referred to in verse 17, not some hidden sins of men.

Verse 18 is Jesus' warning to the little flock that they need to have ears to hear. That is, they need to have faith in God's Word over what religion tells them. The more faith they have, the more mysteries of the kingdom they will know. Then, the more effective their preaching of the gospel of the kingdom and performing the signs of the kingdom will be during the tribulation period such that they will lead more of the lost sheep of the house of Israel into the kingdom. (Note Matthew 17:14-21, where the 12 disciples could not cast out a lunatic devil. Jesus told them that they could not cast out the devil, because they were in unbelief. But, the fasting and prayer of the tribulation period would cause them to overcome their unbelief so that they could cast these types of devils out.) The more they lead into the kingdom, the greater their reward will be in the kingdom. That is the meaning of "for whosoever hath, to him shall be given." Note the last part of verse 18. The religious leaders will seem to have a good grasp on the kingdom of God, but Jesus says that they do not.

8:19-21 Mark 3:21 tells us that Jesus' physical mother and brothers came because they thought He was crazy. Therefore, they have come to try to stop His public ministry because He is an embarrassment to them. Spiritually speaking, then, they are not His mother and brothers because they are trying to stop Him from doing the will of His Father. The blessed virgin Mary, who is a virgin no longer, is part of this group, trying to stop Him from doing His Father's will. This explains Jesus' reaction that those that believe God's Word and do it are His family, not these people who are, physically speaking, His family.

8:22-25 The ship on the lake is a type of the believing remnant of Israel going through the tribulation period. Falling asleep during the storm represents those with faith in God ("Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Isaiah 26:3).) The storm of wind represents the spirits of Satan, such as the Antichrist and the false prophet, that try to toss the little flock around as a reed shaken in the wind (7:24). The boat being filled with water represents how the Antichrist's religious system will overtake apostate Israel. Going to their Master for help represents how the little flock is saved from the tribulation period only by trusting in God's Word.

Jesus sleeps while a great storm rages around Him. Their ship was even filled with water, and Jesus is STILL sleeping. This shows how Jesus trusted completely in His Father. This is a lesson for the disciples. They will go through the tribulation period, and it will seem like God is nowhere to be found. The only way they will survive the storm of the tribulation period (make it to "the other side of the lake") is to continue to trust in God's Word against all odds. The "manner of man," that Jesus is, is the same "manner of man" that the disciples will be when they are filled with the Holy Ghost. They will be able to perform physical miracles during the tribulation period so that the lost sheep of Israel may be saved. This is how Jesus is with them, even during the tribulation period (Matthew 28:20).

8:26-34 Note that, during this whole ordeal, the man does not speak once. Only the devils speak. So, too, Satan was speaking through the Jewish religious leaders when they spoke to Jesus.

8:27 This man is a picture of Israel. He is filled with devils, just like Israel is Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24). The devils have been in the man for a long time, just like Israel has been practicing their religion for hundreds of years. He is naked, just like Israel does not have white robes of righteousness (Revelation 6:11). He does not have a place to live, just like Israel is under "the times of the Gentiles" (21:24) due to their unbelief.

8:28 The response of this man also matches the response of Israel. Israel did not believe the gospel of the kingdom. Instead, the Pharisees were filled with fear over what Jesus might do to them (5:26, 6:11, 7:16), just like the

devils in this man are afraid Jesus has come to torment them. Jesus was not part of Israel's religion. Therefore, the devils ask, "What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God most high?"

8:29 The man would be bound by chains and fetters, and he would break them. This is a type of how Israel is unsaved, and they have bound themselves with the chains and fetters of the Jewish religion to try to work their way into the kingdom. Because their religion could not save them, the chains and fetters did not help.

8:30 The man was possessed with a legion of devils. So also was the state of Israel.

8:31 The deep is Satan's domain. These devils did not want to be cast out of the earth. Similarly, the Pharisees did not look for redemption from their Messiah. They just wanted to get rid of Him so that they could continue their rule on earth under Satan.

8:32 Swine were unclean animals under the law (Leviticus 11:7). So, too, the nation of Israel was unclean. When the devils went into the swine, it is a picture that, although Jesus cast out devils during His earthly ministry, Satan still possessed Israel because they did not believe the gospel of the kingdom. "The power of the Lord was present to heal them" (5:17), but they remained unhealed due to their unbelief.

8:33 Because Satan maintained his control over Israel, Israel went from being near entering the kingdom (A mountain is a picture of a kingdom, and the swine were feeding on the mountain.) to running away from the kingdom because of their unbelief, such that their hopes "were choked." Therefore, God started the dispensation of the gospel of grace with Paul in Acts 9. Therefore, the devil being cast out of the man and into the swine is a picture of what happened to Israel at Jesus' first coming because of their unbelief. The swine running down the mountain and being choked in the lake is a picture of what happened to Israel at the Holy Ghost's coming in Acts 1-7 because of their unbelief.

8:34 The people telling others "in the city and in the country" of what happened is a picture of how Jesus would do a miracle, the common Jews would tell the religious leaders, and then the religious leaders would come to Jesus to try to stop Him.

8:35-37 When the religious leaders of Israel hear of God's miracles through Jesus, they are filled with great fear (afraid that God might overthrow their religious system) and try to get rid of Jesus, just like these people did here. Note how these people were initially afraid (8:35), afraid that Jesus may not be of the devil because He cast out a legion of devils, something they probably could not do. When they hear the whole story, it confirms for them that Jesus' power is of God, which causes them to be "taken with great

fear.” This is a type of how most of Israel will not believe the gospel of the kingdom during the tribulation period, because it goes against the Antichrist’s established religious system, and they could be killed for doing that. Therefore, they send the little flock away.

8:38-39 The man, cleansed of the devils, wants to go with Jesus, but Jesus tells him to be a witness for him where he lives instead. Similarly, the little flock will want to ascend with Jesus when He leaves the earth after His resurrection, but He will send them out to the cities of Israel instead so that others might enter God’s kingdom as well.

8:40 The people gladly receive Jesus, not because they believe the gospel of the kingdom, but because He heals them physically.

8:43 This woman’s issue of blood for 12 years stands for the 12 tribes of Israel. They have tainted blood because of their sins. She had gone to many physicians for healing but was actually worse off for doing so (Mark 5:26). So, too, Jews had gone to the Jewish religious leaders to be healed of their blood problem. Because the religious system taught the traditions of the fathers, rather than God’s law covenant, they were actually worse off now.

8:44 The woman thought that her religious observance was necessary for Jesus to heal her (Matthew 9:21). That is why she touched Him.

8:45-48 So many people come to God with their religion (pictured as touching Jesus here) that, if man looks at those observing religion, he cannot identify who is truly saved or not (pictured by Peter’s response here). However, Jesus knows the believer among the crowd, because virtue flowed out from Him. Virtue has to do with morality or righteousness, rather than physical healing. Therefore, this “virtue” that goes from Jesus probably refers to the fact that this woman had faith in God to heal her spiritually. Since spiritual healing comes from the blood of Jesus, He felt this spiritual healing come from Him to her. Therefore, He said “thy faith hath made thee whole” (8:48). This, then, means that she would receive eternal life. It is not referring to the physical healing of her blood problem.

Jesus makes a point to find her and tell her that she was healed because of her faith, not because she touched Him. Similarly, if Israel were to be healed spiritually, it would not be because of their religion. It would be because of their faith in God’s Word to believe the gospel of the kingdom, which means abandoning their religion and being water baptized so that they may enter God’s eternal kingdom on earth.

8:41-42,49-50 In 7:2-3,6-7, we saw a Gentile’s great faith such that he told Jesus just to speak the word and his servant would be healed. Now, we see a Jewish synagogue ruler, who has faith that Jesus can heal his daughter, but not from a distance and not after she died.

Today, Christians like to use a verse, like 8:50, to say that a physical miracle did not take place because a person did not have the faith for God to heal. However, that is not what is meant by this verse. Remember from 4:22-29 that Jesus would not do any physical healings in His hometown, because of their unbelief. Signs are done to confirm that the gospel of the kingdom is true (Mark 16:20). If no one will believe, there is no point in doing the physical miracle. Therefore, Jesus is saying that, if the synagogue ruler has faith in God, Jesus will do the miracle as a sign to others so that they may believe. However, if not even the ruler has faith, the physical miracle will not do any good, and so He will not perform the resurrection in that case. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (16:31). Therefore, Jesus is looking for faith in the gospel by the ruler, and not faith in the healing, in order to raise his daughter from the dead.

8:51 When unbelievers see a miracle, they make excuses about why they should not believe. In addition, the Jewish religious leaders try to destroy Jesus. Resurrection is the greatest miracle of all, and it gets the worst response from the religious leaders. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead in front of everyone, the Jewish religious leaders sought to kill Jesus from then on (John 11:53). In Luke 8:51, it is not time yet for Jesus to be killed. Therefore, Jesus only lets Peter, James, and John see this resurrection.

8:52-53 We can see the unbelief of the Jews when Jesus declares the girl is only sleeping. It is true that she is dead, but, because of the resurrection of the dead into God's kingdom, those, who will enter the kingdom, are only sleeping to rise to eternal life at Jesus' second coming. Jesus tries to get them to have this perspective, "and they laughed Him to scorn." This shows that they do not have the spiritual ears to hear the truth of God's Word. Similarly today, when you truly believe God's Word and allow the Holy Spirit to teach it to you, most Christians will laugh you to scorn.

8:54-55 Jesus' raising of the girl from the dead is a type of how He will raise Israel from the dead at His second coming to enter the kingdom. Therefore, her getting meat immediately is a type of how God will immediately write His law upon saved Israel's heart at that time (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

8:56 It is not the physical miracles that Jesus wants proclaimed throughout Israel. He calls His 12 disciples to "preach the kingdom of God" (9:2). They will also perform physical miracles, but the miracles are the means to the end of having Jews believe the gospel so that they may enter God's kingdom. The physical miracles are not the goal themselves. Since the people outside of the house did not believe (8:53), telling them of the miracle would do more harm than good.

9 Jesus begins preparing His 12 apostles for His impending death, but they do not have the faith to believe what He is saying. They think they will use the supernatural power Jesus has given them to bring in the kingdom by force, and that they will be great in that kingdom through that power. Jesus teaches them to bring Israel in the kingdom by treating them as children, leading them into God's fold. The power is meant to illicit a faith response, rather than bringing in the kingdom by force. Force is what the violent use (Matthew 11:12), not God (17:20-21).

9:1-2 Note carefully how these two verses are worded. The two signs of the kingdom are to cast out devils and perform physical healings. That is what we see in verse 1. Jesus gave His disciples the power to do the 2 signs of the kingdom. However, "He SENT them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick." Although they have the power to do physical miracles, Jesus' main purpose in sending them is to preach the gospel of the kingdom so that the lost sheep of Israel may believe the gospel. The purpose of sending them is NOT so they can work supernatural wonders. Those wonders only confirm that the gospel that they preach is true (Mark 16:20).

9:3-5 The disciples were not to build a lifelong ministry in one location. They were to go to one city: 1) Preach the gospel of the kingdom, 2) Perform the signs of the kingdom, and 3) Leave for the next city. Their great commission from Jesus was to go to the cities of Israel (Matthew 10:5), find the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:6), and give them the gospel (9:2) so that they may enter the kingdom, because God's kingdom will come before they finish going through all of Israel (Matthew 10:23).

Also, they were not to bring money or supplies with them. By doing this, those, who receive them, have the opportunity to help them out materially, as the disciples help them out spiritually (II Corinthians 8:14).

9:2,6 These two verses tell you that the gospel, that the disciples preached, was the kingdom of God. Specifically, this gospel is "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2, 4:17). They did NOT preach trusting in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sins. We know this because Matthew 16:21 says, "From that time forth BEGAN Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." The parallel passage to Luke 9 is Matthew 10. Therefore, since they preached the gospel of the kingdom and they did not know about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection until Matthew 16, the gospel of the kingdom could not contain that information, since, last time I checked, 10 comes before 16. Rather, they preached to repent, i.e., go back to following God's law covenant with Israel and be water baptized for cleansing from idolatry (Ezekiel 36:25) so that they may enter God's kingdom because the kingdom is at hand.

9:7-9 Religion has clouded clear thinking. The Jews have the Old

Testament, which tells of a coming Messiah. However, they do not even consider that Jesus could be the Messiah. They think He is John the Baptist, Elijah, or another prophet. That is because they think their Messiah will overthrow the Romans. Since Jesus is not doing that, they think He is just a prophet. Note that Herod, being a ruler, does not make a superstitious presumption but desires to meet Jesus so he can decide for himself.

9:10 Jesus knows that men focus on the physical over the spiritual. Therefore, when the disciples come back from going through towns preaching the gospel and healing the sick, they will be telling everyone how they cast out devils and healed lepers and lame men, instead of telling people about how many people believed the gospel and will now enter God's kingdom. Because of this, Jesus takes the 12 away privately from everyone to get their focus on the kingdom, rather than on the signs of the kingdom.

Where is the focus with so-called faith healers today? Is it not on the miracles they say they do and not on people being saved from hell? These faith healers rarely even give a gospel message, and, if they do, it is usually "another gospel" that will not save people from their sins (Galatians 1:6).

9:11 Note the proper focus of Jesus. He preaches the gospel of the kingdom. The physical healings are secondary. Also, notice that those, who did receive physical healings, were healed based on their NEED, not based on if they had the FAITH to be healed. Faith is necessary to believe the gospel of the kingdom and enter God's kingdom. For the Jews, this faith usually comes AFTER a physical healing, "for the Jews require a sign" before believing (I Corinthians 1:22).

9:12-14 Where is the faith of the 12 apostles? They had just returned (9:10) from going through towns and healing people everywhere (9:6), and Jesus had told them to ask of their Father and He would give them what they ask (Matthew 7:7). The example Jesus gives is specifically asking the Father for food (Matthew 7:9-11). He then says to do unto men what you would have them do unto you (Matthew 7:12). Therefore, this is the perfect opportunity for the disciples to put into practice what Jesus had taught them. They could follow the Golden Rule by asking the Father for food to feed the 5,000 men there. Yet, the 12 apostles still lack faith after all those healings they had just performed such that Jesus has to step in and feed the people!

We also see that the disciples are starting to get a big head. The 12 told Jesus to send the multitude away, as if they were calling the shots now. The physical miracles they performed had gone to their head.

9:15-17 In the tribulation period, it will be the 12 apostles who do this. The little flock will not take the mark of the beast. Therefore, they will not be able to buy food. Therefore, they will have to ask of the Father to feed them. The apostles had the opportunity to do that now, but they lacked the faith to

follow Jesus' instructions.

9:17 The 12 baskets taken up afterward symbolize how God will feed the 12 tribes of Israel in the wilderness in the tribulation period (Revelation 12:6) such that they are filled with food left over. These are the 12 tribes of Israel that will be sealed in Revelation 7:1-8 at the beginning of the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period (the Great Tribulation). This is a separate group from others saved in Israel, who will be starving and need to ask for the Father to feed them in order to survive outside of God's protection, for many of these people will be killed by the Antichrist's kingdom (Revelation 6:9).

9:18 The disciples lack of faith has just been shown. Now, we see why. Jesus prays to His Father ALONE. The 12 disciples are with Him, but they are not praying.

9:19-20 The disciples are at least one step ahead of the Jews, because they believe Jesus is the Messiah, while the Jews think He is just a prophet.

9:21-22 Jesus does not want the disciples to tell Israel that He is their Messiah, because they may try to make Him king by force, which they just now tried to do between verses 17 and 18, based upon the additional information in John 6:15.

Matthew 16:21 identifies this as the time when Jesus BEGAN to tell His disciples how He must suffer, be killed, and be raised the third day. There is no way the disciples could have preached Jesus' death as atonement for sins when they went to the towns in Israel in 9:6, because they did not even know about His death until afterward.

9:23-24 Jesus' call to the little flock to "take up" their own cross daily and follow Jesus has to do with, every day, being willing to be killed by the Antichrist and his goons. "No man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Ephesians 5:29), and preaching the gospel during the tribulation period means spiritually crucifying their flesh to the will of the Father. They were to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of Israel during the tribulation period. That would mean persecution and maybe even death at the hands of apostate Israel. Thus, they were to deny their flesh and the lusts thereof and do the Father's will, being willing to lose their life for the sake of bringing others with them into God's kingdom.

9:25-26 The little flock may be taken captive by apostate Israel and brought before the image of the beast to be killed. At that point, it is important to remember that, if they deny the Christ before the image, they will not make it into the kingdom. For apostate Israel, they need to know that they are giving up their place in God's kingdom for material wealth and power in the temporary kingdom of the Antichrist. Therefore, there is no profit for them because they lose their own souls.

9:27-30 Although the kingdom of God was near, it did not come to fruition due to the unbelief of the nation of Israel. Nevertheless, Jesus did give Peter, James, and John a taste of the kingdom by bringing them up to a mountain where Jesus was glorified and Elijah and Moses also appeared in their glorified state. This was meant to help the little flock be faithful to God through the tribulation period and endure to the end because they would know that the kingdom awaits them.

9:27 Seeing the kingdom of God before death refers to the event of Jesus' transfiguration in 9:28-36. We know this to be the case because Peter later says that they "were eyewitnesses of His majesty" and saw Him receive honor and glory from the Father at that time (II Peter 1:16-18). Therefore, Jesus' prophecy of this verse did come to pass, even though God has not established His kingdom on earth yet.

9:28 It is interesting that this verse says that "about an eight days after these sayings," Jesus took Peter, James, and John up to the mountain, while Matthew 17:1 says that it was "after six days." Six days is "about an eight days," so there is no contradiction here. However, why wouldn't the Holy Spirit give an exact figure in Luke like He did in Matthew? The reason is because eight is the number of a new beginning, and Jesus is showing Peter, James, and John a new beginning for the nation of Israel when Jesus comes back and sets up God's kingdom on earth with Israel as God's nation, ruling over the whole world.

9:29 The reason that Jesus' raiment turned glistering white is because white linen represents the righteousness of the saints (Revelation 19:8). Thus, Peter, James, and John are seeing Jesus as He will appear in the kingdom.

9:31-32 Luke tells us two things about the transfiguration that the other gospel accounts do not tell us. First, Elijah and Moses spoke about Jesus' death. Thus, the disciples had another opportunity to learn of His death. This time, they could learn about it directly from Moses and a prophet. They did not learn of it, though, because, difference #2: They were asleep. This is a picture of Israel going through the tribulation period. Most will be oblivious to what God is accomplishing during that time because they do not listen to God and His Word (Matthew 25:5). Similarly, God is trying to tell His disciples about Jesus' death, and they are asleep.

9:33 Because Peter is in a state of unbelief about Jesus' death, not having the ears to hear about it at this time, he ends up putting Jesus, Moses, and Elijah on the same level. He speaks of all three of them as gods, being worshipped, each in their own temple. This shows how much religion had permeated Israel such that the main man Jesus chose to take care of the little flock during the tribulation period suggests setting up tabernacles to people other than God. It is not hard, then, to understand how Israel will worship the Antichrist in the tribulation period. Peter, though, does

recognize Jesus as the Son of God (Matthew 16:16); therefore, he speaks “not knowing what he said.”

At the same time, we should not be too hard on Peter, because Jesus, Moses, and Elijah all must have appeared as gods to him, since they were all in their glorified bodies.

Another point to note is that Peter was able to recognize Moses and Elijah, even though he had never seen them before, and they were in their glorified bodies. This means that, in God’s eternal kingdom, we will be able to recognize all of the saints, even though we have never seen what they look like.

9:35 So lacking is the disciples’ faith that God the Father has to speak audibly to them to listen to what Jesus says because He is the Son of God. They need to understand that the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, has to die, be buried, and rise again the third day in order for what they just saw, God’s kingdom on earth, to become a reality. Therefore, they should not try to talk Jesus out of dying.

9:38-41 Jesus gave the disciples the power to cast out ALL devils (9:1), but this particular kind of devil they could not cast out. Why could they not cast it out if they had power over ALL devils? The reason is because, while Jesus had given them the power, they could not exercise that power without faith. That is why Jesus refers to them in verse 41 as “faithless.” This devil tears the boy, makes him foam, and bruises him. This devil represents religion. Because the disciples are still believing in religion over the word of God through Jesus Christ, they do not have the faith to cast out the devil.

Jesus says in Matthew 17:21 that “this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting,” meaning that, the only way the little flock is going to have the faith to say to religion “remove hence to yonder place” (Matthew 17:20) is by going through the tribulation period where they will be forced to fast because they will not take the mark of the beast and they will be forced to pray, because they will plead to God to help them through the tribulation period. The only way Israel will make it into the kingdom is by going through Jacob’s trouble (Jeremiah 30:7). Thus, we see that Jesus sent His disciples out to preach the gospel of the kingdom to show them how necessary the tribulation period will be to purge Israel of their religion so that they can enter God’s kingdom as His holy nation because, as it stands now, Israel is a “faithless and perverse generation” (9:41).

9:42 Romans 11:26 says that, after the rapture of the body of Christ, “all Israel shall be saved.” They are saved by going through the tribulation period. Thus, God draws Israel to Himself through the time when Satan’s kingdom flourishes, just like this child is healed, even as the devil is throwing him down and taring him.

9:43-45 God the Father told Peter, James, and John that Jesus is the Son of God, and they should hear Him. However, when Jesus tells them again of His impending death, they do not understand what He is saying. The kingdom of God is near, but they are not ready for it yet. This should make it crystal clear that the gospel, that the 12 disciples preached, did NOT include Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

9:46 The disciples were supposed to understand that the kingdom only comes by Jesus' death, yet they ignored that part, focusing on who will be greatest in the kingdom. If they learned the lesson of Jesus' impending death, they would have known that the only way to be great is to suffer for God, just like Jesus was doing and would continue to do through the cross.

9:47-48 The child is a picture of the nation of Israel's spiritual condition. They were like children, as Jesus said in 7:32. They were looking for entertainment from God, rather than obeying the law covenant and looking for the Messiah to save them. The only way for Israel to enter into the kingdom would be for the little flock to help them along, as one would help a child, to get into God's kingdom. Therefore, the disciples would not become great in the kingdom by physically fighting against Rome or even against the religious leaders. They would have to go out to Israel during the tribulation period and help the spiritual children to understand how to enter God's kingdom. By doing so, they would lead many of the lost sheep of Israel into the kingdom; thus, becoming great in the kingdom.

9:49-50 Clearly, the disciples are not listening to Jesus. He told them to be like children, and John's response is to recall how he told someone to stop casting out devils in Jesus' name. Casting out devils is a picture of casting Satan out of Israel, getting Israel ready for the kingdom. Therefore, while Jesus told His disciples to lead Israel along as children, the disciples were hindering Israel from entering the kingdom by trying to stop someone from kicking Satan out of Israel! This shows that, until the Holy Ghost comes in Acts 2, the disciples will not appropriately use the supernatural power to heal the sick and cast out devils.

9:51 Jesus "stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." This shows His determination to do His Father's will, even though it meant suffering and dying at the hands of the people He had come to save. He had to do this Himself, because His disciples would only try to hinder His going to the cross. As such, He fulfills Isaiah 50:7, which says that the Messiah would set His "face like a flint" because the Lord God would help Him, even though the disciples would not.

9:52-53 The reason that "a very great multitude" (Matthew 21:8) went before Jesus, crying "Hosanna" as He came into Jerusalem, was because Jesus had "sent messengers" to let people know that He was coming into Jerusalem. The message they proclaimed was of Psalm 118:22-29. The stone rejected of the religious leaders was becoming the cornerstone. He is

coming to be that final sacrifice for their sins. Therefore, it is a day to “rejoice and be glad” (Psalm 118:24). This is why they knew to say “blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Psalm 118:26). It is not that they knew their Bible. It is that they had a faith response to the message proclaimed by the messengers that Jesus sent ahead of Himself to Jerusalem.

Note that the messengers first go to the Samaritans. The Samaritans were rejected by other Jews, because they were in the northern part of Israel, but all 12 tribes will be in the kingdom (Ezekiel 37:21-22). Therefore, the Samaritans needed to be saved, too, as we see Jesus doing in John 4. Therefore, Jesus invited them to come and partake in the Passover Lamb sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ in Jerusalem. However, they, like the rest of the Jews, were not looking for their Messiah to die. Therefore, “they did not receive Him” (9:53).

9:54-56 Again, the disciples are not hearing Jesus at all. He told them to accept Israel as children and lead them into the kingdom. Instead, they want to consume Israel with fire, which is quite the opposite of why Jesus came. Jesus came to save men, not to destroy them.

It is also funny that they would want to destroy the Samaritans for not receiving Jesus when the disciples have also not received Him in the sense that they do not understand His impending death, burial, and resurrection. But, this is just like religion. Christianity readily calls heretics those who believe the truth of God’s Word, when Christianity are the true heretics. The same will take place in the tribulation period, as most of Israel aligns themselves with the Antichrist and persecutes the little flock, who are the true believers in Israel.

9:57-62 Christianity likes to change what these people said in these verses to make it sound like their excuses are greater than what they really are. For example, people will say that let me “bury my father” refers to sticking around for years until his father dies. Even if that is not the case, the context tells us that Jesus is looking for immediate forsaking of all and following Him. That’s what Peter, James, John (5:11), and Levi (5:28) did. It is also what Jesus tells the little flock to do when the abomination of desolation is set up in the temple. Jesus said, “Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes” (Matthew 24:17-18).

At the time of this passage, Jesus is going toward Jerusalem, and these people with their excuses are ways of Satan trying to stop Jesus from heading to Jerusalem. However, because Jesus has “set His face to go to Jerusalem” (9:51) to be crucified, He will not be stopped. These people will need to forsake all, at that very second, to follow Jesus because they will not have any material goods that they can hold onto while going from city to city in Israel during the tribulation period to preach the gospel. If they are not

willing to forsake all now for Christ, they certainly will not forsake all when the Antichrist threatens death for those not serving the Antichrist and offers riches for those in Israel who will follow him. Besides, Jesus is going to Jerusalem to be sacrificed as their Passover Lamb. No believer would want to miss that!

9:58 The Lord Jesus Christ made the earth. Psalm 95:5 says that “His hands formed the dry land.” Yet, as the Son of man, He does not even have a place to lay His head. He is on the move at all times because He is doing His Father’s work of reconciling the lost sheep of the house of Israel back to God (Matthew 15:24). If that is what Jesus Christ does, how much more should saved Israel do the same!

9:60 How do the dead bury the dead? Jesus is saying that the spiritually dead, because they are not working for the kingdom of God, are the ones who have the time to bury the physically dead.

9:62 This verse should remind us of Lot’s wife. She looked back to Sodom and turned into a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26). (We even see Jesus mention her bad example in 17:32.) So, too, anyone turning back is not fit for the kingdom of God. This shows how wicked apostate Israel is that they need to separate completely from that Babylonian religious system without even hinting at returning to it.

10-19 A lot of information found in these 10 chapters is not found in the other gospels.

10:1 Now, Jesus has "steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (9:51), and His 12 disciples are going with Him. If Jesus can get the lost sheep of the house of Israel together, they can come to Jerusalem and have Jesus sacrificed as the Passover Lamb in the temple. They can then partake in that sacrifice in order to be part of God’s eternal kingdom on earth.

To prepare the cities for this march to Jerusalem, Jesus finds 70 disciples willing to go before Him. He sends them to every city He will go to on His way to Jerusalem, so that the lost sheep of the house of Israel will come to Jerusalem with Him, overturn the mountain of Babylonian religion there, and bring the Passover Lamb sacrifice of Jesus into the temple, just as God had planned in Psalm 118:21-29.

Of course, we know that God’s real plan was to have Jesus die on a cross, but God kept that a secret in the Old Testament. Otherwise, Satan and his forces would not have had Jesus crucified (I Corinthians 2:7-8). But, Luke is showing Jesus as the perfect man. As such, Jesus did not know of God’s hidden plan, and so He went about to fulfill God’s revealed plan in Psalm 118:21-29.

10:2 Many in Israel would believe the gospel of the kingdom if they heard it

(Isaiah 53:11), but they are hearing the religiosity of the Pharisees instead. Therefore, laborers are needed. Twelve were sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel before (9:1). Now, 70 more are being sent. Still, the number of gospel preachers will not be enough to cover all of Israel with the gospel before Jesus' second coming (Matthew 10:23). That is why prayer for more gospel preachers is important.

Jesus is basically saying that the only way the kingdom of God will come then is if more people preach the gospel. In today's mystery dispensation, the rapture of the body of Christ will take place when "the fullness of the Gentiles be come in" (Romans 11:25). This probably refers to all of the heavenly positions being filled with qualified believers (Ephesians 1:21-23). The way you are qualified for a higher position in heavenly places is if you learn more sound doctrine from Paul's epistles. Therefore, if you want the rapture to take place sooner, start learning and teaching Pauline doctrine to others.

10:3 The wolves, ready to devour the little flock, are the Jewish religious leaders. If people start believing the gospel of the kingdom, they will stop going to the Pharisees' synagogues and giving them money. Therefore, the Pharisees will try to put an end to the ministries of the little flock, much like they are now trying with the Lord Jesus Christ's ministry.

10:4 During the Great Tribulation (the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period), the little flock will not be able to buy food; therefore, they are not to take any possessions with them as they preach the gospel. However, two bigger reasons for not taking possessions with them is so that: 1) They will rely upon God's provision (Matthew 7:7-11), and 2) They can make a quick getaway when the wolves come after them to destroy them (Matthew 24:15-20).

"Salute no man by the way" tells you that they were to go to the synagogue in the city and preach the gospel of the kingdom to those there, since potential believers are probably in the synagogues. If they talk to everyone they meet along the way, they would be delayed in getting to the synagogue, and they would likely be stopped and prevented from going to the synagogue.

10:5-6 "The son of peace" refers to people being willing to believe the gospel of the kingdom, rather than trying to destroy the gospel preachers like the Jewish religious leaders will try to do. If they believe the gospel, they will have peace with God.

10:7 The little flock do not have time to go from house to house, because they need to keep going through the cities of Israel and there are not that many members of the little flock to preach to Israel. Also, the most receptive people to the gospel are probably in the synagogues. Granted, the religious people are there, too, and they will not believe. However, the average Jew, in

the synagogue, believes in God and would welcome the gospel if he heard it.

God's Word is quick and powerful and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). Therefore, when they preach the gospel, there WILL be a reaction to it, and they will quickly see who is religious and who is a believer. I think that it is quite possible that the word "house" refers to a synagogue, rather than a person's house, which means many people in the city would hear the gospel if they preach in just one "house." I say this based on what Jesus did in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-23), where He was not able to do miracles because they did not believe the gospel. It also makes sense in light of 10:10-11. Why would they proclaim judgment on a city if just one, little house rejected the gospel? However, if a house of worship in that city rejects the gospel, the whole city has rejected it, because, if the churchgoers do not believe the gospel, the non-churchgoers do not either.

10:8-11 If a city receives them, they are to heal the sick to prove to them that the gospel they preach is true, so that they may believe it and enter God's eternal kingdom on earth. If they are not received, they are to move on. In some instances, they may be falsely received. Therefore, Mark 16:18 says, "If they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." This does not mean they should be downing cans of Drano for the novelty of it. Rather, it refers to situations when those religious wolves try to devour them by giving them poison to eat and drink, and they eat and drink that poison before they realize they are ravening wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15). This will then be a sign to the rest of the people in the synagogue that God is with them, since they did not die when they drank the poison. Therefore, their message is true and should be believed.

10:11 In cursing man, God said, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19). The idea is that unsaved man is nothing more than a pile of dust. Therefore, if a city rejects the gospel of the kingdom, it is a dusty city. That is why Jesus tells the preachers to say to an unsaved city: "Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you." Because the dust would cleave to their feet, Jesus said that the believing remnant needed their feet washed: "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" (John 13:10). But, because they have preached the gospel, God says they have beautiful feet, in spite of the dust. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace" (Isaiah 52:7).

10:12 God destroyed Sodom by fire (Genesis 19:24-25). The city that rejects the gospel of the kingdom is in worse shape than Sodom because their degree of punishment will be worse because they rejected a greater message (7:28). The kingdom of God was at hand, and they rejected it. Therefore, their punishment in the lake of fire will be worse than Sodom's punishment. This also shows that there are degrees of punishment in hell, just like there are degrees of reward in heaven and in God's eternal kingdom on earth.

10:13-15 Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum are examples of cities that will have that greater punishment because they rejected the gospel of the kingdom. Note that Capernaum was "exalted to heaven." They were self-righteous to the point that they thought they could go up into heaven and take it over from God for themselves. Both Satan (Isaiah 14:12-14), and the people who created the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11, are also examples of this self-righteousness.

10:17-18 Satan is a cherub (Ezekiel 28:14). Ezekiel 1:14 says that cherubs move "as the appearance of a flash of lightning." Satan is also "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). Therefore, when the 70 were casting out devils, Jesus "beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

10:19 Because "the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few" (10:2), God promises to protect the little flock from being harmed, as they go from city to city in Israel preaching the gospel of the kingdom. This is the same promise Jesus gives in Mark 16:18. The new versions take that verse out to try to get rid of that promise by God to the little flock, but it is still in the Bible in Luke 10:19, where the new versions leave it in. In addition to physical harm, it is talking about spiritual harm, and the context shows that spiritual harm is the main issue here. The spiritual serpents and scorpions are the generation of vipers, i.e., the Jewish religious leaders (Matthew 23:33), who will join themselves with the Antichrist in the tribulation period. The "power to tread on serpents and scorpions", then, means that the little flock will be able to take away Satan's grasp over Israel by preaching the gospel and performing the signs of the kingdom. Regardless of how strong Satan's grasp is on people, faith in God overcomes Satan.

10:20 Being able to cast out devils was just a means to the end of having people believe the gospel of the kingdom. Therefore, they were to concentrate on the kingdom, rather than on the means of getting Jews into the kingdom. Their names being written in heaven is a reference to the book of life. According to Revelation 21:27, only those written in the book of life will enter into God's kingdom on earth. Their rejoicing, therefore, should be in their eternal life and the work that God has given them to do to lead others into the kingdom.

10:21 This shows the power of God. Satan has some very wise and skilled men on his side. God has some pretty ignorant people on His side. Yet, Satan loses the battle when these ignorant babes, trusting in God, work for Him. ("Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).) Paul says that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (II Corinthians 4:7). Truly, when the little flock wins the victory over Satan, God gets the glory. That is why Jesus rejoices here.

10:22 The “all things” of this verse refers to the Lord Jesus Christ being over all spiritual powers. After His resurrection, He says, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18). Ephesians 1:21 says that Christ is “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named.” Because He is over all, He is able to give power over devils and all of Satan’s forces to the ignorant, spiritual babes, who are the disciples (10:21).

10:23-24 I Peter 1:10-11 says "of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." The Old Testament prophets wrote of the Messiah's first and second comings and searched diligently to figure out the details, but they could not. God told them that this understanding would not be given to man until the future (I Peter 1:12). That future is at the time of Jesus’ first coming, because the spiritual "babes" (10:21) with Jesus now have the opportunity to see and believe the doctrine regarding the Messiah and the kingdom of God. Therefore, they are blessed beyond the blessing given to the Old Testament prophets, who merely wrote about the Messiah.

10:25-28 Note that the lawyer’s question was a temptation, meaning that he was not really seeking eternal life. Rather, he was trying to get Jesus to speak against the Jewish religion. Jesus' response to this man is in line with Romans 2:7, which says that God will give eternal life "to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality." The problem is found in Romans 3:10: "There is none righteous, no, not one." Therefore, Jesus gives the man a true statement by saying he will have eternal life if he keeps the commandments. The problem is that no one keeps the commandments perfectly.

However, this man is not looking for righteousness; he is just trying to justify himself (v. 29). Therefore, Jesus gives him, not the gospel, which gives a man imputed righteousness, but the way to be self-righteous, which Romans 3:10 tells us is impossible. Once he learns the lesson of the law, which is that he cannot be justified by it (Galatians 3:11), then he will seek out the gospel of the kingdom. However, before that time, he will not believe. Therefore, Jesus does not even share the gospel with him.

10:27-29 The man's response of the two commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets makes it look like he had heard Jesus give these two commandments before (Matthew 22:36-40) and was trying to figure out a way in his mind where he has obeyed them. Therefore, he asks Jesus: "Who is my neighbour?" Jesus tells him that the Samaritans, a group hated by Jews, are his neighbour. Jesus does so to bring conviction on the man's heart so that he will seek to receive God's imputed righteousness, rather

than his own righteousness. Sadly, we do not see him make this request.

10:31-34 Not only does Jesus teach the lesson that the Jews are to love all their neighbours, including those hated Samaritans, but He also teaches that those entering the kingdom of God are not the ones you would expect. There will be priests and Levites, i.e., members of the Jewish religious elite, who will not enter the kingdom, while some Samaritans will. This story pictures how the little flock may be beaten up and bruised during the tribulation period, and the apostate nation of Israel's religious leaders will not help them. They will get help from others, who are not part of apostate Israel. However, it must be pointed out that the Samaritans are still part of Israel, since they represent the 10, northern tribes, which is why Jesus "must needs go through Samaria" (John 4:4).

10:31 Jesus uses the term "by chance." This shows that every, single event is not orchestrated by God. Now, God does work all things together for good for those who love Him (Romans 8:28), but this does not mean that He overrides man's free will to cause things to happen. Rather, God "always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (II Corinthians 2:14), regardless of the individual circumstances around us that may occur by chance.

10:31-32 The priest and the Levite both pass by on the other side, because they do not want to be unclean by coming into contact with an almost-dead man. What this shows is that religion is used to justify bad behavior. Religion allows man to feel good about himself, while still satisfying the lusts of the flesh.

10:34 The Samaritan went to the man, while the priest and the Levite went away from him. This is the difference between man's religion and those who have faith in what God has told them. Faith in God causes God's love to come through you, such that you go to people in need, while man's religion causes the flesh to come through you to the point of purposely going far away from those in need.

10:37 You know that this story did not justify the man who asked Jesus the question (10:29). I am sure this man had a very narrow definition of "neighbour," so that he could say that he loves his neighbour. It probably did not include anyone outside of the religious elite, much less the Samaritans!

Note also that Jesus tells the man, "Go, and do thou likewise." What Jesus does, here, is not unlike what He does in Matthew 5:20-48. There, He gives the true meaning of the law to show that no one can obey the law perfectly. He also shows the narrow definition of the law that the religious leaders hold, so that they can justify themselves. Here, Jesus gives the true meaning of the law with the Good Samaritan story. The man's response to the command of "Go, and do thou likewise" should be, "I cannot." Jesus would then share the gospel of the kingdom with them. However, because

the man did not respond, he remains dead in his sins.

10:38-42 Of all the things that Jesus said and did, why include a story about one sister serving and the other sister sitting? The reason is because this story illustrates something greater. The Jews were trying to work their way into the kingdom, like Martha was working to serve Jesus. Because there is none righteous (Romans 3:10), the Jews, no matter how hard they try, will never work their way into God's kingdom. Instead, they need to stop working and start believing. If they believe the gospel and are baptized, they will be saved (Mark 16:15), as pictured by Mary, not working, but listening to God's Word. The "one thing [that] is needful" is to believe the gospel. That is the ONLY way they could make it into God's kingdom on earth.

This story should also reorient a church's priorities. A church is so concerned with making a good impression to bring people in, whether that be through child care, singing, or secular activities. Instead, the top priority of a church should be preaching the Word rightly divided. That is the "one thing [that] is needful so that Christians may "come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4).

11 Jesus teaches His disciples to trust in God and His Word, rather than in the religion of the Pharisees (vs. 1-13). We see the Pharisees attribute Jesus' works to the Devil (vs. 14-26). Jesus then condemns the Jewish religious leaders to hell, saying they will be punished for killing all the righteous people of God (vs. 29-54).

11:1-4 "The Lord's Prayer" is really found in John 17. This prayer in Luke is the one that Jesus taught His disciples to pray. This version is a little different from the one in Matthew 6:9-13, because they were spoken at two, different times. The basic elements of the prayer are the same in both places, and the fact that there are differences shows that the prayer should not be vainly repeated over and over again as is done today (It is funny that Matthew 6:7 says not to use vain repetitions in prayer, and the vain prayer that has been repeated the most over the last 2,000 years is the one that begins just two verses later!).

Even with this in mind, because we are in the dispensation of grace, this prayer should not be said at all today, as its content specifically applies to the tribulation period for the little flock of Israel. The fact, that God the Father is in heaven, is a slap in the face of Israel. If they had faith from the beginning, He would have been on earth in His kingdom by that time. "Thy kingdom come" refers to God's eternal kingdom coming down to earth, not to some mystical kingdom in our hearts today. "Thy will be done" is a plea for God to accomplish the regathering of the nation of Israel as God's holy nation during the tribulation period through the ministry of the little flock going from city to city in Israel preaching the gospel of the kingdom. "Our daily bread" is a prayer for God to feed Israel during the tribulation period, since they will not be able to buy food, not having taken the mark of the

beast (Revelation 13:17).

Note the conditional forgiveness of verse 4. If they do not forgive others, they will not be forgiven by God and they will not enter into the kingdom.

Matthew 6:15 makes this abundantly clear: "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Contrast this with the command for us today in Ephesians 4:32: "Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake HATH FORGIVEN you." "Lead us not into temptation" refers to not having to face situations that would cause them to deny the faith with the ultimate temptation being having to stand before the Antichrist's people and to make a choice between being physically killed and entering God's eternal kingdom or being physically killed and not entering God's kingdom.

Also note that this prayer is so badly garbled by modern translations that the Antichrist will be able to apply it to Satan as being the God, rather than God the Father. Specifically, modern versions omit three portions of the prayer, which is about 20 of the 58 words, which means that 1/3 of the prayer is gone from modern translations! These three omissions are about: 1) Their Father being in heaven, 2) His will being done on earth as it is in heaven, and 3) A request to be delivered from evil.

11:5-8 The point of this illustration is that, if a neighbour will give you food to give to others if you keep bugging him, then God will certainly give the little flock spiritual food, i.e., the Holy Spirit (11:13), to endure unto the end of the tribulation period and help the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

11:9-13 The little flock will be arrested, brought before councils (Matthew 10:17-18), and told to renounce the Lord Jesus Christ or be killed (Matthew 10:21-22). At that time, the little flock will ask God for the good gift of the Holy Spirit, and God will give Him to them (Matthew 10:19-20). The Holy Spirit will give them the boldness to stand up against apostate Israel, and they will proclaim the gospel, at that time, by the Holy Ghost speaking in other tongues through them so that all Jews in all nations hear the gospel (Mark 13:10-11). This is the good gift that the little flock needs.

Note that this gift of the Holy Spirit helps the little flock, in that they do not sell their souls to the devil, and it also helps the lost sheep of the house of Israel, in that they receive the gospel of the kingdom through the testimony of the little flock. The lost sheep, then, are the friend of the person in the illustration of 11:5-8.

Today, Pentecostals and mainstream Christianity use 11:13 to say that, even after they are saved, they still need additional fillings of the Holy Spirit after the initial filling at salvation. They say you have to continue to ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals say this filling is speaking in tongues, while mainstream Christianity says that this filling is the ability to walk in the Spirit. Regardless of the view, it is teaching Christians not to

read their Bibles to learn doctrine to allow the Holy Spirit to guide them, but it is teaching them to pray for a filling that will empower them. Either way, it is a heretical teaching that gets people away from God's Word and toward sensual guidance that is of the devil (James 3:15). Paul calls this "another spirit" (II Corinthians 11:4), which is not the Holy Spirit.

11:14-15 The Pharisees commit the blasphemy of the Son of man by attributing the Son of man's works to Satan. In other words, they have rejected the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God the Son. They already rejected the ministry of God the Father by rejecting John the Baptist, since he was sent (John 1:6) and taught by God (1:80). Therefore, the only member of the Godhead left to reject is the Holy Spirit. The only chance they now have of entering God's kingdom is to believe the gospel during the Holy Ghost's ministry in Acts 2-7 (12:10).

11:16 The two signs of the kingdom are casting out devils and healing the sick. Jesus has just done both, and they are asking for a sign from heaven that He is from God. What other sign could they be looking for? Luke's note tells you that they were "tempting Him" by asking for a sign. Whenever someone asks for a sign, they are tempting God, which is against God's command in Deuteronomy 6:16. That is why Jesus says that an evil generation looks for a sign (11:29).

11:19 Because the Pharisees were children of the devil (John 8:44), if they cast out devils, they were doing it by the power of the devil. Apparently, Satanic power was being used by the religious leaders to cast out devils, because this verse says that their children were casting out devils, and they certainly were not doing so by the power of God.

Matthew 7:22 says that, during the tribulation period, some people will be casting out devils in God's name, but they are really on Satan's side. This is not unlike what goes on in charismatic churches today. They are speaking in tongues, but God is not doing that today. Therefore, they must be doing so by either making it up themselves or by the devil, even though they do so in God's name.

11:20 Jesus cast out devils "with the finger of God." This phrase is found in Exodus 31:18, which says that the ten commandments were written with the finger of God, which means by the Holy Ghost, since God's Word comes by the Holy Ghost (II Peter 1:21, Acts 28:25). Therefore, "no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." In other words, they asked for a sign from heaven, and Jesus said they do not need a sign because they should have no doubt that the kingdom is come upon them. Note that Jesus puts the emphasis on the gospel of repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. He does not say, "No doubt I am the Messiah, I am God, and trust in my death for salvation." Rather, all they need to know is that they need to repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and His casting out of devils leaves no doubt that that gospel message He is proclaiming is true.

11:21-22 I doubt they see this, but Jesus has just indicted the Pharisees. The strong man of verse 21 is Satan, and his armor are the Pharisees. The stronger in verse 22 is the arm of the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus will take away Satan's armour, meaning He will replace the religious leaders with His little flock. Dividing the spoil means that God will regain Israel as His holy nation when Jesus comes back.

11:24-26 This will be the condition of the nation of Israel during the tribulation period. Jesus cast the unclean spirit out of Israel at His first coming. After Jesus leaves, the nation will be "swept and garnished" by the religion of the Pharisees, such that it looks clean and nice, but it really is not. ("Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27).) That is the perfect setting for the devil. He thrives in religion, because it looks godly, but it is not. Therefore, the unclean spirit comes back with seven more wicked spirits.

The number seven signals the seven-year tribulation period. Therefore, Jesus is saying that He has cleansed Israel, but, because they do not believe the gospel of the kingdom, the house of Israel is swept clean, not being filled with the Spirit. This means that, under the Antichrist, it will be in an even worse condition in the tribulation period than it was when Jesus came. The warning to the Pharisees is that they had better believe the gospel of the kingdom while they have the chance. "To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:7-8,15;4:7). The only way, to keep the condition of Israel from deteriorating to a place worse than what it was at Jesus' first coming, is for Israel to repent and be baptized, so that they receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38), instead of being a habitation of devils.

11:27-28 The exaltation of Mary, the mother of Jesus, began before Jesus was crucified! Jesus had the answer for them. Rather than worshipping Mary, they should have faith in God by believing the gospel of the kingdom and keeping the law covenant. (Revelation 22:8-9 says that even angels are not to be worshipped.)

People think that the Bible is out of date, not applicable to modern times. However, man's sin nature remains unchanged, as does Satan's attack of what God is doing. Therefore, we can go to this passage and use it to refute the worship of Mary in the Catholic church.

11:29-30 Israel has already been given many signs that the kingdom of God is at hand. Their reaction was for the Pharisees to blaspheme the Son of man (11:15 and Matthew 12:24-32), and Israel, as a whole, has sided with the Pharisees. Jesus was not a magician. He did not give signs just to be giving signs. Rather, the signs were to confirm the gospel that He preached (Mark 16:20). He said that "an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after

a sign” (Matthew 12:39). Therefore, when asked for a sign, He would not give one.

However, Jesus would still give this evil generation the sign of Jonas. Matthew 12:40 explains that the way that the sign of Jonas will be given to this evil generation is by Jesus’ being buried three days and then rising from the dead. Therefore, even this sign is not given for the sign’s sake.

Note that 11:30 says that “Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites,” and it is in this same manner that the Son of man will be a sign to this evil generation of vipers. When Jonas rose from the dead, he went to Nineveh and told them that they would be destroyed. Similarly, once Jesus rises from the dead, Israel will have further proof that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. They will then be told that they are to be destroyed, because they “by wicked hands have crucified and slain” Jesus Christ (Acts 2:23). They will then get a renewed opportunity to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Therefore, in spite of their blasphemy of the Son of man, this evil generation will have one more opportunity, through the Holy Ghost’s ministry in Acts 2-7, to enter the kingdom of God.

11:31-32 The Jews took pride in being the physical descendants of Abraham (John 8:33). Therefore, they thought they could do whatever they wanted to do and still make it into God’s kingdom. Jesus warns them here, though, that Gentiles will judge Israel. A Gentile queen who blessed Israel and a Gentile city that repented will both make it into God’s kingdom and judge the Jews of this evil generation of vipers to hell. (Matthew 25:31-40 shows that Gentiles, who blessed Israel, will be given an inheritance in God’s eternal kingdom on earth.)

Jesus is the greater king (“greater than Solomon”), the greater prophet (“greater than Jonas”), and the greater priest (“greater than the temple” (Matthew 12:6)). The point is that Gentiles, being in the dark (Acts 17:27), repented with less evidence than the generation of vipers around Jesus, even though that generation had the light of God shining in their midst (John 1:5), and had more evidence, yet they are STILL looking for a sign. Therefore, these Gentiles will be in the kingdom and judge this evil generation of Jews unworthy to enter in.

11:33-36 Jesus is indicting the nation of Israel because their religious leaders have not believed in Jesus as their Messiah. The light is in Israel (11:35), meaning that Jesus is in their midst (John 1:7-9). But, the religious leaders have hidden that light, because they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil (John 3:19). Since they are the leaders of the nation, they are like the eye, which leads the body. When the eye is evil, it leads the whole body into evil. Therefore, the religious leaders have led the whole nation of Israel into unbelief. That is why Jesus Christ cannot bring Israel into the kingdom, even though there is a believing remnant in Israel. The whole nation is evil because the religious leaders are evil. The call, then,

is for Jews to “save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40) by repenting and being water baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). God will then give the kingdom to this little flock of believers (12:32).

11:38-40 “For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders” (Mark 7:3). The Pharisees washed their hands multiple times before they ate, as a way of showing that they were clean. Religion is only concerned with an outward show of obedience in the flesh. It does not care about obeying God’s law based upon an inward faith. Jesus intentionally does not wash His hands to teach them that they are unsaved and bound for hell because they have not believed the gospel of the kingdom, which would make them clean on the inside. It is not the hands that need to be cleansed; it is the soul.

11:41 In Mark 7:18-23, Jesus explains that all evil things come from the heart within a man. Therefore, a man is unclean because his heart is unclean, not because his hands have not been washed with water. The Pharisees need to address this heart issue by believing the gospel of the kingdom. If they do this, they will “sell that ye have, and give alms,” because that is exactly what He told the believing remnant to do with their worldly possessions (12:33). Almsgiving means that they give what they have to the poor. Therefore, Jesus meant this in a literal, physical sense.

At the same time, Jesus means this in a spiritual sense. The context is that the nation of Israel is full of darkness because their religious leaders are evil (11:34). However, it does not have to remain evil, because the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is their light, is in their midst (11:35). Therefore, if the Pharisees spiritually sell the evil that they have by trusting in God’s imputed righteousness to them by believing the gospel of the kingdom, then they will spiritually give all they have to the “poor in spirit” (Matthew 5:3), who “hunger and thirst after righteousness” (Matthew 5:6), by pointing the whole nation to their Messiah and His gospel so that “the whole [nation] shall be full of light” (11:36). Then, “all things are clean unto you” (11:41), meaning that they would have allowed God to cleanse them from their evil on the inside, which would naturally result in the outside being cleansed as well.

This verse does NOT say that they could eat all meats, because Leviticus 11 mentions many animals that were unclean to them, and Jesus said He did not come to destroy the law (Matthew 5:17). We also see Jesus telling His disciples to obey the Mosaic law, as given to them by the religious leaders (Matthew 23:2-3). This would include not eating unclean animals.

11:41-42 These two verses show the contrast between obeying God and following religion. The Pharisees look good to men because they pay tithes of their spices, but they have not obeyed God because they have become wealthy by robbing from the poor.

11:45-46 In the midst of Jesus’ declaring woe upon the Pharisees, a lawyer

speaks up saying that, by condemning the Pharisees, He is condemning the lawyers, too. Jesus does not miss a beat, as He agrees with the guy's statement and proceeds to pronounce woe upon the lawyers. Think of the United States and how much worse the legal system is because of lawyers. Can you imagine what the lawyers did with God's law?! Jesus says they made things worse. They accentuated the burdens of the law, making them worse, while exempting themselves from having to obey it, since they ignored "judgment and the love of God" (11:42).

11:47-48 What a vivid description of the religious leaders, the generation of vipers! Their fathers killed the prophets, and they do no better, because they will end up killing the Messiah. However, they look like they are good people, who follow God, because they build up the tombs of the prophets. To the religious leaders, it is all about making "a fair shew in the flesh" (Galatians 6:12).

11:50-51 "This generation" refers to the generation of vipers (Matthew 23:33). These religious people, who are really children of the devil (John 8:44), will stand before God at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-14).

The Jewish Old Testament has the same books as a Gentile Old Testament, but they are in a different order. The first book is Genesis, and the last book is Chronicles. The first righteous one killed in the Jewish Old Testament was Abel (Genesis 4:8), and the last one killed was Zacharias (II Chronicles 24:20-21). Thus, by saying that the generation of vipers are guilty of all of the righteous blood spilled from Abel to Zacharias, Jesus is saying they are guilty of ALL righteous blood. It will be the religious folks, who appear to be close to God, who God will give a greater punishment to in hell, being guilty of killing the true, righteous people of God.

11:52 "The key of knowledge" is a reference to having the Mosaic law and using it to gain the knowledge that they cannot be righteous on their own. They need God to save them. The lawyers have twisted God's law to make it a matter of the flesh, rather than a matter of the soul. They are busy circumcising their flesh, when God wants them to circumcise their heart (Deuteronomy 10:16). Because of what they have done, when common Jews read the law, they do not get the knowledge of their sin and their need for a Saviour. As such, even those, who try to go to God's law for salvation, are hindered by the lawyers' false interpretation of scripture.

Christianity today is in this exact situation. Satan has taken his ministers and made them look like ministers of righteousness (II Corinthians 11:13-15), so that the gospel is hidden from people by their deceitful handling of the Word of God (II Corinthians 4:2-4). Churches are filled with people who have never even heard the gospel. As such, the Christian religion is leading people to hell in a handbasket.

11:53-54 The Pharisees' reaction to Jesus' indictment of them proves that what Jesus is saying is true. They want to get rid of Jesus and so they urge Him to keep speaking until they can find some loophole in THEIR law to exploit in order to condemn Jesus to death. It shows they are not concerned with right "judgment and the love of God" (11:42). The language of them "laying wait for Him" sounds like a crouching lion, seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8). Truly, they are children of the devil (John 8:44).

12 This chapter contains Jesus' instructions to the little flock to be mindful of the things of God's kingdom, rather than of the Antichrist's kingdom. They will be tempted with riches and persecuted for being God's servants, but they need to continue to work for God in order to make it into God's kingdom. This includes selling all they have (v. 33).

12:1 Everyone is physically following Jesus. The multitudes of Jews follow Him for the entertainment of the physical miracles. "What will He do next?" is their attitude. The religious leaders are around Him "laying wait for Him, and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, that they might accuse Him" (11:54). Therefore, although great crowds are around their Messiah, they are of the generation of vipers, who will not enter into God's kingdom. Therefore, Jesus speaks, not to them, but to the little flock—"His disciples first of all." "The leaven of the Pharisees" is their religion, which is a bunch of sayings that sound good and pious, but they live the lives of children of the devil (John 8:44). Therefore, their sayings are hypocrisy.

We see the same going on today. Churches tell people to attend church, give them money, and God will bless them, when the only way to please God is to have faith in what He has told them (Hebrews 11:6).

12:2-3 These verses further explain 8:17. 8:17 is not talking about God revealing to all the sins done by Christians in secret. It refers to the little flock in the tribulation period speaking the gospel of the kingdom and the things of God, in contrast to the traditions of the fathers spoken by the Jewish religious leaders. In the tribulation period, very few will listen to the gospel proclaimed by the little flock. In comparison to popular religion, the gospel of the kingdom is like "that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets." However, in the kingdom, it "shall be proclaimed upon the housetops."

Church history is an example of this. If you buy a church-history book, it will primarily talk about Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and maybe a little mention of the Protestant Reformation. You will not find any information about the mystery given to Paul, and the gospel that saves today. Therefore, what is "proclaimed upon the housetops" is man's religion about God, but what is "spoken in the ear in closets" is the dispensation of the gospel of the grace of God found in God's Word.

12:4-5 Jesus is talking to His "friends," i.e., the believing remnant, not the

“innumerable multitude of people” around Him (John 15:14-15). During the Great Tribulation (the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period), apostate Israel, having joined forces with the Antichrist, will seek to persecute and kill members of the little flock if they do not deny the gospel. Those are the forces in 12:4. The force in 12:5 is the Lord Jesus Christ at His second coming. They should not fear the Antichrist, because he may kill them physically, but he cannot prevent them from entering into God’s kingdom. However, they should fear the Lord Jesus Christ because, if they deny Him by taking the mark of the beast or worshipping his image (Revelation 14:9-11), He will kill them at His second coming (Revelation 19:15) and then deny them to God the Father and throw them into hell (12:9).

12:7 “The very hairs of your head are all numbered” should remind the believing remnant of the Hebrews boys in the fiery furnace. In Daniel 3:21, they were thrown into the fiery furnace. Not only were they not killed, but they were not even injured, such that not even “a hair of their head [was] singed” (Daniel 3:27). As such, they are a type of the little flock, who will go through the refiner’s fire of the tribulation period (Malachi 3:2). Their bodies may be killed (12:4), but they will be resurrected in God’s kingdom. Since God knows everything about them, even to the point of knowing all of the hairs on their head, their bodies will be resurrected to enter into God’s kingdom with the end result being that “the fire [of the tribulation period] had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed” (Daniel 3:27). In other words, what God is saying is that, in the kingdom, the believing remnant will have glorified bodies that will not have lost anything that their fleshly bodies had, even down to the last hair on their heads!

12:8-9 Jesus expands upon the warning of 12:4-5. The little flock should fear God, because He will cast them into hell if they deny Him before the Antichrist. However, if they stay true to God before the Antichrist, they will enter God’s kingdom.

Confessing or denying “before the angels of God” does not mean that the angels are above them. Rather, it is a reference to God’s judgment of Israel based upon the new covenant, which takes place before “an innumerable company of angels” (Hebrews 12:22-24).

12:10 Now, Jesus warns the little flock of the judgment of apostate Israel. He already told the Pharisees, in Matthew 12:24-32, that they had blasphemed Him by attributing His works to the devil and that they would get one more chance to enter God’s kingdom. That chance would be the ministry of the Holy Ghost through the little flock in Acts 2-7. If they attribute the Holy Ghost’s ministry to the devil also, i.e. “blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost,” they will not enter God’s kingdom, i.e., “it shall not be forgiven.” Therefore, the little flock should not be jealous of the wealth and power of apostate Israel when the little flock goes hungry, are persecuted, and may even be killed.

This “unpardonable sin” is the sin of unbelief and applies to the nation as a whole in Acts 2-7. It only applies to individual Jews when they take the mark of the beast. We know that Jesus is speaking against the nation of Israel as a whole, because it was judged by Jesus Christ as committing this blasphemy of the Holy Ghost at Stephen’s stoning (Acts 7:55-56). Saul or Paul was at this stoning, consenting to his death (Acts 8:1). Paul even admits, later, that he was a blasphemer (I Timothy 1:13). And, yet, it was in Paul first that God extended His longsuffering and gave him everlasting life in the dispensation of grace (I Timothy 1:16).

Individually speaking, we know that taking the mark of the beast is the way that individuals commit the unpardonable sin, due to Revelation 14:9-11. It is not that Christ’s blood is not sufficient to atone for that sin or that God’s mercy cannot forgive it. Rather, it is that taking the mark of the beast is the final step of unbelief from which there is no return for the individual.

12:11-12 Because the little flock believe the gospel of the kingdom, the Holy Ghost will be with them to speak through them. By being persecuted in the public’s eye and the Holy Ghost speaking through them at that time, the whole world will hear the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 24:14), even though the little flock will not even finish going from city to city in Israel preaching the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 10:23). Therefore, the Antichrist’s and apostate Israel’s efforts to squelch the gospel of the kingdom will actually spread the good news to all nations. Also note where the little flock is accused first. They are brought “unto the synagogues.” This shows that it is the Babylonian religious system of the Antichrist and apostate Israel that is persecuting the little flock in the tribulation period.

Note, from Acts 2:5, that there are “Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven,” who hear the Holy Ghost speak to them, in their own language (Acts 2:6), “the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:11). Therefore, when the little flock is arrested and brought before magistrates, the Holy Ghost will speak the gospel of the kingdom and the mysteries of the kingdom through the little flock, such that only devout Jews are able to understand those things in their own languages. Unbelievers will not be able to understand these things, which is why the magistrates will not stop their testimony from being broadcast worldwide. This is the true gift of tongues. It is not speaking unknown gibberish, as the charismatics do today.

12:13 Jesus has just told “an innumerable multitude of people” of how they had better not deny the Holy Ghost and side with the Antichrist, otherwise, they will spend eternity in hell. The reaction to this is that a man asks Jesus to order his brother to give him money! This shows that Israel does not have the ears to hear because they are of the devil. They are not even listening to Jesus. They are only interested in the things of the world, which shows they will not enter into God’s kingdom. (Try sharing the gospel with someone, and see how quickly they change the subject, like this man did.)

12:14 Jesus' response shows that the purpose of His first coming was not to judge Israel and the world. That will be what He does at His second coming. Rather, Jesus' purpose is to free Israel from being Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24) by obeying God's law covenant perfectly and then taking the punishment for Israel's lack of obedience, i.e., He will die for their sins (Matthew 20:28).

12:15 Material covetousness will lead Israel into hell. The thorny-ground Jews will join the Antichrist so that they can become wealthy in this world (8:14), while the rocky-ground Jews will take the mark of the beast so that they can keep their goods (8:13). Either way, they will exchange their souls for the things of this world (Mark 8:34-38).

12:16-21 Because this parable is for the tribulation period and not for us today, it should not be applied today. Christians, not rightly dividing the Word of Truth, try to come up with some crazy meaning, such as, "You should not be concerned with money and should be willing to spend it because you never know when you are going to die, but you should still save for retirement." That is not what this parable is saying. This parable is saying that Israel should not be going after material riches, because they will not make it into God's kingdom if they do. Rather than storing up goods, they should sell their goods (12:33) and help those in need, because, when the false prophet institutes the mark of the beast, all of their goods will be taken away from them (Revelation 13:16-17). Even if they do take the mark of the beast to keep their possessions, God will judge them "this night." Night refers to the tribulation period. Therefore, the parable IS saying to sell all that they have (12:33), because the end of Satan's rule of the world is coming within a matter of about 8 years or so. Either Satan will take away their goods and God will restore them one hundred fold for all eternity (Matthew 19:29), or they can keep their goods for a few years by taking the mark of the beast, and they will lose both their goods and their souls for all eternity in the lake of fire. Either way, "heaven and earth shall pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Therefore, they should be "rich toward God" (v. 21) by believing the gospel of the kingdom and obeying God's law regardless of the consequences instituted by Satan.

By contrast, today, in the dispensation of grace, we should store up some things if possible, because "if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Timothy 5:8). Contrast this with what Jesus told His disciples: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (14:26). So many churches today say that we are "to make disciples" of people and do what Jesus said do in Matthew – John. If they do that, they would teach them to forsake their family, but the Lord Jesus Christ's instructions to us today through the apostle Paul say that we need to take care of our families. This shows the importance of "rightly dividing the Word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

12:22 Therefore, Jesus sends the little flock out to the cities of Israel without any food or any possessions. If they are trusting in their possessions, they will not trust in God's provision, which means they will end up taking the mark of the beast and losing their salvation. Therefore, they need to learn the lesson to trust in God now so that they will make the right decision when the image of the beast is set up in the temple halfway through the tribulation period. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (4:4).

12:23-31 God will provide to the little flock what they need. This does not mean that they will get three square meals per day. They may go a few days without physical food and may even get sick from no food. If they do get sick, this gives the little flock the opportunity to pray for the person, and they WILL be healed (James 5:14-15). The reason God allows this to happen is because they need spiritual food more than physical food. For example, they may need to fast so that they can overcome religion (Matthew 17:20-21). The primary meat that God provides the little flock "is to do the will of Him that sent [them], and to finish His work" (John 4:34). He will provide physical meat as well (Revelation 12:14), but that is not the most important meat that the little flock needs during the tribulation period.

12:25-26 Here, adding a cubit to your height is considered to be least, even though this would be greater than getting food or clothing yourself (12:23). Therefore, Jesus is talking about the kingdom here. In other words, He is saying that, since they cannot even add a cubit to their height, they certainly cannot bring themselves into God's kingdom. Since only the Lord Jesus Christ can do that, they need to obey what He tells them here, or else they are in danger of not making it into the kingdom.

12:27-28 In the context of talking about John the Baptist, Isaiah 40:6-8 says, "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth:... surely the people is grass,...but the Word of our God shall stand forever." Therefore, when Jesus mentions the lilies and the grass in 12:27-28, He is really talking about the kingdom. The lilies and the grass, then, represent apostate Israel and the Antichrist's kingdom. That kingdom may be glorious in man's eyes, but it will wither and fade away. What will be left is the Word of our God, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:1,14), reigning over the earth forever. Therefore, as in 12:25-26, the lesson is for the believing remnant to obey what the Lord Jesus Christ tells them here.

12:29-31 When God delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage, they quickly complained to Moses about not having food (Numbers 11:1-3). The little flock is not supposed to be like that during the tribulation period, rather they are to seek the kingdom of God by preaching the gospel of the kingdom and doing the signs of the kingdom without worrying about where their next meal is coming from.

12:32 This is the verse from which we get the term “little flock.” They are not to fear, regardless of what Satan does through the Antichrist during the tribulation period, because God WILL give them the kingdom if they endure unto the end (Matthew 24:13). (Note that He gives them the kingdom. They do not earn it themselves, as the religious leaders were trying to do.) We also see this promise in Matthew 21:43, where Jesus says that the kingdom of God will be taken from the Jewish religious leaders and given to a nation bearing fruit, i.e., the believing remnant or little flock. This promise came to Israel as a warning in Deuteronomy 32:21, and now we can see that the “foolish nation” of that verse is the little flock of 12:32.

12:33 This verse is not a suggestion; it is a command. Jesus commanded the little flock to “sell that ye have, and give alms.” Today, if we are supposed to be following what Jesus said in the gospels, then ALL Christians should sell ALL that they have and give it away. They should then travel from city to city **within Israel**, preaching the gospel, healing the sick, and casting out devils (Matthew 10:5-8). Mark 16:17 says, “these signs SHALL follow them that believe.” Therefore, ALL believers would be doing the signs of the kingdom, just like ALL believers were to sell all that they had.

However, these instructions are for a different dispensation. God is not doing these signs today, and He has not commanded us to sell what we have. In fact, He has commanded us to take care of our families (I Timothy 5:8). God commanded the little flock to sell what they have because, halfway through the tribulation period when the false prophet institutes the mark of the beast, the believing remnant will lose all of their possessions anyway, since they will not be able to participate in the economic system of that time (Revelation 13:16-17) and will need to flee to the mountains to avoid being killed (21:20-21). If they sell their goods now, they will rely on God’s provision, rather than on man’s provision, so that they will not take the mark of the beast, but they will continue to preach the gospel of the kingdom instead. We see them doing this in Acts 4:32-35, where they sell what they have, give it to the disciples, and the disciples distribute the goods to the members of the little flock who have needs. We see this command in Matthew 5:42 also, where Jesus says to “give to him that asketh thee.”

Their treasure is said to be in the heavens, not because they would be going to heaven, but because New Jerusalem would come down from heaven to earth (Revelation 21:2).

12:35-37 These verses refer to how the little flock needs to be preaching the gospel of the kingdom throughout the tribulation period. In working, they will be watching for the signs of Jesus’ coming such that, when He is about to come, they will be able to warn sleeping Israel so that those, who have at least believed the gospel of the kingdom, will make it into the

kingdom (Matthew 25:5-10). Then, they will be served by the Lord Jesus Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9).

The idea, of Jesus coming and knocking and having the little flock open the door, may remind you of Revelation 3:20, where Jesus stands and knocks on the door. If any man hears and opens the door, Jesus promises to sup with him. Christianity takes that verse to say that Jesus knocks on your heart's door, and you need to invite Jesus into your heart in order to be saved. That is NOT what the verse is saying, not even for Israel's dispensation. Rather, He comes to the door of the sheepfold (John 10:2-3). The sheepfold has both unbelievers and believers in it (John 10:1-2). First, Jesus takes the unbelievers into judgment (Matthew 24:39-41). Then, he takes the believers out (Isaiah 40:10-11) and leads them (Psalm 23:1-23 into His Father's house, where He has prepared a place for them (John 14:2-3). The first thing that happens, though, at His Father's house, is that He marries Israel with the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9). It is at this supper that Jesus "sups" with the believing remnant of Israel.

12:38 "The night" refers to the tribulation period. ("Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).) Jesus will come at the end of the night, which is during the fourth watch of the night (Matthew 14:25). However, the servants, who work through the whole night (the whole tribulation period), including the second and third watches, will receive a greater blessing because they will bear more fruit, i.e., lead more of the lost sheep of Israel into God's eternal kingdom on earth.

12:39 During the tribulation period, "the goodman of the house" is the Antichrist, while Satan is considered to be the strong man (Matthew 12:29). Because Satan does not believe anything that God says, the Antichrist does not believe Jesus will come back at the end of the tribulation period. Therefore, when Jesus comes back as "a thief in the night" (II Peter 3:10), He breaks through Satan's house and steals away the little flock, who are trusting in God's Word, and brings them into the kingdom.

12:41-43 Jesus' answer to Peter's question is that He is speaking the parable to those who will listen to the point of working for God during the tribulation period. Giving the little flock "their portion of meat in due season" has to do with the leaders of the little flock. Because they believe God's Word, they will be in charge of the missionary campaign to reach the lost sheep of Israel with the gospel. So, they will give the little flock "their portion of meat," meaning they will tell the different people which cities to go to so that they can reach as many cities of Israel as possible before Jesus' second coming. It also refers to them receiving physical food, but that is of a secondary importance.

12:44 This promise is similar to Jesus' promise to the 12 apostles that they will sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). The faithful servants during the tribulation period will bear fruit by leading the

lost sheep of the house of Israel into God's kingdom. Since they have shown themselves to be faithful servants, God will make them rulers in His kingdom. 19:37 shows one servant being ruler over ten cities, and 19:19 shows one servant being ruler over five cities, based upon their relative faithfulness to God.

12:45-46 Although Jesus did promise positions of authority to the 12 apostles, it is a conditional promise. (Matthew 19:28 prefaces the promise with, "Ye which have followed Me.") They have to be faithful servants. We know that Judas Iscariot lost his position, and he was replaced by Matthias (Acts 1:26). Therefore, Jesus gives the warning here that their high positions in God's kingdom are condition upon them being faithful to preach the gospel of the kingdom throughout the tribulation period. If, during the tribulation period, they use their position of authority to lead members of the little flock astray ("beat the menservants and maidens"), not only will they lose their position of authority, but they will be numbered with the unbelievers. In other words, they will spend eternity in the lake of fire. 12:46 says that God will "cut him in sunder." It is no accident, then, that Judas Iscariot "burst asunder" when he died (Acts 1:18).

12:47-48 What is worse is that, because they were once God's servants, they are held to a higher standard because they had greater responsibility. In other words, their fall will cause more members of the little flock to go astray. Therefore, they will receive a greater punishment in the lake of fire than an ordinary unbeliever who never believed the gospel of the kingdom in the first place. This also serves as a warning for preachers in today's dispensation, who never believe the gospel of grace today. They will receive greater punishments in the lake of fire for leading people astray. (The sad reality is that the hottest place in hell may be reserved for Billy Graham, because of the millions he has led astray with a false gospel (Galatians 1:8-9).)

12:49-50 Matthew 3:11-12 says that Jesus will baptize apostate Israel "with unquenchable fire," which is a reference to destroying them and sending them to hell. Jesus has already indicted the Jewish religious leaders by saying that they cannot "escape the damnation of hell" (Matthew 23:33). Thus, with His pronouncements against apostate Israel, He has already kindled God's fire on the earth. However, He does not bring God's fire until His second coming, because He has come to be baptized in His first coming. Baptism means to be identified with, and so the baptism of His first coming is His identification with death. He is straitened until this is accomplished, which means that He cannot bring judgment upon apostate Israel until He first brings salvation to believing Israel through His death, burial, and resurrection.

12:51-53 Israel did expect their Messiah to bring peace. Jesus tells them that His first coming is about His death and bringing people into God's kingdom. Many in Israel will not believe the gospel of the kingdom. The

Antichrist will make a seven-year covenant with the nation of Israel, and he will institute capital punishment for those not worshipping the image of the beast (Revelation 13:15). Therefore, those, who believe the gospel of the kingdom, may have a sword brought against them by the Antichrist.

When God first brought Israel into the Promised Land under Moses, He had them carry the sword and kill the Canaanites. But, this caused them to be lifted up in pride, and so they did not believe in what God had told them. Unfortunately, God has to reverse the sword and have it chase His people in order for Israel to believe and enter the kingdom.

12:54-56 Israel's problem was that they were focused on the material world. They could see what was happen physically, but they had no eyes to see what was happening spiritually. Therefore, although the kingdom of heaven was at hand, they did not know it, and the nation continued in their unbelief.

12:57-59 Since apostate Israel is focused on the physical world, Jesus uses an illustration from the physical world to show them what is happening to them spiritually. They have earned death in hell because of their sins (Romans 6:23). The fire of their judgment has already been kindled (12:49). They should recognize this and seek a way out. God has provided them a way out by believing the gospel of the kingdom, but they refuse to believe. The result, then, will be that they will not escape God's judgment until they have "paid the very last mite." Because they can never pay the full amount that they owe for their sins, they will spend all of eternity in the lake of fire, never to escape.

13 Jerusalem is in bondage to the Pharisees' religion (vs. 1-5 and 10-16). Therefore, Jesus leaves Jerusalem without Israel being saved (vs. 34-35). However, they will have a renewed opportunity to believe the gospel during the ministry of the Holy Ghost in Acts 2-7 (vs. 6-9). Therefore, He warns them to believe God's Word over the Jewish religious system (vs. 17-30).

13:1-5 If Pilate mixed some Galilaeans' blood with their sacrifices, it shows that they were killed by Pilate. Based on Jesus' response, it seems that there is a Jewish religious thought that, if people are killed, God is punishing them for their sins. We see this also in the book of Job, where Job's three "friends" keep trying to say that he is suffering because God is punishing him for his sins. This idea stems from legalism. Legalism looks for relative holiness, meaning that I am holy if I am better than you, but God says such a comparison is not wise (II Corinthians 10:12).

Instead, they should compare themselves with the holy law (Romans 7:12). If they do so, they will find that they are guilty and in need of God's imputed righteousness (Romans 3:19-20). The Galilaeans killed by Pilate, those killed in the falling of the Tower of Siloam, and everyone else, dead or alive, has broken the law. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in

one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10). Therefore, the gospel of the kingdom applies to all people in Israel, not just the really bad sinners. That is why Jesus says, “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (13:3).

13:6-9 This parable explains why the Antichrist did not appear on the scene just after Jesus’ crucifixion, as prophesied in Daniel 9:26, and why the little flock has a ministry under the Holy Ghost in Acts 2-7.

This parable is saying that God the Father ("a certain man") planted the Jewish religious system ("a fig tree") in Israel ("His vineyard") to lead Israel into the kingdom. During Jesus' ("the dresser"'s) ministry ("these three years"), He sought for believers of the gospel in Israel ("sought fruit"), but found Israel still in apostasy ("found none"). Therefore, God has decided to get rid of apostate Israel ("cut it down").

However, Jesus asks the Father to give Israel one more year ("let it alone this year also") to see if they will repent at the ministry of the Holy Ghost in Acts 2-7 ("I shall dig about it, and dung it."). If not, then God will judge apostate Israel into hell ("Thou shalt cut it down."). Therefore, the Holy Ghost is poured out upon the little flock in Acts 2, and they preach the gospel of the kingdom from Acts 2-7, which is precisely one year. Because Israel still rejected the gospel of the kingdom, the Lord Jesus Christ stands up in Acts 7:55-56 to judge Israel (Isaiah 3:13).

However, instead of throwing apostate Israel into hell at that time, the Lord Jesus Christ starts the mystery program with the apostle Paul in Acts 9, in order to reconcile the heavenly places back to Himself (Ephesians 1:19-23). Once the body of Christ is complete, Israel will be saved through the tribulation period (Romans 11:25-26) with apostate Israel being thrown into hell at Jesus’ second coming immediately after the tribulation period ends (Matthew 24:29-30; Revelation 19:15).

13:11 The number eighteen is found in 13:4, 13:16, and here in 13:11. It means bondage, which goes along with the parable of 13:6-9, which shows that Israel is in bondage to Satan, not having believed the gospel of the kingdom that can set them free. Therefore, this woman's eighteen-year infirmity represents Israel being in bondage to Satan. Her not being able to lift herself up represents how Israel cannot save themselves from Satan's bondage. They need God to bind Satan (Matthew 12:29) and bring them into the kingdom Himself (John 10:14-16).

13:12 God, on the other hand, is able to free Israel from "the hand of him that was stronger than he" (Jeremiah 31:11), as shown by Jesus' declaration that she is loosed from her infirmity or her bondage.

13:14-16 The apostate nation of Israel's reaction to God's offer to free them from their bondage to Satan is to turn to religion. Religion says Israel cannot be freed from their bondage on the sabbath day, even though the Jewish

religious leaders "work" on the sabbath more than any other day, since people come to the synagogue on that day. The sabbath was made for man to enjoy his rest in the Lord (Mark 2:27). He would come to the temple and be released from the bondage of sin, as a result of the sabbath-day sacrifice (Numbers 28:9-10). Therefore, the ruler's statement, that man should be healed on every day but the sabbath, is contradictory to what God made the sabbath to be, which is why Jesus calls him a "hypocrite." Therefore, this parable shows that the religious leaders stand in the way of Israel believing the gospel and entering the kingdom.

The eighteen years of being bound by Satan may also refer to Satan's time of having apostate Israel bound as he reigns during the tribulation period with the mark of the beast being 666, which, added together, equals eighteen. Note also that she is "a daughter of Abraham." Jesus is emphasizing that He came to save "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," not the Gentiles (Matthew 15:24).

13:18-21 Having shamed the religious leaders, Jesus now teaches the people that they will not enter the kingdom of God by believing the religious leaders. Rather, they need to believe the gospel that the little flock preaches. Therefore, instead of going to the mountain of religion (the tradition of the fathers), they need to go to the grain of mustard seed (have faith in God's Word) (Matthew 17:20). The gospel is hidden among religion in Israel, just like a grain of mustard seed is much more difficult to see than a mountain. Belief in the gospel is the only way Israel will enter God's kingdom, because God requires faith for salvation (Hebrews 11:6), and not the works of the law (Galatians 2:16).

Until Jesus brings in the kingdom, believers in Israel are always a remnant. They are never in the majority. We see this with the parable of the mustard seed, because it ends up growing into a tree. A mustard is an herb, not a tree (Matthew 13:32). Therefore, when it does grow into a tree, it means that apostate Israel has taken the gospel and changed it into a lie so that it can grow big. This should come as no surprise, since we see this today in Christianity. Where the truth of God's Word is proclaimed, the congregation is small. Where the congregation is large, a clear gospel is not preached.

To emphasize this point, Jesus gives the illustration of leaven in 13:21. The woman of this parable would be the Babylonian religious system, called "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" in Revelation 17:5. This Babylonian religious system "hid" (That's the "mystery" part of her name.) leaven "in three measures of meal." The three measures of meal would be the three members of the Godhead. The first measure was God the Father, as represented by the ministry of John the Baptist. The second measure was God the Son, as represented by the ministry of Jesus Christ. The third measure is God the Holy Ghost, as represented by the ministry of the little flock between Jesus' first and second comings. The end result is that the

whole of Israel is leavened, such that they are apostate at Jesus' second coming. They are then replaced by God with the little flock of Israel.

Thus, in giving the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven, Jesus is showing how the gospel of the kingdom, as proclaimed by believing Israel, is twisted into a lie by the Jewish religious leaders, such that most of Israel is apostate when the Lord Jesus Christ brings in God's kingdom at His second coming.

13:22 Jesus "steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" in 9:51. He is going there to be crucified, but He is preaching the gospel of the kingdom in the cities and villages along the way, so that, if they believe, they can go to Jerusalem with Him, so that their sins may be forgiven through the Lamb of God's passover sacrifice (John 1:29).

13:23 This question shows that at least someone understood His parables in 13:18-21.

13:24-25 Matthew 7:13-14 gives a little more information about the strait gate, saying that "narrow is the way" and "strait is the gate" to God's kingdom, while "broad is the way" and "wide is the gate" to destruction. Legalists use these verses today to say how we must carefully obey everything God tells us to do, or we will not make it into heaven. However, these verses apply to the tribulation period and the kingdom program of Israel, not to the current dispensation of grace where we receive the atonement the moment we are saved (Romans 5:11) and are sealed with the Holy Spirit so that we cannot lose our salvation (Ephesians 1:13).

However, even within the kingdom program of Israel, these verses do not mean that they have to toe the line because it is so hard to get into God's kingdom. There are basically two ways that Israel will be following during the tribulation period. They will either follow apostate Israel's religious leaders, which "lade men with burdens grievous to be borne" (11:46), or they will follow God's law, which Jesus describes as an easy yoke and a light burden (Matthew 11:30). The easy yoke and light burden refer to the strait gate and narrow path, while the grievous burden refers to the wide gate and broad way. Therefore, the words "strait," "narrow," "broad," and "wide" do not refer to difficulty. They refer to popularity.

13:18-21 just stated that the gospel of the kingdom will be hard to find during the tribulation period. As such, few will believe the gospel. Most of Israel will follow what is popular, which will be the harder religious system of apostate Israel. The lost sheep of Israel will have to "strive to enter in at the strait gate" because the religious leaders have used their religion to take away the key to the gate and to hinder people from entering in (11:52). Thus, "many...will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." When Jesus rises up for His second coming, the little flock will cry that He is coming (Matthew 25:6), but many will not have believed the gospel of the kingdom in time.

Therefore, they will not enter the kingdom of God (Matthew 25:11-12).

13:26-27 Israel will claim that they should enter the kingdom of God because they followed what the Jewish religious leaders told them to do. Matthew 7:22 even says that they prophesy, cast out devils, and do many wonderful works in the Lord's name.

They will also claim that they know Jesus, because He taught in their streets, but just knowing Jesus is not enough. James 2:19 says, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." Because apostate Israel did not believe the gospel, Jesus calls them "workers of iniquity" (13:27), who cannot enter in God's kingdom.

Similarly today, in the dispensation of grace, many people will say that they know Jesus because they were members of a church and paid tithes, but they do not have eternal life because they did not believe in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection alone as the atonement for their sins (I Corinthians 15:3-4).

13:28-29 Jesus warns Israel again that aligning themselves with the Jewish religious leaders will cause them to gnash their teeth and weep outside the kingdom, while the Lord Jesus Christ gathers the little flock of saved Jews from among the Gentiles and brings them into the kingdom (Isaiah 40:10-11). The Jews in Jerusalem are in unbelief because of their self-righteousness (18:11-12). Therefore, Jerusalem's house is left desolate (13:34-35). In the tribulation period, the little flock of Israel will be scattered among the Gentiles (Leviticus 26:33) due to the persecution of the Antichrist and apostate Israel, because the little flock chose to enter in at the strait gate. That is why believing Israel is gathered from the east, west, north, and south to enter God's kingdom, while the Jews in Jerusalem, who claim to be Israel, are not really Israel (Romans 9:6-7).

Note also that the weeping and gnashing of teeth is not because they are being tormented with fire in hell, although that will be part of it (16:24). Far worse than this is being separated from God's love for all eternity. They will see saved Israel in the kingdom, and all people in the kingdom will see them in hell and abhor them (Isaiah 66:23-24). People, today, will give up all their worldly goods, just so they can feel loved by an imperfect person. How much more, then, will apostate Israel, grieve over being separated from God's perfect love for all eternity, especially when God gives them eternal life as a free gift (Romans 6:23)! That free gift is offered to all, but it is only "upon all them that believe" (Romans 3:22).

13:30 With regards to the last and the first, the first word in each phrase refers to the time when the person believed the gospel of the kingdom, while the last word in the phrase refers to the position of authority they will have in the kingdom. In other words, there are people who were saved in the tribulation period who will have great positions of authority in the kingdom,

while those saved before the cross tend to have lower positions of authority in the kingdom. The reason is that most of the people saved in Israel come from the tribulation period. Malachi 3:2-4 says that it takes the refiner's fire of the tribulation period before Israel is saved. Numbers 26:64-65 says that only Joshua and Caleb made it into the Promised Land out of over 1 million people (over 600,000 men plus their wives). When God blesses materially, man gets prideful and does not believe. Therefore, God must bring about tribulation in order for people to be saved. Acts 2:41 shows 3,000 saved, and Acts 4:4 shows 5,000 saved. Therefore, most of Israel, working for God's kingdom, will do so in the tribulation period. Therefore, many saved at the end of Israel's program will have greater positions of authority in the kingdom, while there are not as many saved in Israel before the tribulation period, and these will have lower positions, because of their lack of service. We see by the fact that the 12 apostles will have the positions of 12 thrones over the tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). However, this does not exclude saved Jews before the cross from having high positions of authority, since David will be prince over Israel (Ezekiel 34:23-24).

13:31-33 The Pharisees wanted to kill Jesus. Therefore, they would not warn Jesus that Herod is about to kill Him if it were true. They have just made up a story to try to get Jesus to leave Jerusalem, because Jerusalem is where the Jewish religion is at its worst, and they do not want Jesus destroying their stronghold over the Jews there. (23:8 tells us that Herod did want to see Jesus, but he wanted Jesus to do a miracle for him, not kill Him.) Jesus responds by telling them to "go ye, and tell that fox." He does not say to go tell Herod, because He knows they are lying. Rather, they report to some high ranking Pharisee who made up this story to get rid of Jesus. As such, this high ranking Pharisee was acting like a fox, being sneaky and sly, in making up this story, and Jesus calls him out on that.

Therefore, Jesus is really telling them to go tell their religious superior that he cannot stop God's will from happening. Jesus will continue to perform the signs of the kingdom for the next two days so that the lost sheep of Israel in Jerusalem may be saved. Then, on the third day, He will be crucified. However, Jesus does not say He will be crucified; He says He will "be perfected." In other words, Jesus will be the complete Passover Lamb to take away all the sins of all believers. As such, the religious leaders of Jerusalem cannot stop Satan's stronghold over Israel from falling. In fact, they cannot even kill Him in Satan's capital—Jerusalem. He will be killed "without the gate" of Jerusalem (Hebrews 13:12).

13:34-35 The believing remnant had already said "blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" when Jesus rode into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:9), but the religious leaders did not join them (Matthew 21:15-16). Here, Jesus is saying that they will eventually say "blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," but they will not say it until He comes to judge them with fire at His second coming. That is when they will say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" (Matthew 7:22). But, for now, Jesus leaves

the temple in Jerusalem (Matthew 23:39-24:1), leaving them in a state of unbelief because they would not believe the gospel of the kingdom.

Note that Jesus wanted to gather Israel together “as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings.” This shows that they are still children, because of their unbelief. (The term “children of Israel” is found 647 times in a King James Bible.) They do not become full-grown sons until Jesus’ second coming (Revelation 21:7).

Also note that He says that “YOUR house is left unto you desolate.” God left the temple in Ezekiel 10:18-19. He returned, in the person of Jesus Christ, to offer Himself as the sacrifice for their sins, but they did not respond in faith. Therefore, He leaves again. Because the Jews are steeped in their religion, it is their house that He leaves. It is not God’s house any more.

14 Jesus teaches the Pharisees that they will not make it into God’s kingdom if they do not give up their religion for the gospel of the kingdom (vs. 1-24). He then teaches believing Israel that they need to commit to preaching the gospel of the kingdom throughout the entire tribulation period, or else other Jews will see the little flock as hypocrites and not believe the gospel (vs. 25-35).

14:1 Jesus is in the house of religion.

14:2 Dropsy is a disease from fishes.

14:3-6 The Pharisees did not invite Jesus over for food because they liked Him. They "watched Him" (14:1) to see if He would do or say something that would be against their religion so that they could “lawfully” kill Him. They set the trap by bringing in a diseased guy to see if He would dare heal the man on the sabbath, which would be against their religion because He would be working on the sabbath. Jesus calls attention to their religion being contrary to God's law, and He heals the man. However, the Pharisees sit there in silence. Their silence shows how nothing can be done against the truth (II Corinthians 13:8). The healed man and the Pharisees represent the two groups of people in Israel. The healed man represents the little flock, who receive spiritual healing, i.e., eternal life in the kingdom, by coming to Jesus. The Pharisees represent apostate Israel. They are the generation of vipers, who will not make it into God's kingdom, because they trust in their religion.

Note that the Pharisees do not utter a word in these verses, yet Jesus answers them twice. The fact, that the Pharisees invited Jesus and a diseased man, shows that this is a setup. Jesus knows this, and He still heals the man. He does this to show them, once again, that the power of the Lord is present to heal Israel spiritually, if they will only believe the gospel of the kingdom (5:17).

14:7-11 The Pharisees were exceedingly prideful. Therefore, Jesus gives an illustration to show how their pride will keep them from getting into God's kingdom. If they think they are worthy of God's kingdom, they are self righteous and will not believe the gospel of the kingdom. Since no one is righteous in himself (Romans 3:10), they will not make it into God's kingdom. Instead, they need to be humble, realizing they are not worthy of God's kingdom. Only then will they believe the gospel and make it into the kingdom.

We see a clearer example of this in 18:10-14. There, a Pharisee thanks God that he is not a sinner, while the publican acknowledges his sin and asks for God's mercy. The Pharisee will go to hell, while the publican will be in God's eternal kingdom on earth. This shows that, just because someone is religious, it does not mean that they have eternal life. Similarly today, many people attend church regularly, but they will not go to heaven, because they have not trusted in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection alone for salvation (I Corinthians 15:3-4).

14:12-14 Now, Jesus tells the Pharisee, who invited everyone over to his house, how God the Father will decide who to invite to His marriage supper of the Lamb. Jesus did not come "to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (5:32). In this illustration, the self-righteous are represented by the friends, brethren, kinsmen, and rich neighbours. They are not called to the marriage supper of the Lamb because they are righteous in themselves. (Their self-righteousness is seen in that they will try to recompense the one inviting them. That is, they will try to buy their way into heaven with their own righteousness.) Therefore, they will not have eternal life because they will not eat of Jesus' flesh and drink of His blood at the marriage supper (John 6:53-56). "The poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind" represent the little flock, who believe the gospel of the kingdom. Their righteousness will exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees (Matthew 5:20), because they will have God's imputed righteousness on their souls. Therefore, they will eat and drink at the marriage supper of the Lamb and make it into the kingdom (Revelation 19:7-9).

14:15 This is the response that Jesus was looking for, since it now gives Him an opportunity to explain how the illustration in 14:12-14 is really an explanation of who will be at the marriage supper of the Lamb and, subsequently, live in God's kingdom.

14:16-24 Jesus now tells the Jewish religious leaders who will make it into God's kingdom. Basically, all Jews are invited (This is shown right away by telling us that He bade "many" (v. 16). The "many" represents the nation of Israel (see Isaiah 53:11-12 and Matthew 20:28), but only those willing to come in actually make it in.) Therefore, no one will have a valid excuse for not making it into the kingdom. The Jewish religious leaders, being in charge of God's religious system, are invited first. The religious leaders make excuses which fit with their traditions. Two love their possessions, such that

they are not willing to give them up to enter the kingdom, which they would have to do since they will give up their possessions if they do not take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16-17). One says that he has "married a wife." This shows an allegiance to the tradition of the fathers over God's law covenant with Israel. (The "one consent" (14:18), with which they make excuses, should remind us of how the people were "one" at the Tower of Babel in trying to exalt themselves and to the heaven by their religion (Genesis 11:3-6).)

The statement that "none of those men which were bidden shall taste of My supper" shows how God will replace the religious leaders with the little flock "bringing forth the fruits" of the kingdom (Matthew 21:43). The little flock are those willing to abandon their possessions and religion to believe the gospel of the kingdom and preach it during the tribulation period. They are represented by "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind" (v. 21). They will have those physical characteristics thanks to the persecution they receive from apostate Israel, i.e., the religious leaders aligned with the Antichrist. Then, there are those, who believe the gospel, but do not work for the kingdom. They still make it into the kingdom and are represented here by those in "the highways and hedges."

14:18-20 The specific possessions mentioned here all mean something in relation to Satan and his claim over Israel. Looking after a piece of ground shows how Satan has gotten the land of Israel for himself and is walking up and down it to try to keep God from taking it back (Job 1:7 and 2:2; I Peter 5:8). The five yoke of oxen represent the religion of the Pharisees. Jesus said that His "yoke is easy" (Matthew 11:30). Satan says, "I can do better than that. I have five yokes upon the nation of Israel." Those yokes are "heavy burdens and grievous to be borne" (Matthew 23:4). Finally, Jesus is going to marry His bride Israel and has called people to His marriage supper. Satan claims that will not happen because he has already married Israel himself. He says, "I have married a wife."

14:21 The servant, here, are the members of the little flock who watch (Matthew 25:13) for their Lord's coming and make the midnight cry that the Lord Jesus Christ is on His way (Matthew 25:6).

14:23 The Lord Jesus Christ compels all of Israel to come into God's kingdom through the ministry of the little flock, who go to the cities of Israel during the tribulation period.

14:26 Christians probably read Jesus' words in Matthew through John more than they read anything else in the Bible, yet you would be hard pressed to find a sermon preached on this verse! At this point, great multitudes are following Jesus (14:25), and He tells them that they have to hate everyone, including themselves, to be His disciple. But, did not Jesus also tell them to "love your enemies" (6:27)? So, Jesus wants His disciples to hate their family and love their enemies. Why?

Hating their family is the way into God's kingdom. It is not that they are supposed to have genuine hatred for their families. Rather, Jesus is saying that the ones closest to them will try to steer them back into the Jewish religion, which will lead them away from the gospel of the kingdom. (An example of this is seen today in Islamic families, who will often shun and even kill a member of their family for becoming a Christian.) In the tribulation period, that will mean aligning themselves with the Antichrist.

We even see that Jesus' own family tried to do this to Him, too. In Mark 3:21, His friends try to "lay hold on Him" because they think He is crazy. Then, His family shows up to put Him away (Mark 3:31). Jesus renounces His ties to His family, including His blessed mother, Mary, and pledges allegiance to the little flock (Mark 3:33-35). This is the example the little flock needs to follow. If they are not willing to break ties with their family, they will not make it into the kingdom, because they will end up following the Jews' religion.

Note that they also even have to hate their own flesh because their flesh will tell them to follow the Antichrist, because the Antichrist will promise riches and will persecute them if they continue to follow Christ. Jesus set the example here, also, as He "stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (9:51). He will also later deny His flesh to the point of sweating "great drops of blood" (22:44). Only by hating His family and His own flesh did He not get sucked into religion. So, too, the little flock, who is preaching the gospel of the kingdom throughout the tribulation period, must be willing to forsake family and even their own flesh in order to continue doing the Father's will until the end of the tribulation period.

14:27-35 "Bear his cross, and come after me" have to do with following Jesus' example. Jesus forsook His family, He is forsaking Himself by going to Jerusalem to be crucified, and He will soon die on a cross for Israel to be saved. So, too, the members of the little flock need to forsake their family, their own flesh, and be willing to die for the cause of Christ. If they are not willing to lose their families, their possessions, and their lives in the tribulation period, people will not believe the gospel of the kingdom, which will cause fewer people to be saved and enter God's eternal kingdom on earth.

So, in other words, Jesus is telling Israel here that, if they believe the gospel and preach it to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:6), they need to be willing to do so through the entire tribulation period. If they do not, the gospel will lose its savour (14:34), such that men will "cast it out" (14:35). On the other hand, if the little flock loves their enemies, they will preach the gospel, regardless of what happens to them, even though this means hating their own families and their own bodies.

We need to note that Jesus is absolutely trying to deter people from

believing the gospel of the kingdom because a full commitment through the whole tribulation is required for the gospel to achieve its maximum effectiveness. In other words, Jews, who believe the gospel but then worship the image of the beast, only harm God's kingdom. That is why He tells this "great multitude" (14:25) to hate their own families and their own lives. This is also why, on another occasion when a great multitude follows Him, He tells them to eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to have life in Him (John 6:53-57).

Today's pastors are so concerned about offending people that they water down the doctrine. By contrast, the Lord Jesus Christ, whenever He saw great multitudes, gave them even stronger doctrine to weed out those who would not believe to the end. As the Great Physician, He recognized they needed strong medicine to be healed of their spiritual sickness (5:31-34). Today's pastors just want money, and so they continually feed sick children with the junk food of bad doctrine.

So, why would Jesus want to offend people? In Isaiah 52:5-6, God said that the Jewish religious leaders caused Israel "to howl, saith the Lord; and My name continually every day is blasphemed. Therefore, My people shall know My name." They will know His name by the little flock preaching the gospel of peace and salvation (Isaiah 52:7). If the little flock becomes apostate, they will blaspheme God's name by preaching a false gospel, as so many Christians do today, and Israel will not be saved. Therefore, they must stand up for sound doctrine.

The two illustrations in 14:28-32 are not made up stories. Rather, they reveal God's plan of overthrowing Satan, but only those with the "ears to hear" understand this (14:35). The first illustration is of a man building a tower. God's plan of taking the earth back from Satan involves building the spiritual house of Israel. He does so with Jesus Christ as the "chief corner stone" (I Peter 2:6) and with believing Israel "as lively stones" of the house (I Peter 2:5). God counted the cost and determined that this plan would work in overthrowing Satan.

The second illustration is of a king fighting against another king. Jesus Christ is the "King of kings" (Revelation 17:14), while Satan is "the prince of this world" (John 12:31). Note, from the illustration, that the king determines beforehand if he will be able to win the victory over the other king if he has half of the army of the other king. Similarly, Satan will come against God with an army that is as numerable as the sand of the sea. God will be outnumbered in people, but He will still win the victory, because He will devour them all with fire (Revelation 20:7-9).

Therefore, in addition to teaching the lesson that the disciples must count the cost and give up everything to follow Him, Jesus is also saying that God Himself counted the cost before He created the heaven and the earth and determined that His plan to reconcile the earth back to Himself through the

Lord Jesus Christ and Israel would work. Therefore, by forsaking all to follow the Lord, what the disciples really are doing is they are placing their faith in God to bring about His plan to overtake the earth, and they are not believing Satan and the Antichrist's plan to keep the earth for themselves.

Counting the cost (v. 28), then, is not what most Christians think it is. Most Christians think it means that we must make sure we work for God in order to maintain our salvation. What it really means is that the tribulation saints need to recognize that the cost of them not being faithful to preach the gospel until the end of the tribulation period is reduced fruit. In other words, the cost is fewer Jews making it into God's kingdom. Therefore, they need to determine to stay faithful to preaching the gospel throughout the tribulation period.

14:33 If the little flock does not forsake their families, they will be led into following the Antichrist. If they do not forsake their possessions, they will end up taking the mark of the beast. They will not be following Jesus to the death, i.e., they will not be His disciple, if they do not forsake all during the tribulation period.

Having said that, we should note that most of saved Israel will not be His disciple, but they will still make it into the kingdom. They believe the gospel of the kingdom and do not worship the image of the beast, but they also do not preach the gospel. This group of people is pictured by the five virgins, who sleep through the tribulation period, but still make it into the kingdom (Matthew 25:5,7,9-10). Jesus' disciples, who preach the gospel during the tribulation period, are pictured by the ones who watch and cry that the bridegroom is coming (Matthew 25:6).

15 Jesus uses the stories of the lost sheep (vs. 4-7), the lost piece of silver (vs. 8-10), and the lost son (vs. 11-32) to demonstrate how God wants to save all of Israel, even the publicans and sinners. There is a progression in these "lost" parables. The parable of the lost sheep shows how God wants to save each Israelite. The parable of the lost piece of silver shows how God wants to save all ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel. The parable of the lost son shows how Israel went astray before Judah did, and that God is anxious to unite Israel and Judah so that all 12 tribes of Israel enter the kingdom (come back home).

15:1-2 These two verses are essential to understanding the context of the three parables of the chapter. The worst of sinners in Israel have come to hear Jesus. They did not come for miracles. They came "to hear Him." Unfortunately, the Jewish religious leaders are there, too, and the mysteries of the kingdom are not for them to know (Matthew 13:11). Therefore, Jesus speaks these three "lost" parables to the "sinners" (15:1) so that, if they have "ears to hear" (14:35), they will understand that God Himself has come in the flesh to save them.

15:3-7 The parable of the lost sheep, then, shows how God rejoices over one sinner repenting, more than 99 just people. This does not mean that the Pharisees are already just. It also does not mean that God loves an unjust person more than He loves a just person. The point is that Jesus is sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24). Therefore, He spends His time with them in the hopes that at least one of them will change their mind (repent) by abandoning the religion of the Pharisees and following God's law covenant with them (v. 7).

The reason there is great rejoicing in heaven over one found sheep is that it means one more person who will be in God's eternal kingdom. The 99 just people will already be in God's kingdom. Since they have already come to Christ by believing the gospel of the kingdom, they are already in His fold, and can "go in and out and find pasture" (John 10:9). Therefore, He can leave the 99 found sheep in the wilderness (in the pasture) (v. 4), because they have God's Word to keep them from going astray. Jesus can then concentrate of finding other lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24) to bring them into the sheepfold. He is ministering to "all the publicans and sinners" (v. 1) in hopes that at least one of them will change their mind and follow God's law covenant. As "the good shepherd" (John 10:11), He is finding the lost sheep and keeping them safe (John 17:12).

Now, the little flock should also be listening to these parables, which means that, if they are Jesus' disciples, they will continue to reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the gospel of the kingdom after Jesus' ascension to the Father.

15:8-10 The "ten pieces of silver" represent the ten tribes of the house of Israel (The other two tribes are in Judah.). All ten tribes of Israel are lost when Jesus comes to the earth. From them (mostly from Zebulun and Naphtali (Matthew 4:15)), Jesus finds a little flock (vs. 3-7), and they go out to Israel as the lit candle (11:33), sweeping the house of Israel (v. 8) to find those who are still lost. Heaven rejoices over those who change their mind, forsaking the Pharisees' laws and putting themselves back under God's law, in order to enter God's eternal kingdom on earth.

15:11-32 Now, Jesus tells an even broader parable. At first, He was looking for individuals in Israel to be saved. Second, those individuals were looking for more individuals in Israel to be saved. Now, we are told of the unification of Israel with Judah. In Ezekiel 37:19, God says that He will take Israel and Judah and unite them into one nation. Ezekiel 37:21-22 says He "will take the children of Israel from among the heathen...and bring them into their own land,...and I will make them one nation in the land." That is what this story of the lost son is about. The ten tribes of Israel have gone astray, but God will gather them back into His house (the land of Israel) to be married to Him (Isaiah 62:4). Therefore, we go from individuals in Israel (15:4-7), to the ten tribes of Israel (15:8-10), to all 12 tribes of Israel being reunited to God in the kingdom (15:11-32).

Sorry to have to burst your bubble, but this story is not about some wretched, evil sinner who cleans up his act and starts being a good son again. Since “there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Romans 3:12), we are all incapable of cleaning up our own acts. That is why “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). However, churches do not want you to learn this message, because, if there is nothing we can do to earn eternal life, then you will not be dropping your life’s savings into their coffers any time soon. So, they make salvation a work and applaud stories of the bad sinner who has come home to God so that you never learn that eternal life is a free gift from God to the believer (Romans 6:23).

The best testimony of salvation is a story of someone who has never smoked, drank, did drugs, slept around, or anything else. The best testimony is someone, who is considered to be a model citizen, who recognizes that he has sinned and is in need of God’s grace and His imputed righteousness in order to have eternal life (Romans 3:22-26). Such a story tells everyone listening that they need to believe in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as the atonement for their sins, as well (I Corinthians 15:3-4), while a story of the miserable wretch coming home only serves to justify the self-righteous, do-gooders in the audience, hardening their hearts even more to the gospel of grace.

Having said that, let us now look at the details of this parable to see what it really means.

15:11 The man is God, and the two sons are the divided nations of Israel and Judah.

15:12 Israel was not willing to wait for God to send their Messiah to redeem them and bring them into the kingdom. Instead, they asked for their inheritance, apart from God. We see this when Jeroboam set up two golden calves in Israel so that the ten tribes would not go to God’s house in Jerusalem (I Kings 12:28-30), and it only got worse from then on.

15:13-14 Israel served other gods (“wasted his substance with riotous living”), and so God sent a famine as punishment. For the second cycle of chastisement, Leviticus 26:19 says that God “will break the pride of your power.” That was the divided kingdom when Israel left God’s house. Then, “I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass.” That is the “mighty famine” in 15:14 that is seen in I Kings 17:1.

15:15 Then, instead of repenting and coming back to God, Israel “joined himself to a citizen of that country.” This means that Israel joined themselves to Baal (I Kings 22:53). As a result, they forsook God’s commands and did abominable things like the Gentiles were doing (II Kings 17:15). This is pictured by the lost son feeding the swine, which were

unclean animals under God's law (Leviticus 11:7). As such, this is a type of Israel breaking God's law.

15:16 God said He would bless Israel if they obeyed the covenant (Deuteronomy 28:2), but He would curse them if they disobeyed the covenant (Deuteronomy 27:26). Since they disobeyed, they were under the curse, as pictured here by the phrase: "No man gave unto him."

15:17-18 Now, we see Israel realizing that Gentiles ("hired servants") are treated better by God than Israel is treated by the Gentiles. Note that he says he will come to his father and confess his sin, which is what Israel has to do in order to be forgiven by God (Leviticus 26:40-42; I John 1:9).

15:20 Once the son comes within the eyesight of his father, the father runs to meet him and welcomes him. This pictures how Israel cannot come to God with their own filthy-rags righteousness (Isaiah 64:6). Therefore, God had to come running to them in the person of Jesus Christ to die for their sins, but they are not saved unless they have faith in Him, as pictured by the son making his way back to the father.

15:21 The son's statement represents Israel humbling themselves before their God, realizing that Israel's traditions will not save them. They have to rely upon God's mercy and grace. Thus, this verse represents all in Israel that believe the gospel of the kingdom.

15:22 Because they believe the gospel, they are clothed with robes of righteousness (Revelation 19:8).

15:23 Saved Israel then comes to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7,9).

15:24 The son "was dead, and is alive again," just like believers "were dead in sins," but they are made alive again in Christ (Ephesians 2:5).

15:25-26 While the lost son represents the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the elder son represents apostate Israel. They have not left Jerusalem, where God's house was, but they have left God, following the traditions of the religious leaders. This is signified by him being "in the field" and not in God's house. The "musick and dancing" represents the party at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Although apostate Israel says that they know God and the scriptures well, they do not understand what the Messiah did/will do for them, as represented by the elder son (apostate Israel) having to ask a servant (saved Gentile in the kingdom) what it meant by the musick and dancing. See how the tables have turned. Israel was supposed to be a kingdom of priests to the Gentiles (Exodus 19:5-6). Instead, saved Gentiles have to tell apostate Israel what is going on.

15:28-30 "And he was angry, and would not go in." Christians focus on the

Prodigal Son, and they just assume the elder son is in the Father's house, too. However, 15:28 clearly says that the elder son "would not go in," because he was angry. This represents apostate Israel's religion keeping them from entering in God's kingdom. They are self-righteous, thinking they do not need God's grace because they claim to be perfect in obeying God's law ("neither transgressed I at any time Thy commandment"). The message, then, to the Jewish religious leaders listening to this parable is that they will not enter God's kingdom by their religion. Religion is so angry that the publicans and sinners make it into God's kingdom that they will not even listen to the gospel, even though God wants them to be in His kingdom, as well ("therefore came his father out, and intreated him").

Similarly today, the story of the Prodigal Son gets told over and over to self-righteous religious fanatics, who do not even note that they themselves will not have eternal life with God because they are trying to make it into heaven by their own righteousness.

Note also that the elder son does not want to have supper with his family. Rather, he wants to have a good time with his friends. Religion only likes self-righteous people. It does not want to associate with those receiving God's imputed righteousness. In fact, religion disowns those related to them. The elder son never uses the term "father." He has also disowned his brother, because he calls the lost son "THY son." It takes the father to remind him that he is really his brother (15:32).

15:31-32 At the time that Jesus tells this story, the Jewish religious leaders are still the leaders. They have not been kicked out yet. They still have the chance to enter God's eternal kingdom on earth, if they believe the gospel of the kingdom as given to them in Acts 2-6. Therefore, the parable ends where the situation stands when Jesus tells it, which means that they are still called "Son," since they do represent Israel, which is God's son (Exodus 4:22), but they will need to be born again in order to enter the kingdom (John 3:7). The publicans and sinners are in the kingdom already, as represented by the lost son being in the house and being born again ("was dead, and is alive again"), but the Pharisees are still undecided, as represented by them being in the field outside. Will they enter in, or will they keep arguing with God that they do not need the gospel because they can make it into the kingdom by their own righteousness?

16 Jesus tells His disciples to try to make friends among the Pharisees so as to show the common Jews that the little flock is on God's side, and the Pharisees are on Satan's side (vs. 1-13). Jesus tells the Pharisees they will not make it into God's kingdom if they do not abandon their riches and trust in God's covenant with Israel to save them (vs. 14-31).

16:1-2 The "certain rich man" of verse 1 is God the Father. The "steward" of verse 1 are the Jewish religious leaders. God had put the religious leaders in charge of teaching God's law covenant to the common Jews so that they

might enter the kingdom of God. However, they rejected God's law in favor of their own tradition (Mark 7:9). To put it in terms of this parable: they wasted the goods of the rich man (v. 1). God told the religious leaders through the prophets that He would remove them as religious leaders and replace them with faithful shepherds (the twelve apostles) (Jeremiah 23:1-4). In Matthew 21:43, Jesus specifically tells the Pharisees that "the kingdom of God shall be taken from you." In the terms of this parable, the rich man says that the steward "mayest be no longer steward" (v. 2).

16:3-8 Now, we see the reaction of the Jewish religious leaders to God's declaration that they will no longer be His religious steward over Israel. The steward's writing down of debts is a picture of how the religious leaders eased the burden of the people so that they would continue following them. Now, the Pharisees did put "burdens grievous to be borne" (Luke 11:46) upon the people, and Jesus' "burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). That is true in the sense of creating a bunch of extra rules to follow that God never asked Israel to do, such as not being able to pick corn on the sabbath (6:1-2) or having to wash their hands before eating (11:37-38). However, they did not execute God's judgment (11:42) because they did not, for example, kill people for working on the sabbath (Exodus 31:15) or for cursing their father or mother (compare Leviticus 20:9 and Matthew 15:4-6). Therefore, they allowed people to stay alive for transgressing God's law. They rejected the commandments of God to keep their own traditions (Mark 7:9), which made the common Jews feel good in the flesh and still continue in their depraved state. In terms of the parable, they lessened the debt owed to the rich man so that, when God would remove them from being the religious leaders of Israel, the people would follow them, rather than follow God's law. In other words, the Pharisees made friends of the common Jews, while Jesus' disciples were not making friends among the common, Jewish people.

One of the reasons that Jesus' disciples were not making friends among the common, Jewish people was that they were not able to do all the signs of the kingdom because they were living in unbelief regarding Jesus' death and the mysteries of the kingdom He was sharing with them. Because of that, not as many people of Israel would believe the gospel of the kingdom that they were preaching because they were not able to fulfill completely their mission. For example, they were not able to cast out a lunatick devil (9:38-42) due to their unbelief. As such, "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (v. 8). In other words, the generation of vipers are able to keep more Jewish people than Jesus' apostles are able to take away from them due to a lack of wisdom on the part of Jesus' apostles. Therefore, Jesus' disciples were not as effective as the Pharisees were.

Note also from this parable that the Jewish religious leaders were too proud to beg (16:3). This is their fundamental problem. In spite of all the wickedness they had done in leading Israel astray, God still would have forgiven them of their sins and they would have continued as the religious leaders, if they were willing to believe the gospel, confess their sins, and be

water baptized (Matthew 3:2-6). Since they were too proud to beg God for mercy, they did not bring these “fruits meet for repentance” (Matthew 3:8). Therefore, they remained in their lost condition.

16:9 The Pharisees made friends of the common Jews to keep them going to their synagogues, even though God will remove them from being His leaders. This culminates in them making a seven-year covenant with the Antichrist (Daniel 9:27). Since the little flock is supposed to reach the common Jews with the gospel and the common Jews are friends of the Pharisees, the little flock should try to become friends with the Pharisees. We see this with Jesus, eating meals at Pharisees’ houses.

However, because the little flock stands for the truth while the Pharisees are part of Satan’s lie program, the little flock will fail in becoming friends with them. By failing to become friends with the Pharisees, the Pharisees are actually receiving them “into everlasting habitations.” They do this by the fact that the common Jews will now have the opportunity to see that the little flock is not being antagonistic to the Jewish religious leaders, but the Pharisees are rejecting God’s Word. Therefore, by not being willing to be friends with the little flock, the Pharisees are showing the common Jews how the Pharisees are part of Satan’s program, while the little flock are part of God’s kingdom. The common Jews are then more likely to believe the gospel. As such, the Pharisees receive Israel “into everlasting habitations” by their bad example, much like Israel’s bad example in the Old Testament teaches us, today, not to lust like they did (I Corinthians 10:5-11).

16:10 By being faithful to trying to be friends with the Jewish religious leaders, the little flock will be faithful in the least. They will then go on to give the signs of the kingdom and preach the gospel of the kingdom to the common Jews, and the Jews will be more likely to believe that gospel, seeing that they are speaking for God, while the Pharisees are part of Satan’s program.

16:11 If the little flock cannot be friends with the Pharisees, they are not loving their enemies (6:27). As such, they are not being good representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, He will not commit “the true riches” to their trust, which would be a leadership position in God’s eternal kingdom on earth (Matthew 19:28). The common Jews are more likely to believe the gospel of the kingdom, seeing that the little flock was first faithful in respecting the Jewish religious leaders and trying to get along with them.

16:12 Being “faithful in that which is another man’s” means being faithful to obeying the Pharisees’ religion, as long as it does not contradict the commandments of God (Acts 5:29). Jesus told them, “the scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do” (Matthew 23:2-3). In this manner, they will obey those who have the rule over them. Then, other Jews will see this respectful behavior from the little flock, which will cause these other Jews to listen to

the little flock's message of the gospel of the kingdom. The little flock will then receive their own riches in the kingdom, as the reward for their service to God.

16:13 The little flock's effort to make friends with the Jewish religious leaders will cause the common Jews to see the difference between the Pharisees and the little flock. If they look at things objectively, they will see that the religious leaders speak for Satan, while the little flock is following God's law. Once they see that there are two sides, they will have to choose one side or the other. They will either serve God or mammon. This means that they will have to choose between serving God and losing all of their material possessions, or pursuing material riches but losing their souls. However, if the little flock does not first show the common Jews, by trying to be the Pharisees' friends, that they are on God's side, the Jews may not see the difference and think that they are serving God by following the Pharisees, when they are actually serving mammon.

16:14 The fact, that the Pharisees were covetous, proves that what Jesus has told the little flock works. Some of the common Jews were following Jesus, instead of the Pharisees, because they saw that Jesus was speaking God's Word, while the Pharisees were speaking the traditions of the fathers. If the little flock loves the Pharisees, other Jews will believe the gospel. The Pharisees' covetous attitude, then, will cause them to begin to mock and laugh at the little flock, just like they do with Jesus here, which will show the Jews that the Pharisees are of the devil (John 8:44).

16:15-16 The Pharisees were esteemed by men because of how godly they appeared to be to the common Jews. However, the little flock is preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and "every man presseth into" the kingdom (16:16). Therefore, if the little flock can expose the Pharisees' participation in Satan's lie program by the Pharisees rejecting the little flock, then the Jews may be open to hearing the gospel of the kingdom from the little flock. Then, the Pharisees' religious system will fall.

By the way, 16:15 is a great cross-reference for those who claim that the justification in James 2:24 is justification in the sight of men. James MUST be talking about God doing the justifying, since "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

16:16-18 Verse 16 is not saying that the law and the prophets were replaced by the new covenant once John the Baptist's ministry began, because verse 17 says that it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than for even one mark of one letter of one word of God's law to pass away. Then, Jesus reiterates the law in verse 18. What verse 16 is saying is that the law and the prophets were preached until John the Baptist came along. Then, the at-hand phase of the kingdom began to be preached by John (Matthew 3:2), but the law and the prophets never went away. It was just that John added some new information that related specifically to the kingdom of

heaven being “at hand.” In fact, 16:29 says that the law and the prophets contain the necessary information to avoid burning in hell.

The Pharisees are saying that people can follow their traditions to make it into the kingdom, but Jesus says that they need to have God’s imputed righteousness, which comes to them by believing the gospel of the kingdom. “Every man presseth into” the kingdom, but, if the Jews want to make it into the kingdom of heaven, they must believe what the little flock preaches, and not what the Pharisees are saying, because the Pharisees are trying to take God’s kingdom by force (Matthew 11:12).

The comment in verse 18 about committing adultery may seem out of place, but it is a reference to what Israel has done by abandoning God for the traditions of the fathers. They have committed spiritual adultery by leaving God for another god—Satan.

16:19-31 The rest of chapter 16 covers the difference between the Pharisees and the little flock. The Pharisees are like the rich man (v. 19). They “devour widows’ houses” (20:47) to make themselves rich. The little flock is represented by the “beggar named Lazarus” (v. 20), who is poor due to the persecution he has faced at the hands of the Jewish religious leaders. During the tribulation period, the religious leaders will thrive, while the little flock suffers, since all of the economic goods of the little flock will be taken away from them when the mark of the beast is instituted halfway through the tribulation period (Revelation 13:16-17).

However, the little flock will be in God’s kingdom, while the Jewish religious leaders will suffer in the torments side of hell. John the Baptist, Jesus, and now the little flock are coming to them, proclaiming the gospel so that they can be in God’s kingdom, but they will not listen. In fact, they will not believe, “though one rose from the dead” (v. 31). God will raise a different Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43-44), and their reaction is to kill Jesus (John 11:50). Then, when Jesus rises from the dead and He sends the Holy Ghost upon the little flock, the Jewish religious leaders will persecute and kill members of the little flock (Acts 7:57-60). Then, God will have His two witnesses during the first half of the tribulation period, and the religious leaders will throw a big party when the beast is finally able to kill them (Revelation 11:3,7,10). This shows that the religious leaders are children of the devil (John 8:44), such that nothing or no one will persuade them to enter God’s kingdom.

16:21 The dogs licking Lazarus’ sores is a picture of how, during the tribulation period, the rich, apostate nation of Israel will not give so much as crumbs to help out the little flock. Yet, the Gentiles (dogs, see Matthew 15:26-27) come and do what they can to help the little flock. These Gentiles will be blessed in the kingdom for blessing Israel (Matthew 25:34-40).

A comparison of this verse with Matthew 15:26-27 shows that God takes

care of the Gentiles in Israel's program, but apostate Israel will not even do one thing to help believing Israel. The Jewish religious leaders supposedly took care of all Jews, but they would not help those who believed God's Word. Similarly today, the Christian religion seems to be the "family of God," who loves everyone, especially Christians. However, the truth is that they persecute those who truly believe God's Word.

16:22-26 God is holy, and unholy man cannot enter into His presence. Even though Old Testament saints had faith in God and His law covenant, they were still unholy until Jesus' death atoned for their sins (Hebrews 9:13-14, 10:4). Therefore, they could not go to heaven. Instead, they went to "Abraham's bosom." The first time in the Bible that the word "peace" appears is in reference to God's promise to Abraham that he will go to the grave in peace (Genesis 15:15), and that is because he had faith in what God told him (Genesis 15:5-6). Therefore, there is peace with Abraham as they wait in the paradise side of hell.

After Jesus' death, He said that He would be in paradise "to day" (23:43), meaning that He "led captivity captive" (Ephesians 4:8), taking paradise out of the earth and bringing it up to heaven, where it now awaits to come down with the New Jerusalem at Jesus' second coming (Revelation 21:2).

Meanwhile, the whole time, there has also been a torment side of hell, where all unbelievers go after their physical death to be "tormented in this flame" (v. 24). There was "a great gulf fixed" between the two portions of hell so that those in torments could not go to the paradise side and vice-versa (v. 26).

16:23-24 Note that, although the rich man is burning in flames, he still has eyes to see Lazarus and a tongue that could be cooled. This shows that people still have their physical bodies in hell. Jesus mentioned this, as well, in Mark 9:43, when He said that "it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched."

16:24 Note how the rich man calls Abraham "father." This shows that he was a Jew. It also shows the religiousness of this guy in that he calls him "Father." (Remember that the rich man represents religious, apostate Israel.) Today, the Catholic religion calls their priests "Father," and they use this scripture as their support for doing so! Here is a word of advice: "Do not take your doctrine from a guy burning in hell!" Instead, take the advice of the Lord Jesus Christ when He says, "call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven" (Matthew 23:9).

16:25 Lazarus received evil things in his life because, as a type of the little flock in the tribulation period, he was persecuted by the religious elite. The rich man received good things in his life because, as a type of apostate Israel, he received material wealth, being aligned with the Antichrist.

16:28 The “five brethren” represent half of Israel that will not enter the kingdom of God due to their unbelief (Note that five of the ten virgins, representing the ten tribes of the northern territory of Israel, do not enter into God’s kingdom in Matthew 25:1-2,8-12).

16:29-31 I have heard Christians say, “I wish I was alive to see Jesus perform all of those miracles. Those people sure were blessed to see that!” However, Romans 10:17 says, “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Romans 10:19-20 goes on to quote Moses (the law) and Isaiah (the prophets) as proof that Israel had the opportunity to believe. This is why 16:29-31 says that the law and the prophets are more powerful than man’s witness of the afterlife. Back then, people could receive eternal life just by believing God’s Word, even though they had no idea how God would actually give them eternal life (I Peter 1:10-12). Today, God “hath abounded toward us in ALL wisdom and prudence” (Ephesians 1:8), which means that we have God’s full and completed Word. We also have the indwelling Holy Spirit to teach us the things of God (I Corinthians 2:9-13). Therefore, we are in a much better situation than those alive to see Jesus’ miracles, since it is much better to be spiritually mature than it is to be physically whole.

17 Jesus tells His disciples to serve God throughout the tribulation period (vs. 1-10). Not many of Israel will do so (vs. 11-19). However, if no one does, Israel will not be ready at Jesus’ second coming (vs. 20-37).

17:1-2 In Matthew 13:21, Jesus said that there will be some who will believe the gospel of the kingdom, but they will not make it into the kingdom because, when they are persecuted, they fall away because they are “offended.” Because the tribulation period will take place, “it is impossible but that offences will come” (17:1). However, the ones, who offend those believing in the gospel of the kingdom, will receive great punishment in the lake of fire, because they caused people not to enter God’s kingdom.

17:3-4 Because the little flock will not be forgiven by God if they do not forgive others (Matthew 6:15), they need to forgive those who change their mind and decide not to trespass against them any more. The reference to “seven times in a day” probably hints at the tribulation period’s seven years, when forgiveness is most crucial, since the little flock needs to be united if they are to be effective in getting Jews to believe the gospel of the kingdom.

17:5-6 The apostles ask the Lord to increase their faith, and the Lord’s response is to tell them that “if ye had faith.” In other words, He does not miraculously increase their faith. They have to go through trials to have their faith increased. For example, they will only have the faith to cast out religion by going through the forced prayer and fasting of the tribulation period (Matthew 17:21). In Matthew 17:20, He says that “faith as a grain of mustard seed” will remove “this mountain,” which is a reference to the religious system of the Pharisees. Here, though, He says that “faith as a grain of mustard seed” will remove “this sycamine tree.” Rather than talking

about the faith to remove religion, Jesus is talking about the faith to obey God. A sycamine tree grows quickly only at first, and never becomes a big tree. The idea is that disobeying God is an idea that takes root quickly, but never grows into anything worthwhile. Once the apostles increase their own faith through the trials of the tribulation period, they will realize the worthlessness of the thought of disobeying God and they will discard that thought.

17:7-10 Jesus tells the apostles that the reason He will not increase their faith is because they are servants. They are not to have things handed to them without doing anything. Rather, they are to work for the Lord by obeying His commandments. They will still have their faith increased, but it will be increased automatically through the service they do for the Lord, rather than having things handed to them. Granted, God will provide for their physical needs during the tribulation period (Revelation 12:6), but spiritual growth is necessary first through depriving them of physical needs for as long as it is spiritually beneficial.

17:10 Self esteem is such a dangerous idea among Christians today. This verse shows that God values God-esteem, not self-esteem. Of course, this verse applies to the little flock during the tribulation period. Therefore, it is better to use a passage like Ephesians 6:5-9 to show how servants of Christ should behave.

17:11 John 4:4 says that Jesus "must needs go through Samaria." The reason was that, because the Samaritans were Jews, Jesus had to go there to find the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 15:24). This is why He goes through Samaria here.

17:12-19 The ten lepers standing afar off represent the ten tribes of Israel that were far from entering into the kingdom. There are two things required here. First, they need to have faith that they will be healed. Second, they need to obey the law ("go shew yourselves unto the priests" (v. 14)). Similarly, in order for the ten tribes of Israel to make it into the kingdom, they have to believe the gospel of the kingdom and then obey the law covenant. (Their belief of the gospel is represented in verse 14 by the fact that all of them went to the priests to be pronounced clean, even though they were not actually cleansed until they went on their journey.) Then, from the ten tribes, there will only be a little flock with the increased faith (17:5) to follow God's command to preach the gospel of the kingdom throughout the tribulation period. This is represented by the one man who came back and glorified God. The fact that he is a Samaritan is significant because Samaritans are not considered to be Jews by the rest of Israel, but this Samaritan will rule over most Jews in the kingdom because of his faith to preach the gospel to the rest of Israel. This symbolizes how the little flock will be largely comprised of the outcasts of Jewish society—Samaritans, publicans, and sinners.

The command to “go shew yourselves unto the priests” (v. 14) is in obedience of Leviticus 14:2. Jesus told the cleansed leper to obey the Mosaic law. This shows that the Lord Jesus Christ did not do away with the law, as most Christians believe He did.

17:20-21 The mysteries of the kingdom are given to the little flock, not to the Pharisees (Matthew 13:11). Since Jesus will not even tell His disciples after His resurrection when the kingdom of God will come (Acts 1:6-7), He certainly will not tell the Pharisees before His crucifixion. The Father's will for Jesus is to: 1) Reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the gospel (Matthew 15:24), 2) Keep them safe (John 17:12), and 3) Give His life a ransom for them (Matthew 20:28). Therefore, He tries to shift the Pharisees' focus back to believing the gospel, should any of them be part of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. That is why He tells them that "the kingdom of God is within you." In other words, the way for them to enter the kingdom of God is in their midst. All they have to do is believe the gospel of the kingdom and be water baptized (Mark 16:15).

People use Jesus' saying of "the kingdom of God is within you" to say that it is a spiritual kingdom that is within their hearts. Nothing could be further from the truth! Many scriptures tell of a literal, eternal kingdom that God will set up ON THE EARTH (Exodus 19:5-6; Psalm 2:8; Psalm 48:1-2; Matthew 5:5; Revelation 21:1-2). The context of this scripture shows that Jesus is referring to needing to believe the gospel of the kingdom in order to enter God's kingdom.

Also, even if Jesus was referring to a spiritual kingdom, it certainly was not within the hearts of the Pharisees because they are children of the devil (John 8:44)! Jesus is saying that the way to get into the kingdom of God is hidden from their eyes even though it is in their midst. It is like a grain of mustard seed in the ground (13:18-19). The gospel is there for the Pharisees to believe, but they do not believe it without the ears to hear it.

17:22-24 Jesus will not be physically present with the little flock during the tribulation period, as pictured by the disciples being in the middle of the sea in a storm with Jesus nowhere to be found (Matthew 14:22-24). Therefore, they will have to have faith in His Word and follow it regardless of Satan's forces against them. The little flock will long for the days when Jesus was with them, but they are not to believe any rumors of Jesus being around because He will not be there. The reason they should not follow someone claiming to have seen the Christ is because it is a trap (Matthew 24:5). Apostate Israel will try to lure the little flock away from trusting in God's Word and will try to persecute and even kill them (Matthew 10:17-21). Jesus' second coming will be clear to all. The whole earth will sit in darkness for days at the end of the tribulation period (Matthew 24:29-30). Then, Jesus will come as lightning. All will see His second coming.

17:25 Jesus tells the little flock that the intention of His first coming is not

to set up the kingdom. He must suffer and be rejected by “this generation,” which is the generation of vipers (Matthew 23:33). This is why Israel, as a whole, rejected Him. They wanted their Messiah to be king, even if they had to force Him to take the throne (John 6:15). By contrast, the Antichrist will take the throne in the temple as soon as he can (II Thessalonians 2:4). Therefore, Israel will accept him as their messiah.

17:26-27 In Noah's day, people were going about their lives as if no judgment was coming. They did this even though they could see Noah building an ark for 100 years (600 years old in Genesis 7:6 minus 500 years old in Genesis 5:32), he preached righteousness to them (II Peter 2:5), and Enoch preached judgment to them prior to this (Jude 1:14-15). They had plenty of warnings, but they, like Satan, did not believe God's Word. So, too, in the tribulation period, the little flock will preach the gospel, and the two witnesses will testify against apostate Israel for 3 ½ years (Revelation 11:3-4). Yet, because of their unbelief, the Jews will continue their lives as if no judgment is coming upon them.

17:28-29 The same thing happened in Sodom. Note that, while God did completely destroy the earth in Noah's day and Sodom in Lot's day, both Noah and Lot were spared. As such, they are types of the little flock. Apostate Israel will be destroyed by the Lord Jesus Christ at His second coming, but a believing remnant of Israel will make it into God's kingdom.

It is also interesting to note that the people of Noah's day "married wives" and "were given in marriage." It is not said the people of Sodom did this, probably because they were homosexuals. They had deteriorated to a state worse than Noah's day. In both cases, God's judgment came due to rampant sexual immorality. Similarly, God's judgment against Babylon at the end of the tribulation period will be due to spiritual fornication (Revelation 17:1-2,5).

17:30 Although Jesus told His disciples signs of the end times (Matthew 24), and they could watch for those signs (Matthew 25:13) in order to tell Israel that Jesus is about to come (Matthew 25:6), God's judgment will catch people by surprise (Matthew 24:39), because of their unbelief in God's Word. Therefore, the Son of man's coming is not “revealed” to the unbelievers until it is too late. All they will be able to do is run to the mountains and rocks in hopes that they will hide them from the Lamb's wrath (Revelation 6:16-17).

17:31-32 Because Jesus' second coming will catch unbelievers by surprise, they will not even have time to believe the gospel to make it into the kingdom (Matthew 25:8-10). Even believers, who have not been watching, will have just enough time to abandon religion and enter the kingdom (Matthew 25:6-10). That is what Jesus is referring to when He says not to go into the house to get stuff. If they go to the Antichrist's system when the call is made that Jesus is there, they will be taken in judgment because they are not trusting in God's Word to them. They only have just enough time to be

restored under the gospel of the kingdom before Jesus comes. As Lot is a type of believers being saved at the end of the tribulation period, Lot's wife is a type of unbelievers, who was warned but did not believe. Lot's wife received the same judgment as the rest of Sodom did, and unbelieving Jews will receive the same judgment as unbelieving Gentiles receive.

17:33 In the tribulation period, those, seeking to save their physical lives, will deny Christ by worshipping the image in order to keep from being killed (Revelation 13:15). But, they will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 14:9-11). Those, giving their physical lives for Christ's sake, will have everlasting life in God's eternal kingdom on earth (Revelation 6:9-11).

17:34-37 For today's dispensation of grace, the rapture of the body of Christ is the catching up away of the saved to dwell with the Lord forever in heaven. However, these verses are referring to Israel's kingdom program. The context shows that the people are taken away in judgment (17:27,29). Therefore, it is the believers who stay on the earth and enter God's kingdom, while the unbelievers are taken away in judgment. They are taken to a place where birds will devour their bodies (17:37). This is the great supper of the birds spoken of in Revelation 19:17-18, which precedes the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-9).

Christians often use the parallel passage of Matthew 24:40-41 to say that this refers to the rapture of the body of Christ. They do not use the Luke passage for this, because they would have to explain why God would pick up the raptured people and then have them devoured by eagles!

The fact, that two men are in a bed, may refer to rampant homosexuality, as was found in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. In fact, the Antichrist himself may be homosexual since Daniel 11:37 says that he will not regard "the desire of women."

18 Faith in God's Word (vs. 35-43), enduring to the end of the tribulation period (vs. 1-8), is the only way to make it into God's kingdom. All self-righteous people will not make it into the kingdom (vs. 9-30).

18:1 For once, the meaning of a parable is given BEFORE it is told, even though it relates to the situation of not being able to find Jesus during the tribulation period, which was just told in 17:22-37. Jesus tells His disciples that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint." However, Jesus previously told them to "ask and it shall be given you" (11:9). While it is true that God the Father will give the little flock what they need, part of what they need is spiritual growth. For example, they will not be able to overcome religion until they go through some prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:21). Therefore, they can ask God the Father for food, but He will not provide it right away. They need to ask Him over and over for their necessary food. In doing so, both prayer and fasting will be accomplished at the same time, which build their trust in God's Word. Eventually, God the Father will give them the food

they need, but, in delaying fulfilling their physical need, He meets their spiritual need. It will seem to the little flock that the tribulation period will never end, but their faith in God's promises to them will keep them from fainting during this time.

18:2 The phrase "neither regarded man" is key to note. The Pharisees devoured widows' houses (20:47). The way they did it was by their influence, either political or monetary, over judges. Therefore, most judges, at that time, would not have avenged the widow, but the judge in the parable does because he is not partial to the religious crowd.

18:2-8 This parable shows an impartial, unjust judge taking care of a woman with no husband. The little flock's situation during the tribulation period is also as if they do not have a husband, because Christ will not be found (17:22-23). The difference is that they have a partial judge. God is partial to the little flock in Israel, since the middle wall of partition is still up for them (Ephesians 2:14). And, He is a just judge, punishing apostate Israel with destruction (17:33-37). Therefore, if an impartial, unjust judge gives a woman what she requests, how much more will a partial, just Judge give His people a place in God's kingdom. The problem, though, is that many, who believe the gospel of the kingdom, will not pray and will faint as a result (18:1). Therefore, when Jesus comes back, He will not find many with faith in God's Word (18:8), who endured unto the end of the tribulation period (Matthew 24:13).

18:7-8 Note how God will "bear long" with the little flock, even though He wants to "avenge them speedily." God will "bear long" with the little flock's lack of faith that can only be built up by the prayer and fasting they do during the refiner's fire of the tribulation period (Malachi 3:2-3). That fire will purge out many people, such that it will be hard for the Lord Jesus Christ to find faith on the earth at His second coming.

God tried to bless Israel into the kingdom under Moses, but Israel did not believe. Therefore, the only way to bring them into the kingdom is by punishing them with the tribulation period. However, if the punishment is too severe, Israel will side with Satan. Therefore, it takes the wisdom of God to know just the right amount of punishment so that all Israel is saved (Romans 11:26).

18:9-14 Jesus spoke parables so that only His disciples would understand them (Matthew 13:10-11). But, in this case, Jesus speaks a clear parable to the unbelievers in the crowd, who were self-righteous and despised others. Those two qualities go hand in hand. When someone thinks he is righteous based upon his own good deeds, by default, he thinks that anyone, who does not do those same good deeds, is beneath him. (This parable is the perfect explanation of why most of Christen-DUMB will not make it into heaven.) Jesus speaks to them to show them that the only way into God's kingdom is God's imputed righteousness through believing the gospel and

being water baptized, not through the self righteousness of the Pharisees. Their being Pharisees is probably why He specifically uses a Pharisee and a publican (someone the Pharisees despised). This parable shows them that justification by God comes only through imputed righteousness. No one will make it into God's kingdom by works. In fact, II Chronicles 7:14 says that Israel must "humble themselves, and pray" in order to be forgiven of their sin, much like this publican does here.

18:12-14 Note that the Pharisee claims he is just based upon his works, while the publican knows he is not just and pleads for God's mercy. God only justifies those who have faith in Him.

18:15-17 The disciples rebuked the people from bringing infants to Jesus. God lights everyone, who comes into the world (John 1:9), with the knowledge that God exists and He should be worshipped (Romans 1:19-21). Man comes along and indoctrinates children in "the course of this world" (Ephesians 2:2), which is brought to them by "the god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4), Satan. Adults, then, become hardened to their knowledge of God and do not believe.

Having faith in God is the only way you can please Him (Hebrews 11:6). Therefore, Jesus uses little children as examples to the adults. They need to go back to their child status by having faith in what God has told them, without trying to rationalize it away through the course of this world. Therefore, Jesus tells the disciples to allow the children to come unto Him, because they are the examples the disciples should be following, not the Pharisees and their religion. The only way to get into the kingdom of God is to have God's imputed righteousness. That requires believing the gospel, which means having faith in God over what man says. This is how someone receives "the kingdom of God as a little child." He trusts in God to bring him into the kingdom, rather than trusting in self-righteousness.

18:17-18 The contrast in these two verses is amazing, showing that people were not hearing what Jesus was saying. In verse 17, Jesus says that they will not have eternal life in the kingdom of God without having faith in the gospel of the kingdom. In verse 18, a man asks what he can DO to have eternal life, when Jesus just got through saying that there is nothing a man can DO to inherit eternal life. It goes to show you that people believe what they want to believe, which usually is not the truth.

18:19 Jesus reiterates to the man that there is nothing he can DO to have eternal life, although He words it in such a way that only someone with ears to hear would understand that is what He is saying. God will only let someone enter His kingdom, apart from His imputed righteousness, if they have had "patient continuance in well doing" (Romans 2:7). Therefore, He said: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). By telling this ruler that: "none is good, save One, that is, God," He is saying that no one meets this perfect standard and must

have God's imputed righteousness to make it into God's kingdom. Therefore, no one, except God, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, will receive eternal life based upon his own merits. The rich man, then, needs to believe the gospel of the kingdom, instead of trying to work his way into the kingdom.

18:20 To further drive home the point, Jesus mentions five commandments. Breaking any one of them means not inheriting eternal life (James 2:10). All have broken at least one of these commandments, because the disobedience occurs in the heart (Matthew 5:21-48). Therefore, this man is guilty under the law, just like everyone else in Jesus' audience.

18:21 Nevertheless, he maintains his innocence. He chooses to ignore Jesus' message and believe the Pharisees' message that he is righteous on his own because of his own good works (18:11-12).

18:22 Therefore, Jesus gives him another command. Jesus is not just making stuff up to show his heart is not right, as most Christians claim He is doing here. In 12:33, He COMMANDED the little flock to "sell that ye have, and give alms." This is a command, not a suggestion. If you want to follow the red letters of Jesus, you must do this. Thankfully, this command is only to Israel during the at-hand phase of the kingdom. It is not to us today. The reason Jesus commanded them to sell all that they have is because their possessions will not do them any good during the Great Tribulation since their possessions will be taken away from them for not taking the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17). Another reason is that giving up those possessions now will make it much easier not to take the mark of the beast, because they have already given up the things of this world for the things of the kingdom. Therefore, a future decision in the same vein will come much easier. Since this ruler is very rich, Jesus gives him this same command to sell all of his possessions, give them to the poor, and follow Him.

18:23 This ruler's response is to hang on to his material possessions, rather than give them up in favor of spiritual life and wealth in God's kingdom.

18:24-27 For hundreds of years, Christians have explained verse 25 by saying that there was a gate in Jerusalem that was too short for a camel to walk through. All baggage would need to be removed, and the camel would squat down to get through it. However, there is no evidence of this being true. It was propagated to try to come to a different conclusion than what Jesus said. Jesus was referring to a literal sewing needle. You may say, "It is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a sewing needle." That is correct. You got Jesus' point. His point is that "the things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (v. 27). Just like it is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, it is impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. Why? Because the only way a person can

maintain their riches through the end of the tribulation period is to take the mark of the beast, and all those who do this will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 14:9-11). Granted, they could keep their riches until halfway through the tribulation period, but, if they did that, they would be more likely to take the mark of the beast. They also would not be able to use their riches to further the gospel of the kingdom. Hence, the command to "sell that ye have, and give alms" (12:33). In verses 26-27, Jesus reiterates His point that the only way to be saved is to believe the gospel of the kingdom. No one will enter God's kingdom on the basis of his own works.

18:28-30 I can just imagine Peter's thinking when Jesus said that rich men will not make it into God's kingdom. "No worries here. I have already given up everything I had." Peter asks what he will get for giving up all that he had to follow Jesus. Jesus' answer is that he will "receive manifold more in the present time." This refers not to material wealth, because the little flock will be poor during the tribulation period. Rather, Jesus is talking spiritually. The disciples will preach the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of Israel, and some of them will believe. Those are the "manifold more in the present time." They are "manifold more" because the family of the little flock is what is real and will last forever. Physical family is not what is real, as Jesus said, "Who is My mother, or My brethren? ... For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother" (Mark 3:33,35). He said this in response to His mother, Mary, and His physical half-brothers, paying Him a visit!

Also, the little flock will receive increased authority in God's eternal kingdom for giving up all they have, which is a far greater reward than any material possession they gave up to get it, because the kingdom treasure lasts forever, while the material possession will pass away (Matthew 6:19-21, 24:35). They will also receive eternal life in that world to come, i.e., in God's kingdom.

18:31-34 Now that Jesus has said that bringing people into God's kingdom is only possible with God, Jesus tells His 12 disciples how God will bring this about. It is the Son of man who will die, not Jesus as God. I Corinthians 15:3-4 tells us that the gospel for today is to believe in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection on the third day. However, when Jesus tells His 12 apostles that He will die and rise from the dead on the third day, we are told THREE times in 18:34 that they had no idea what He was talking about. Yet, about two years prior, these same, twelve men "went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where" (Luke 9:6). This tells us that the gospel they preached was different from the gospel for today. Their gospel was to abandon religion, go back to following God's law covenant, confess their sins, and be water baptized (Matthew 3:6, Mark 1:14-15, and Acts 2:38). They preached a different gospel—the gospel of the kingdom—instead of today's gospel—the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24).

This also shows that, even Jesus' closest followers, were in unbelief, regarding what the Messiah would do at His first coming. In fact, they did not know that Jesus would rise from the dead until after He had already done so (John 20:9). Why, then, do Christians insist that there is only one gospel? Because, if there is only one gospel, they can twist the gospel of grace and make it a works gospel so that you need to go to their church and serve the Lord in order to maintain your salvation, which ultimately results in more money in their pockets. Therefore, "for the love of money..., they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:10).

Note also, from 18:31, that Jesus' death was prophesied in the Old Testament. However, the cross was never mentioned there. Also, before He went to the cross, Jesus never used the word "cross" to refer to His death. "What, or what manner of time" of Jesus' sufferings were not revealed to anyone before the cross (I Peter 1:10-12), because, if Satan's forces learned of it, they "would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (I Corinthians 2:8). Ultimately, it was the unbelief of the disciples that kept them from understanding His death beforehand, but the cross was also hidden from them so that Satan would have Jesus crucified.

18:35 This blind man represents the spiritual state of the nation of Israel. Jesus has come to save them, but they do not have the eyes to see the salvation of the Lord, nor had they been waiting for it, as they should have been (Lamentations 3:26).

18:37-38 This blind man, though, also represents the believing remnant. While he could not see physically, he did see spiritually. He recognizes Him as the "Son of David," fulfilling the Davidic covenant (II Samuel 7:13). Granted, Jesus will not take the throne as the Son of David until His second coming, but the man does believe the gospel, because Jesus recognizes that He has saving faith (18:42).

18:39 Those, rebuking the blind man, are hindering people from making it into God's kingdom. They are like the lawyers of 11:52. The disciples were doing this with little children in 18:15, and Jesus told them not to because faith like a little child is required to make it into God's kingdom (18:16-17). Here is a man with faith in God, and people are hindering him from making it into God's kingdom. As such, they are a type of the Jewish religion.

18:42-43 Jesus gives the blind man double vision. He can now see physically, but he also now has the eyes to see spiritually to see the mysteries of the kingdom. This is seen by his following Christ as one of His disciples. This is what God wanted to do for the whole nation of Israel.

19 Jesus enters Jerusalem as the complete, Passover-Lamb sacrifice (vs. 28-40), but Jerusalem is still apostate (vs. 41-44). Therefore, the kingdom of God cannot come yet (v. 11). Instead, after Jesus leaves, the little flock must

preach the gospel of the kingdom so that Israel may be saved and enter the kingdom (vs. 11-27). Zaccheus is given as an example of a lost sheep of Israel being found (vs. 1-10).

19:1-10 Zaccheus is a picture of how a rich man can enter into God's kingdom. It is only possible with God (18:24-27). The main characters we see in the gospels among the Jews are human good, represented by the religious leaders, and human evil, represented by publicans and sinners. You would think that the religious leaders would be the ones making it into God's kingdom. However, it is the publicans and sinners who listen to Jesus (15:1), while the religious leaders criticize Him (15:2). Zaccheus "was the chief among the publicans," which made him rich (19:2). Yet, he gave up his material riches (19:8) for spiritual riches in God's kingdom (19:9). By contrast, the rich, religious leader held on to his riches and will not make it into God's kingdom (18:22-23). Just like today, the human evil people are easier to reach with the gospel because they know they are evil, while the human good people are very difficult to reach because they think they will make it into God's kingdom through their own efforts (18:11-12).

19:3-4 The crowd of people around Jesus is a sign of how religion was trying to keep the lost sheep of the house of Israel from making it into God's kingdom. Yet, if the Jews looked up to God by believing the gospel of the kingdom, the religious leaders could not stop them from making it into the kingdom. This is pictured by Zaccheus' climbing into the sycamore tree and the sick of the palsy's going through the roof (5:19). As such, believing Israel had to go high and low to get to Jesus.

19:5-6 Note the use of the term "the place." Jesus was doing the will of His Father by going to the lost sheep of the house of Israel to save them (19:10). He knew that this was "the place" where one of the lost sheep would be found. Also note that Jesus says "to day" He must abide at his house. "To day" is a phrase used in Hebrews to refer to the time of salvation being right then (Hebrews 3:7,13,15,4:7), and so it was for Zaccheus. "To day" Jesus abode at Zaccheus' house so that, in eternity, Zaccheus could abide in the Father's house (John 14:2).

Also, note that Zaccheus "received Him joyfully." What a contrast this is with unbelieving Israel, which "received Him not" (John 1:11).

19:7 Again, we see that the people, trying to keep a lost sheep of the house of Israel from being saved, are the Jewish religious leaders.

19:8 Jesus told the rich, young ruler to "sell ALL that thou hast" (18:22). So, why was Jesus pleased that Zaccheus sold only half of his goods? It is because Zaccheus also had to obey the Mosaic law to restore fourfold what he had stolen. God's law says that he was to restore fourfold for stealing a sheep (Exodus 22:1), and Israel were like sheep (15:4-7). Therefore, Zaccheus immediately sold half of his goods and gave them to the poor, and

he used the other half to obey the Mosaic law.

19:9-10 Note that the reason Jesus went to Zaccheus' house was because he was "a son of Abraham." If he was not a Jew, Jesus would not have gone to his house, because Jesus was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24). These are the ones He came to save, not the Gentiles. However, the Gentiles will be saved through the Jews' ministry in the millennial kingdom, which is why 2:32 says that Jesus is "a light to lighten the Gentiles." (Lest anyone accuse Jesus of being sexist, 13:16 shows Jesus healing "a daughter of Abraham.")

19:11 Jesus told the Pharisees that "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (17:20). However, Jesus' disciples think "that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." Therefore, Jesus tells them a parable to let them know that He must go away and they must work for Him until He comes back before He will set up the kingdom. Yet, when He comes into Jerusalem, the people following Him say "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord" (19:38). Jesus' disciples are not listening! Instead, they should have cried, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

19:12 Remember from the preceding verse that the reason Jesus is telling them this parable is to let them know that the kingdom of God will not appear until His second coming. Therefore, this verse is NOT saying that Jesus went to earth to receive a kingdom and return back to heaven with it. Rather, the far country in the parable is heaven, and His return trip is His second coming to the earth. I Corinthians 15:27-28 says that God the Father will subdue all things under Jesus. With this background information, we can now understand Luke 19:12. The nobleman is the Lord Jesus Christ. After His death, burial, and resurrection, He will travel to a far country (heaven) to receive a kingdom from God the Father. He will then return to the earth and rule and reign forever in His kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14 and 2:44). Given this order of events, the kingdom of God will not immediately appear for His disciples as they are anticipating in 19:11.

19:13 The ten servants represent the little flock going to the ten, northern tribes of Israel in the tribulation period. The ten pounds represent the gospel message that they carry to Israel during that time. "Occupy till I come" means that they are to carry that gospel message throughout all of Israel so that all of the lost sheep of Israel will be saved (Romans 11:26).

19:14 The citizens of Israel are the Jewish religious leaders, and they send a message to God the Father that the Lord Jesus Christ will not rule over them. They send this message by rejecting the ministry of the Holy Ghost through the little flock in Acts 2-7, culminating in the stoning of Stephen.

Furthermore, the Pharisees' use of the phrase "this man," in referring to Jesus, probably indicates that they believe that, not only is Jesus not the

Messiah, but that they are also better than He is, because they do not associate with publicans and sinners like He did. That is the nastiness of religion!

19:15 God the Father gives the kingdom to God the Son in heaven. (Hebrews 2:7-8 says that all things will be put under Jesus' feet, but that is not seen at this time, since Satan is still "the god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4).) Jesus then comes back to earth and sees how His servants fared in bringing others into the kingdom through the gospel.

19:16-17 The more people a servant brings into God's kingdom through the gospel, the more people that servant will rule over in God's kingdom on earth. ("THY pound" indicates that it is God, Who ultimately brings the people into the kingdom.) This servant brings enough people into God's kingdom to be the ruler over ten cities. We see an explanation of this kingdom reign in Jeremiah 33:12-13, where we are told that the shepherds (the faithful little flock during the tribulation period) will cause their flocks to lie down in many cities (the cities they rule over in the kingdom).

19:18-19 Another servant does not do as well as the first servant in bringing people into God's kingdom. Therefore, his reward is not as great. But, he has still done well, because he has shared the gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

19:20 This next person represents someone, who did not preach the gospel of the kingdom at all during the tribulation period. He took the gospel message and put it in a napkin. The only other two times the word "napkin" is used in the Bible are in reference to wrapping a dead body in it (John 11:44 and 20:7). The Matthew account says that this man hid the talent in the earth, and it is still there (Matthew 25:25), which would indicate that he buried it, like a dead body. Therefore, this person is an unbeliever. He heard the gospel message, but he did not believe it, meaning he considered the gospel to be dead, which is why he wrapped it up in a napkin and buried it. That is why he is called a "wicked servant" (v. 22), and, in the Matthew account, this man is cast outside God's kingdom (Matthew 25:30).

19:21 This man's fear is a result of believing the religious leaders over the gospel of the kingdom. This man is afraid that God will not let him into His kingdom because his works are not good enough. Therefore, he abandons the gospel and tries to work his way into God's kingdom. In other words, he knows that God is a hard man; therefore, he tries to meet God's perfect standard himself, rather than trusting in God to do the work for him.

19:22 Because the man tries to get into God's kingdom by his works, he is judged by his works, as Revelation 20:12 says will happen with all unbelievers. That is why Jesus says here: "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee."

19:23 What this statement means is that, rather than abandoning the gospel and trying to work his way into God's kingdom, the man should have at least believed the gospel and studied God's Word so that he would have at least grown spiritually during the tribulation and made it into the kingdom, even if he did not bring anyone else into the kingdom with him. His making it into the kingdom represents the pound, while the usury represents his spiritual growth through faith in God's Word.

19:24-25 We are not told who is standing by here. However, based on their statement, in 19:25, it is probably the other, nine servants. It shows that, even these servants have a works mentality, such that they do not understand why the religious man gets nothing, while the faith man gets more than anyone else. This shows that God's government operates on spiritual laws, rather than on man's reasoning (Romans 8:2).

19:26 The Lord Jesus Christ will reward those who work for Him during the tribulation period, including receiving the rewards that other Jews would have received if they believed the gospel and worked for the Lord Jesus Christ during the tribulation period, also. Thus, the "hath not" refers to not bringing other Jews into the kingdom, and "even that he hath" refers to his place in God's kingdom. Therefore, God has a governmental position in His eternal kingdom on earth for every Jew, and the positions of the unbelieving Jews will be given to the believing Jews, such that they have greater authority in the kingdom, as a result.

19:27 Finally, Jesus deals with the Jewish religious leaders. Not only will they not make it into God's kingdom, but Jesus will also kill them at His second coming (Revelation 19:15) in punishment for them leading Israel astray during the tribulation period.

19:11-27 Keep in mind that Jesus told this parable to tell His followers that He would not set up His kingdom at His first coming. The reason is to give every Jew the opportunity to believe and take His position in the kingdom. Therefore, the current believers are called to preach the gospel so that other Jews may believe, and their reward for doing this will be a higher position in God's kingdom, since many will not believe anyway.

19:28 I like the term "ascending up" here, because it shows that, in order to ascend up to the Father and receive the kingdom from Him, He must ascend up to Jerusalem and die.

19:29 The Mount of Olives is where the Lord Jesus Christ will return to fight against the nations at His second coming (Zechariah 14:4). At His first coming though, He is at the Mount of Olives, to save His enemies by having them destroy the temple of His body.

19:30-31 The colt has never been ridden because it is too small to ride (Zechariah 9:9). As such, this colt symbolizes how the nation of Israel is not

ready to receive their Messiah. Jesus' loosing of the colt symbolizes how His death will loose Israel from being Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24-25).

19:35 You can see that the colt is too small to ride in how the disciples carefully put Jesus on the colt.

19:37-38 Jesus' disciples do not praise Him for the gospel. They praise Him for the physical miracles He did. They also have not learned from the parable that He just told them that the kingdom of God is not coming right now (19:11-27) for they see Him as the conquering King, coming to overthrow the Roman government and establish God's kingdom right then, just as they thought before the parable in 19:11.

However, one thing the disciples say is of note. In 2:14 at Jesus' birth, the heavenly host say, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Now, in 19:38 just before Jesus' death, the disciples say, "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." Jesus' birth meant that Peace was on earth, but His death does not bring peace on earth at that time, because of the unbelief of Israel. The peace, then, is in heaven, because Jesus' sacrifice is brought into the heavenly tabernacle to atone for Israel's sins (Hebrews 9:24,28), but Satan is still the prince over the earth (John 14:30).

19:39-40 "Master, rebuke Thy disciples" is like saying "Not so, Lord" (Acts 10:14). Both statements are contradictory. If Jesus were really the Pharisees' master, they would not rebuke Him for not rebuking His disciples.

Scriptural background for the stones crying out: In Genesis 28:22, Jacob declared that "this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house." Exodus 28:11 says there were two stones with the names of Israel engraved upon them that were part of the priest's outfit. They were memorial stones for Israel (Exodus 39:7). Exodus 39:14 says there were 12 stones on the priest's breastplate, one for each tribe of Israel. In Deuteronomy 27:1-8, God commanded Israel to build an altar of stones once they got into the Promised Land and write all the words of the law on it. In Joshua 4:5-9, God had Israel set up 12 stones in the midst of Jordan as a testimony to God's deliverance of Israel through the Jordan. In I Kings 18:31-32, Elijah built an altar to God with 12 stones, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. In I Peter 2:5, the believing remnant of Israel are called "lively stones." In Matthew 3:9, John the Baptist says that God is "able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

The point: The point of mentioning these scriptures is that God set up stones to represent the 12 tribes of Israel, and God's deliverance of them from Satan's kingdom. Israel should not think that they will make it into God's kingdom because they are Jews (John 8:39-44). They have to believe the gospel of the kingdom and trust in God to bring them into the kingdom.

If no one is willing to do this, God could raise up stones to be the new nation of Israel. The point to the Pharisees, then, is that they should be thankful that there is a believing remnant in Israel. Otherwise, the whole nation would be lost, and God would raise up a new nation of Israel from stones. And, let us not forget the most important Stone of all, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the chief corner stone (I Peter 2:6) upon which God's entire building is based.

19:41-44 Jesus weeps over Jerusalem. God has chosen Jerusalem to be His city from which He will rule the entire world (Psalm 48:1-2). Since the kingdom of God was at hand (Matthew 3:2 and 4:17), Jerusalem had the perfect opportunity to believe the gospel and come into God's kingdom, which is why Jesus said that this was Jerusalem's day. Instead, they will crucify their Messiah and continue in apostasy. As a result, Jerusalem must be torn apart. It must go through the tribulation period so that there will actually be a believing remnant to go into God's kingdom. In other words, Jesus weeps because of Jerusalem's unbelief, which will cause it to go through great affliction in order to believe and for God's kingdom to be established on the earth with Israel ruling and reigning with Him.

19:45-48 Although Jerusalem will have to go through the tribulation period before the city as a whole will believe the gospel and enter God's kingdom, there are still some lost sheep of Israel there. Therefore, Jesus goes to them. However, the religiosity of Jerusalem is so great that He cannot even teach in the temple. He must first throw out the Jewish religious leaders with their money making schemes. He did this a few years before at the beginning of His earthly ministry (John 2:12-16), and now He has to do it again before He cannot even preach the gospel of the kingdom there.

The religious leaders are upset over Him taking away their source of income. Therefore, they want to kill Him, but they will have to be crafty in doing so, because the people are listening to Him. Therefore, Jesus does have a captive audience. Most are only there for the entertainment value that Jesus brings, but there must be at least a few who believe the gospel of the kingdom as a result. Jesus, following His Own parable, has left the 99 righteous to find the lost sheep there in Jerusalem (15:4-7).

God's house will be a house of prayer in the kingdom (Isaiah 56:7). A prayer is a petition to God. God will dwell in the temple in the kingdom, and so people can come to Him with their requests. Today, our bodies are the temple of God (I Corinthians 3:16), because the Holy Spirit dwells within us (Romans 5:5). Therefore, we can constantly talk to God within ourselves, and He hears us.

20 Jesus teaches in the temple that God will destroy the Jewish religious leaders (vs. 9-18). Therefore, the religious leaders try to trap Jesus with questions so as to have Him crucified (vs. 19-40). Instead, Jesus traps them in a question (vs. 41-44), showing to all that they need to repent, i.e.,

abandon religion in favor of God's law covenant with them (vs. 45-47).

20:1 Jesus is preaching the gospel in Jerusalem so that the lost sheep of Israel might be saved, and He is teaching to edify the little flock. He does this “daily in the temple” (19:47) until He is arrested and crucified.

20:2 Religion does not ask if what is being said is true. Religion asks what organization or what person gives you the right to teach others. The Jewish religious leaders are asking Jesus for His credentials. What accredited school of the Pharisees did You graduate from, and who gave You the authorization to preach in this temple? Jesus' authority comes from God the Father. He is speaking truth, while the Pharisees taught lies. However, if Jesus told them this, He would have been kicked out, and His goal is to reach the lost sheep of Israel and edify the little flock (20:1). Therefore, He will not talk about His authority to them (20:8).

Bible believers today face the same questions that Jesus faced. A big church will not let you speak to the audience if you do not have the right degree and the right connections, especially if you preach the truth and they preach lies. Paul had this same problem with the Corinthians, to which he responded, “need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?” (II Corinthians 3:1).

20:3-8 Jesus does not flat out refuse to answer the Pharisees' question for two reasons: 1) He wants to keep preaching the gospel in the temple, because that is where lost sheep of Israel would go, and 2) He also wants to convict the hearts of the religious leaders in case any of them are lost sheep of Israel. Jesus will not lose one sheep that His Father gives Him (John 17:12). (Jesus said some pretty offensive things (Matthew 15:12-14), and yet the only ones offended, apparently, were unbelievers (Matthew 11:6). This shows that we should not be worried about hurting people's feelings. Just give them the truth.) Jesus brings them back to the beginning of the gospel of the kingdom being preached with John the Baptist so that they realize that they will not make it into the kingdom of God because they do not believe that gospel. This gives them the opportunity to believe, but they reject God's kingdom offer again, as they want to make it into the kingdom by their own works, not by God's grace. Really, though, they are not even concerned with God's kingdom. They are just concerned with what people think about them so that they can continue to prosper materially.

20:6 Although the Jewish religious leaders thought they had power over the common Jews, the common Jews could have gotten rid of the religious leaders at any time. That is why Jesus said that, if "ye shall say unto this mountain [the Jewish religious system], Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea [Satan's realm]; it shall be done" (Matthew 21:21), which Jesus told His disciples just before He entered the temple at this time in Luke 20.

20:9-19 Jesus' not answering the religious leaders' question gives Him the

time to tell the common Jews that He is the Messiah, Who has come to save Israel, and they will be destroyed if they do not believe the gospel of the kingdom that He has just preached to them (20:1). Jesus speaks these words in parable form, so that only those, with ears to hear, will understand (Matthew 13:9). However, even the blind Pharisees get the message that He is saying that God will destroy them (20:19). Therefore, all those listening should know that Jesus is warning them to abandon religion and obey God's law covenant with Israel instead.

The parable's interpretation is that the "certain man" is God the Father, and the vineyard He planted was Israel (v. 9). The Jews could figure that out if they know Isaiah 5:7. The husbandmen are the Jewish religious leaders, and the far country is heaven (v. 9). The servants He sends are the prophets (v. 10). The Jewish religious leaders are not leading anyone into God's kingdom as evidenced by the lack of fruit in Israel (v. 10). Not only that, but they are persecuting and killing God's prophets (vs. 11-12). Finally, God the Father sends God the Son to Israel to find fruit (v. 13), i.e., believing Jews ready to enter God's kingdom (13:6-7). The Jewish religious leaders decide to kill their Messiah so that Israel will belong to Satan (v. 14). Casting Jesus "out of the vineyard" and killing Him in order to get Israel for Satan (v. 15) is seen in the fact that Jesus was crucified outside of the city of Jerusalem (Hebrews 13:12). (We see this in type in the Old Testament in that a live goat was sent outside of the city with the sins of the people on him (Leviticus 16:21-22). Also, the goat that was sacrificed in the holy place was to have his blood brought outside the camp (Leviticus 16:27).) Destroying the husbandmen means that God will throw the Jewish religious leaders outside of the kingdom and into the lake of fire (v. 16), while giving the kingdom to the little flock (Matthew 21:43 and Luke 12:32).

20:14 This is a key verse to understand the Pharisees' treatment of Jesus. From this verse, we see that they recognized the Lord Jesus Christ as God's Son, because they said "this is the Heir." The earth belongs to God the Father (Exodus 19:5), and He has appointed His Son "heir of all things" (Hebrews 1:2). By contrast, the Pharisees are of the devil (John 8:44). As children of the devil, the Pharisees recognize that, if they kill God the Son, the earth will belong to Satan. However, what they do not recognize is that killing the Messiah was the way for God the Father to reclaim the earth from the devil, not to solidify Satan's stronghold over the earth. If Satan recognized this, he "would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (I Corinthians 2:8).

20:16-18 Based upon their reaction, here, of "God forbid" (v. 16), the Pharisees know that Jesus just told them that God the Father will not let them into God's kingdom. But, God will not forbid this from happening, because the scripture must be fulfilled. Psalm 118:22 says that the stone (the Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 10:4)), rejected by the Jewish religious leaders, is now the head. Since the Lord Jesus Christ will be the head of God's kingdom, the Jewish religious will not be a part of that kingdom. Note

that the title of the Jewish religious leaders changed from husbandmen to builders in this verse. They were God's husbandmen, put in charge of teaching the people God's law covenant and encouraging the people to obey it. Instead, they "built" their own religious system. They, then, rejected God's Messiah as part of their building. Therefore, the Jewish religious leaders WERE God's husbandmen, but now they are Satan's builders.

Verse 18 refers to the two comings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those, who believe the gospel of the kingdom, are the ones who are broken by the Stone. In other words, they recognize their own righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), and so their pride in their own flesh is broken by the Stone's perfect sacrifice on the cross for their sins at Jesus' first coming. Those, who are grounded to powder by the Stone, are the ones who refuse to believe the gospel. Therefore, at Jesus' second coming, they will be destroyed (Revelation 19:15).

20:19-20 Jesus' clear indictment of the Pharisees in front of the common Jews has caused them to try, even more so, to destroy the Messiah, because they realize that Satan's building, which they have built, will crumble under God's building if they do not do something. Nevertheless, they cannot kill Him on the spot, or else the common Jews will not follow them. Therefore, they do what any good follower of Satan would do—they do their daddy's work by pretending to be ministers of righteousness so as to deliver Jesus up to be killed under a righteous pretense (II Corinthians 11:14-15). "Feign themselves just men" is exactly what all religious people do, so that men will think they are good people (Matthew 6:2,5), when "there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psalm 14:3, 53:3 and Romans 3:12).

20:20-22 20:20 tells us that the Pharisees' question is specifically designed to get Jesus to say not to give tribute to Caesar so that they can deliver Him to the governor to be killed for treason. Therefore, they give Jesus false compliments in verse 21 to make Jesus prideful, but Jesus will not yield to their temptation.

20:23-25 In spite of the fact that Jesus knows that they are only trying to tempt Him, Jesus still answers the question. Jesus gives the best answer He could give. He tells them that tribute should be paid both to Caesar and to God, since the Roman law requires taxes be paid to Caesar and God's law requires tithes be paid to the Levites. In answering in this way, not only does Jesus avoid speaking incorrectly, but He also exposes the Pharisees' lack in that they have not rendered to God what belongs to Him, i.e., repentant hearts.

20:26 Because Jesus gave such a brilliant answer and there are people around Jesus wanting miracles, these wolves in sheep's clothing do not have a chance to "take hold of His words" to try to twist them into something they can accuse Him of before the governor. But, no matter because, when they do finally arrest Jesus and bring Him before the governor, they will accuse

Him of "forbidding to give tribute to Caesar" (23:2), which is something Jesus never said. Religious people have no problem lying, which is why they have a problem when others speak the truth.

20:27-33 Everyone wants Jesus' time for various reasons. The Pharisees want to trap Him in His words so that they have justification to kill Him; the common Jews want Him to perform miracles; and the Sadducees want to twist God's law to try to prove their doctrine of resurrection not existing and they are looking for Jesus' stamp of approval on their liberal, religious views.

The Sadducees are "sad, you see," because they do not have hope in the resurrection. Believing in the resurrection is absolutely fundamental to having faith in God's promises, because God's promises are not fulfilled until after this life is over. Hebrews 11:13 says, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." If a Jew does not believe in the resurrection, he will take the mark of the beast and worship the image of the beast, because there is nothing to look forward to, outside of this life. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (I Corinthians 15:19).

Since the Sadducees start with false doctrine, their question to Jesus is seriously flawed. Marriage is something that God instituted for this life only to: 1) Separate out the sin nature to be passed on through the man to make the virgin birth of Jesus Christ possible, 2) Put a check on the sin nature to keep society functioning morally, 3) Cause us to learn from a different perspective, and 4) Give a solid basis for the family. Once this life is over and the sin nature is gone, the purposes for marriage go away. Therefore, in the resurrection, there is no marriage. However, because the Sadducees believe bad doctrine, they do not understand this, and seek to use their bad doctrine about marriage to prove that their bad doctrine of there not being a resurrection is correct.

20:34-36 If Jesus' words in Luke are to be applied to us today, Jesus is telling us that people lose their salvation by marrying someone after they have believed the gospel, because He says that "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain" the world to come "neither marry, nor are given in marriage." Previously, Jesus told a man that he was not "fit for the kingdom of God" if he so much as went back home and told his family farewell (9:61-62). Certainly, then, during the at-hand phase of the kingdom, getting married is something that is only for "the children of this world" (20:34). No believer would get married at that time. Therefore, if someone is trying to obey God's instructions in Matthew – John, they are not to get married, because they would lose their salvation by doing so.

While this prohibition against marriage is not for today, as Paul speaks out against such a command in I Timothy 4:3, this command not to marry

makes perfect sense when applied to the tribulation saints. Jesus said that "if any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (14:26). He also said that he that "loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:37). The reason is because family members will join apostate Israel. Even if they do not join apostate Israel, they will still distract the little flock from going from city to city, preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

Therefore, DURING THE AT-HAND PHASE OF THE KINGDOM, those, who marry, are looking for rewards on this earth and joining themselves with the Antichrist's kingdom, while those, not marrying, are doing God's will. Therefore, they "shall be accounted worthy to obtain" God's eternal kingdom on earth ("that world"). Because they have eternal life, they cannot die (spiritually speaking) (v. 36). Their immortal status makes them equal with the angels in that respect, but they are also greater than the angels because they are "children of God." The point Jesus is making to the Sadducees is that they are focused on the temporal when they should be focused on the eternal. The eternal is that the little flock will not be married to any one human. Rather, they will be part of the bride of Christ. Therefore, the Sadducees' question is irrelevant for believers.

20:37-38 Now, Jesus addresses the Sadducees' unbelief with regard to the resurrection. Resurrection must take place if God is presently the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In fact, God would not be God if not for the resurrection, because His promises to them would have gone unfulfilled. Therefore, fundamental in Abraham's, Isaac's, and Jacob's belief in God fulfilling His promises to them is believing that they will be raised from the dead and receive those promises in God's coming kingdom. (This is why God name is the "I AM" (Exodus 3:14).) The Sadducees twisted Moses' scripture, about marrying your dead brother's wife, to try to support the idea of no resurrection, and Jesus correctly applies Moses' scripture, about being the God of Abraham, to show that there is resurrection for those who place their faith in what God tells them.

20:39-40 "Durst" is like our modern-day word "dare." After Jesus' perfect responses, no one was bold enough even to try to trip Him up with another question, because Jesus' answers served to make religious leaders look bad and convicted their hearts about their unbelief.

20:41-44 Jesus answered the religious leaders' questions, and so it is only fair that He ask them a question of His Own. He does this so that the common Jews will see that the religious leaders do not represent God, while Jesus does. If they make this distinction in their minds, they will heed Jesus' warning to them in 20:46-47 to repent, i.e., to abandon the religious leaders' teachings and start following God's law instead.

Not only that, but He also is teaching two, very important truths to those

with the spiritual ears to hear: 1) Their Messiah (the Lord Jesus Christ) is fully man, being David's son, and He cannot establish the kingdom right then, as they thought He would (19:11), because He must ascend to the Father and wait for His enemies to be made His footstool before establishing the kingdom (Psalm 110:1), and 2) Their Messiah is also fully God, which means that His impending death is actually part of His plan, because no one can force the Lord into dying. Rather, He will give up His life willingly (John 10:17-18). Therefore, His death should not shake the believing remnant's faith in Jesus being their Messiah and in God's promise to give them the kingdom (12:32).

20:45-47 The reason we are not given the Jewish religious leaders' response is that they did not respond. The parallel account in Matthew 22:46 tells us that "no man was able to answer Him a word."

Since the Jewish religious leaders do not know fundamental doctrines pertaining to the Messiah, there is no reason for the common Jews to follow them. Therefore, Jesus warns His disciples not to mimic the behavior of the Jewish religious leaders. Instead of walking in long robes, loving greetings, taking the highest seats, and taking the chief rooms at feasts, the little flock is to go from city to city in Israel for seven years, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and being persecuted for doing so (Matthew 10:5-8,23). They are to expect no recognition, and then they are to declare that they are unprofitable servants, because they have merely done their duty (17:6-10). Therefore, they should say to that mountain of religion in front of them: "Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea" (Matthew 21:21). If they are not willing to chuck religion out of their way, how will they do their duty as servants of Christ during the tribulation period?

Note that Jesus says these things "in the audience of all the people" (20:45). He is warning the little flock about the Jewish religious leaders, and He does so in front of those very leaders! This will only serve to infuriate them even more, causing them to want to crucify Him and get rid of Him as soon as possible.

Also, note that Jesus says that the Jewish religious leaders "shall receive greater damnation" (20:47). This shows that there are degrees of punishment in hell. Therefore, the religious leaders will receive a worse punishment in hell than the common Jews, who are unbelievers, will receive. Today, this translates into people like the Pope, T. D. Jakes, Creflo Dollar, and Joel Osteen, not only missing heaven, but also burning in the hottest place in hell, if they have not trusted in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for their sins. The reason for this is because they make their disciples "twofold more the child of hell than [themselves]" (Matthew 23:15).

21 Jesus gives His disciples signs of the tribulation period so that they may watch for them so as to be ready to enter God's kingdom at Jesus' second

coming.

21:1-4 Jesus contrasts two groups to show that how man looks at things is different from how God looks at things, which should confirm to them that they need to abandon religion in favor of God's law covenant. Man looks at the rich men casting in big gifts and is impressed, while the poor widow gives almost nothing. Therefore, men think her gift is worthless. However, the way God looks at it is that the rich men gave to be seen of men, while the widow gave to the Lord (Matthew 6:1-4). God is impressed by attitude, not by amount. Also, Jesus just told everyone that the religious leaders "devour widows' houses" (20:47). So, the rich men got rich and the widow got poor based on the rich men stealing from the poor widow. Plus, the rich men, being religious leaders, would get the money back anyway, since they are, essentially, giving the money to themselves. They are making a big show of the fact that they are taking money out of one pocket and putting it into another pocket, or, as Jesus put it in Matthew 6:3, taking money from the right hand and placing it in the left hand.

The poor widow has already had her goods unjustly taken away from her by the religious leaders, yet she gives alms that are going to those same people who stole from her already! This is a great example of obeying Jesus' command that states: "Unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other" (6:29). As such, the poor widow represents the little flock during the tribulation period, who faithfully obeys God's command in spite of the persecution they receive from apostate Israel. The rich men, of course, represent apostate Israel in the tribulation period, who get rich by aligning themselves with the Antichrist.

We should note that the situation regarding giving is different today. In Israel's program, the way that a person gave to God was by giving in the temple. If a person did not give his tithes, he was literally robbing God (Malachi 3:8-10). Therefore, the widow rightfully gave in the temple, in spite of the corruption of the temple leaders. Today, however, we should take note of what will be done with the money we give. If the money will go to further God's will of getting people saved and having them come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4), we should give as we purpose in our hearts (II Corinthians 9:7). However, if the money will not be used wisely, we should not give at all, and we should seek an organization or a person, who will use the money wisely.

21:5-6 Matthew 24:1-2 tells us that Jesus' disciples are the ones speaking here of the majesty of the temple. This shows that, even the little flock, to whom Jesus' comments were directed to abandon religion, paid Him no attention. Jesus had warned them not to look on the same things man does, and the first thing the disciples do is admire the greatness of man's building! Note how Jesus told the disciples that "YE behold" these things, which implies that the disciples are in awe over man's building, while Jesus does not care a bit about them.

This is similar to what we see in Christianity today. People admire the steeples (which represent the male sex organ), stained glass windows, and idolatrous statues of "saints," while they trample under foot the Son of God and the Bible with their religion that only serves the devil. By contrast, Jesus does not even consider these things, because He knows that "heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away" (21:33).

21:7 The disciples ask Jesus about the destruction of the temple. While the temple was destroyed around 70 A.D., Jesus was not talking about that destruction. Rather, Jesus is referring to the final destruction of man's temple, which takes place when Babylon falls at the end of the tribulation period. Therefore, Jesus gives them the signs to watch for, that lead up to the end of "the times of the Gentiles" (21:24).

21:8 The first thing the disciples need to keep in mind is not to follow any false Christs. Jesus already warned them of this in 17:22-24, saying that Christ's second coming will not be a secret. All will see it at the same time. Therefore, they should not follow someone who says that he has found the Christ. If they do follow that person, he may lead them to the Antichrist, and they will either be killed, persecuted (Revelation 13:15), or, if they take the mark or worship the image, lose their salvation (Revelation 14:9-11).

21:9-10 Some of these "wars and commotions" are mentioned in Daniel 11 between the king of the north and the king of the south. They begin before the tribulation period starts (Daniel 9:26-27) up to the midway point of the tribulation period. Then, the beast arises and rules over all in a period of world peace.

21:11 The earthquakes, famines, and pestilences are a reference to the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, called "the beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:8). These equate to the first four seals of judgment in Revelation 6:1-8. Earthquakes are probably associated with all four seals. Seal #3 (Revelation 6:5-6) talks about a famine. Pestilence is probably included in the deaths associated with the second and fourth seals in Revelation 6:3-4,7-8. Then, the "fearful sights and great signs...from heaven" probably refer to the sixth seal, which is in the last half of the tribulation period, in which the sun will turn black, the moon will become as blood, the stars will fall from heaven, the heaven will depart, and every mountain and island will be moved (Revelation 6:12-14).

21:12 "But before all these" means before those things happen as part of the sixth seal in the latter half of 21:11. Of course, the fifth seal of judgment is between the first four seals and the sixth seal. The fifth seal shows "the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held" (Revelation 6:9). Therefore, Jesus talks about this fifth seal by saying that the little flock will be persecuted (21:12) and even killed (21:16). Note the progression of their persecution. First, they are delivered

up to synagogues. This shows that it will be the religious leaders leading the way in persecuting members of the believing remnant. They will probably follow the same pattern that they established in killing Jesus. Once tried and found guilty in a synagogue, they will be put in prison until they can convince "kings and rulers" to execute them, as they did with Jesus by getting Pilate to order Him crucified.

21:12-15 The great thing about being before kings and rulers is that the persecuted little flock will be in the public eye. Satan does this through the Antichrist's kingdom in attempting to show the whole world that they should not believe God's Word because it will result in their death. However, the Lord will speak through the little flock so that "it shall turn to you for a testimony" (Luke 21:13). In other words, the little flock will preach the gospel of the kingdom to the whole world through their being brought before kings and rulers. This is how the gospel of the kingdom "shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" before the end comes (Matthew 24:14), even though the little flock goes only to the cities of Israel (Matthew 10:5-6) and will not finish going through all the cities of Israel before the end comes (Matthew 10:23).

This is where the gift of tongues comes in. The Holy Spirit will speak through the little flock, and only those with the "ears to hear" will understand in their own language what the little flock is speaking (Acts 2:5-8). In that way, the unbelievers, who run the television or internet broadcast, will not know that the gospel is being preached, but the unbelievers, who are willing to believe the gospel, will hear it, believe it, and be saved. Therefore, the gospel gets preached to the whole world without unbelievers knowing about it.

21:14 If the little flock plans out what they will answer to kings and rulers, they will be the ones speaking, rather than God speaking through them. Therefore, God tells them to rely upon Him, rather than upon their flesh.

21:16 The ones, put to death by the Antichrist, will get there, for the most part, by family members and friends turning them in. Since most of Israel will think that the Antichrist is the Christ, they will think that he represents God. Therefore, by turning their family members over to the Antichrist, they will think that they are serving God. John 16:2 says, "Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." That is why Jesus says that, during the tribulation period, the little flock will have to hate their own family and even their own flesh in order to follow Jesus' command of preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of Israel (14:26).

21:17 Men will hate the little flock because they are the only ones standing up for God's Word and His kingdom. The little flock will be causing dissension within Satan's kingdom, of which apostate Israel will be a part. Therefore, they will hate the little flock.

21:18 Not a hair of their head perishing should remind them of the story of the three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace, which is a picture of the little flock going through the refiner's fire of the tribulation period (Malachi 3:2). With regard to the three Hebrew boys, "the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed" (Daniel 3:27). Now, that does not mean that the little flock will not be harmed physically, as Jesus just said that some of them will be put to death (21:16). What it does mean is that, any physical harm done to them by apostate Israel, will be reversed by God, when He gives them their new, glorified bodies in the kingdom.

21:19 This is a famous verse quoted by Christians. It does not apply to us today, because it speaks of a conditional salvation, whereas, today, we have already received the atonement (Romans 5:11) and have been sealed with the Holy Spirit "unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30). The little flock will possess their very souls in patience because, if they do not have the patience to wait for the Lord Jesus Christ's redemption of them, they will not endure unto the end and will lose their salvation as a result (Matthew 24:13). By contrast, our souls, in today's dispensation of grace, are possessed in the Holy Spirit's patience to seal us "unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30). He WILL do this because God is longsuffering with us. Paul is the first of the pattern of longsuffering that the Lord Jesus Christ established for the Body of Christ (I Timothy 1:16). In Israel's program, by contrast, it is the believer's patience, as demonstrated by his not taking the mark of the beast or worshipping the image of the beast, which brings his soul into God's kingdom.

21:20-21 Matthew 24:15-16 says that the time to flee from Judea into the mountains is when the abomination of desolation is set up in the holy place of the temple. Daniel 9:27 says that this event takes place in the middle of the tribulation period. Comparing these verses with the verses here in Luke, we know that the time when Jerusalem is compassed with armies is in the middle of the tribulation period. This means that the Great Tribulation is about to start.

Revelation 13:1-7 gives more detail of this, telling us that this starts with Satan resurrecting the Antichrist as a beast, and all the world worships him. Therefore, he can compass Jerusalem about with armies. He goes up to the two witnesses, who are standing in front of the temple, and kills them (Revelation 11:7). He is then able to sit in the temple and declare himself to be God (II Thessalonians 2:4). Once he does that, the rest is easy-peasy. The world makes him an image of the queen of heaven (Revelation 13:14), he sets it in the temple, and causes all to worship it at the penalty of death for noncompliance (Revelation 13:15). Therefore, Jesus tells the believing remnant that, when this happens, they had better high tail it out of Judea, in order to keep from being killed.

21:22-23 With the death penalty being instituted by the Antichrist, the

saints need to flee Jerusalem. So urgent will be their flight out of Jerusalem that breastfeeding women may not be able to get out of Jerusalem fast enough to avoid being killed. This is a warning that, once the tribulation period starts, the little flock should concentrate solely on preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of Israel rather than raising a family. In fact, with regard to the Great Tribulation period, 23:29 says, “Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.”

21:24 The time of the Gentiles runs from Daniel’s day to the end of the tribulation period (Daniel 2:31-45). Although the Antichrist will be an Assyrian Jew (Isaiah 10:5 and Daniel 11:37), he will be against the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16), the little flock. Therefore, his reign is still part of “the time of the Gentiles.” As Revelation 13:7 says, he makes war with the saints and overcomes them. That is why 21:24 says “they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations.”

Revelation 11:2 says that the Gentiles will trod the holy city under foot for 42 months. This must refer to the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, since Luke 21:24 says that their trodding of Jerusalem under foot ends when the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

21:25-26 These signs in the sky and upon the earth refer to the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period when there is a great earthquake, the sun becomes black, the moon becomes as blood, the stars fall to the earth, the heaven departs, and every mountain and island are moved (Revelation 6:12-14). (Note that Genesis 1:14 says that one of the purposes of God for creating lights in the firmament is for signs.) Man’s reaction to these things will be to hide themselves. Note in Revelation 6:15-17 that their reaction is not to trust in the gospel to be saved, even though an angel preaches the everlasting gospel to them (Revelation 14:6-7). Rather, they pray for death so that they will not be tortured by God. Note also that they recognize it is God’s wrath being poured out upon them, yet they still do not believe God’s word for salvation. This shows the selfishness of the flesh “to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Ephesians 4:19). We also see this in Romans 1:32, where it says that sinners know that they are worthy of death for their sins, but they continue in them and actually “have pleasure in them that do them.”

21:26-27 Unbelievers will be trapped in fear when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back. Therefore, they will not make it into the kingdom.

21:28 The signs Jesus mentions here will tell the little flock to look up for their redemption. It is important that they look up so that they can give the cry at midnight to those who once believed the gospel of the kingdom so that they may awaken out of their slumber and enter the kingdom as we are told in Matthew 25:5-10.

In 17:34-37, we saw that, when Jesus comes back, He first takes away the unbelievers into judgment. The believers stay on the earth, waiting to be redeemed. This is supported by 21:27-28, which says that, when Jesus comes back, their “redemption draweth nigh.” In other words, they are not redeemed right away, but their redemption is close.

21:29-31 This quick parable teaches the little flock that, if they know what to look for, they will know when the Lord Jesus Christ will come back for them. Therefore, if they “watch” (21:36) for these things, they will see them come to pass, which will give them confidence to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to come and redeem them.

21:32 “This generation” cannot refer to those alive during Jesus’ day, because 2,000 years have passed, and the tribulation period has not even begun yet. Rather, it refers to this generation of vipers, which are the religious leaders, who are really children of the devil (John 8:44). (This fact is more clearly seen in Matthew 23:33-36.) Although Jesus said that the kingdom will be taken away from the religious leaders (Matthew 21:43) and given to the little flock (12:32), this will not happen until the end of the tribulation period. Until then, “this generation” of vipers continues to rule in Israel’s program.

This is important to understand because Christians think that God got rid of the generation of vipers in Acts 2. While God did grow the little flock under the leadership of the 12 apostles in Acts 2-6, Israel, as a whole, was still led by the Pharisees, who persecuted the believing remnant during that time. 21:32 is a warning, then, that this persecution will continue unto the end of the tribulation period. Therefore, they should not put their trust in the Antichrist.

21:33 This verse speaks of the preservation of scripture. Heaven and earth will pass away at the end of the tribulation period, and God will establish a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1). However, God’s Word will continue on even after that, which means that we must have God’s preserved Word today as well, which we do in English in the King James Version.

The context of this verse, though, is that, because God’s Word will endure through the tribulation period, the little flock can have faith in what God has said, knowing that, if they do, they will be in God’s eternal kingdom when God does cause heaven and earth to pass away. Therefore, they should not fear physical death at the hands of the Antichrist, because God has the power to remove heaven and earth to bring about His kingdom!

21:34-35 Jesus is not talking about the little flock eating too much food and drinking too much wine for they will be poor and hungry. Rather, Jesus is speaking spiritually. They have to guard their hearts against the pleasures of this world. In other words, if they like the things of this world

over the things of God's kingdom, they will take the mark of the beast, losing their souls, in order to gain the wealth of this world just like the unbelievers will do in the Antichrist's kingdom.

21:36 The way that the Jews are "accounted worthy" to escape Christ's judgment of the world at His second coming is by counting themselves worthy to receive eternal life by believing the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 10:11,13). Then, they have to watch for the signs and pray so that they will endure to the end of the tribulation period without denying Christ. They will then "stand before the Son of man," as opposed to being mowed down by Him in fiery judgment.

21:37-38 Day represents God's kingdom, while night represents the tribulation period and Satan's kingdom. Therefore, during the day, Jesus taught in the temple so that some of the lost sheep of Israel may be found. During the night, He fled to the mount of Olives, as the little flock is supposed to flee to the mountains for the Great Tribulation (21:21). The people came to hear Jesus speak during the day. Where were they in the tribulation period (the night)? Will the Son of man find faith on the earth when He comes (18:8)?

22 Jesus eats the Passover with His disciples (vs. 14-22), foreshadowing the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in God's kingdom (Revelation 19:7-9). Jesus is arrested and found worthy of death by the Jewish religious leaders (vs. 47-71), whom the 12 apostles will replace in God's kingdom (vs. 29-30), but not before the disciples forsake Jesus, including their leader, Peter, denying Him multiple times (vs. 55-62). They should have prayed to the Father to be able to overcome the flesh like Jesus did, instead of sleeping (vs. 40-46).

22:1-3 It is Passover, and Jesus is in Jerusalem. If Israel had faith in God's Word, they would have sacrificed Him on the altar in the temple as the complete Passover Lamb sacrifice (Psalm 118:27-28; John 1:29). Instead, they are trying to kill Him in unbelief, as a way to get rid of God so that they can continue to rule with Satan in Israel. ("Jesus of Nazareth ... ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23).) We see Satan's involvement in trying to kill the Son of God in that Satan himself enters Judas Iscariot here to get him to agree to betray Jesus to be killed. (Satan will enter Judas Iscariot a second time when he actually betrays Jesus (John 13:26-27).) If Satan knew that killing Jesus would bring victory to God, rather than defeat as Satan thought, he "would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (I Corinthians 2:8).

22:4-6 According to John 12:4-6, Judas had just seen a woman pour expensive ointment on Jesus, and Judas wanted that money for himself. That is why he ultimately agreed to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15). The Pharisees are glad to oblige him, because they think they are extinguishing God's plan. Instead, they should have been glad to

sacrifice Jesus by faith to atone for their sins to bring God's plan of redemption for Israel to fruition (Psalm 118:24).

Now, you may wonder why the Pharisees need Judas to betray Jesus, since the Pharisees knew Who Jesus was and could have just arrested Him. The Pharisees have two problems with this: 1) They do not want to arrest Him themselves, lest common Jews get mad at them. So, they will send a group of people to arrest Him, who do not know what He looks like. Then, if people get mad, they can pretend like they were not involved, and 2) They fear the multitude, and so they want to have Him arrested "in the absence of the multitude" (22:6).

22:7 Luke makes a point of saying that it is now the day "when the passover must be killed." While it is true that they are about to sacrifice a lamb and eat it, Luke is referring to the day when the complete Passover Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, is being sacrificed for the redemption of Israel. "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).

22:8 The nation of Israel was supposed to have taken Jesus, bound Him upon the altar, sacrificed Him as the complete Passover Lamb, and then eaten of Him to show their participation in the sacrifice (See Exodus 12:5-10). Instead, they will deliver Him to the Gentiles to be crucified. Since they must eat of His flesh and drink of His blood to have eternal life (John 6:53-54), Jesus will now give the 12 apostles the opportunity to do this. The rest of saved Israel will do this at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9). Note how Psalm 118:24 says that "we will rejoice and be glad in it." They are to rejoice and be glad as they eat of the complete Passover Lamb. Since they did not do that then, they will "be glad and rejoice" at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb when they finally do partake of Jesus' sacrifice for their sins, because saved Israel has finally "made herself ready" at that time (Revelation 19:7). Right now, however, Israel is not ready, because they are in unbelief (John 12:37).

22:10 The man with the water represents a member of the believing remnant who has asked of the Lord, Who will give him "living water" of everlasting life (John 4:10,14), which is a reference to the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39), in the believing remnant in the kingdom as promised by the new covenant (Ezekiel 36:27).

22:10-12 The real Passover meal is not at the temple in Jerusalem where all the religious people will go that day, because that is the religious leaders' Passover. God's Passover is in a different house with just the little flock.

22:15-18 Very few Christians realize that this meal that the Lord has with His disciples is the Passover. It is not the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper and the Passover are not the same thing. The Passover was an annual feast that God commanded Israel to observe (Exodus 12:2-11), which was a type

of Jesus' death for the sins of Israel. It is specifically for Israel's program. The Lord's Supper was given to Paul by the Lord Jesus Christ for the body of Christ to observe until the rapture of the church as a way of showing people the communion that is only possible among believers (I Corinthians 11:20-26).

This Passover was unlike any other Passover before it, because the Lamb of God would be slain to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). That is why Jesus said that "with desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you" (22:15). 22:16 says that Jesus will not eat any more of this Passover "until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." We need to know the background of the Passover in order to understand what He is talking about here.

Exodus 12:6-8 says that each household in Israel was to take their Passover lamb, kill, and eat it. If they did not eat it, they would not be participating in the Passover, and the lamb's death would not be a covering for their sins. Since Jesus is the complete Passover Lamb, He says in John 6:53-54, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

I believe that the purpose of this "Last Supper" is for the disciples to eat of His flesh and drink of His blood so that they may be the leaders of bringing people into God's kingdom in early Acts. (This probably explains why, when Judas Iscariot was replaced, his replacement had to be a man who had "compared with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us" (Acts 1:22). Two men fit the bill—Barsabas and Matthias (Acts 1:23). Since that is the case, these two men may have been at this "Last Supper." We are told that Jesus had supper with the twelve apostles, but it does not say it was only the twelve.)

Therefore, Jesus greatly desired to eat this Passover with the 12, because it meant that they were participating in His crucifixion, such that they would be in the kingdom. Then, when Jesus comes back and establishes His kingdom, He has all of saved Israel eat His flesh and drink His blood at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9), so that they may have eternal life in the kingdom with Him. It is at that time when "it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (22:16). Jesus re-emphasizes this point when He takes up the cup and says, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come" (22:18).

By contrast, when we eat the Lord's Supper today, we already have eternal life right now (Romans 5:9,11, 6:23). Therefore, our partaking in a meal, which probably does not include a lamb and the other elements of the official Passover meal, shews the communion that we already have with other believers in Christ because of the Holy Spirit indwelling all of us.

If we were participating in the same thing (Passover) that Jesus was participating in, then we would make Jesus out to be a liar, since He “will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God” (22:16) and we are “the body of Christ” (I Corinthians 12:27), which means that our eating of the Passover would be Christ’s eating of it (I Corinthians 10:16-17).

22:19-20 Jesus is NOT saying that the new covenant began at that time. God’s new covenant with the nation of Israel will not begin until the kingdom begins (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Hebrews 8:13 that the old covenant “is ready to vanish away.” The new covenant is when God writes His law upon Israel’s inward parts (Jeremiah 31:33) and gives them His Spirit to cause them to obey the law perfectly (Ezekiel 36:26-27). This means that Israel does not sin any more once they are under the new covenant. Believing Israel still sinned in early Acts, as we see two people lie to the Holy Ghost (Acts 5:1-10), and we see the little flock squabble over food in Acts 6:1.

Note also that it is only with “the cup AFTER supper” that Jesus says it is “the new testament in my blood,” which is a hint to believing Israel that the new covenant is not applied to them until after the marriage supper of the Lamb.

“This do in remembrance of Me” (22:19) is applied to the breaking of bread, which represents Jesus’ body broken for their sins. Therefore, while they would still only eat the Passover once per year, they were to continue the breaking of bread with each other more frequently in order to remember Jesus’ sacrifice for their sins. Since the believing remnant “had all things common” (Acts 2:44), we see them breaking bread “daily” in Acts 2:46. Therefore, there was a “communion” element of the Passover that Jesus had them observe after His death, but what they are doing in Luke 22 is observing the Passover in which Jesus Christ is the Lamb.

22:21-24 Their Messiah is about to suffer and die for their sins, and Jesus’ disciples, the cream of the crop in Israel, are only thinking about themselves. They wonder who are the worst and the best of the group. Who will betray the Lord, and who will be greatest in the kingdom? They have taken their eyes off of their Messiah and have put their eyes on man. II Corinthians 10:12 says that those, who measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves among themselves, are not wise. The reason is because such a comparison justifies your own, sinful behavior, while you “bite and devour” other believers (Galatians 5:15) and you do not seek to behave as God would have you behave. This will be proven true with the disciples because their focus on themselves will lead them to forsake their Messiah and flee from Him when He is arrested (Matthew 26:56).

22:25-27 Jesus tells His disciples that the way to be great in the world to come is to be lowly in this world. Jesus came to suffer at His first coming and would receive glory in His second coming (I Peter 1:11). Similarly, if the disciples are to be great in God’s kingdom, they will have to suffer during

the tribulation period because they will behave contrary to what apostate Israel is doing, just like Jesus was. Therefore, instead of fighting over who will be greatest in God's kingdom, they should seek to serve and suffer.

22:28-30 At His second coming, Jesus will take the position of authority from the Jewish religious leaders and give it to those who believe the gospel of the kingdom and endure unto the end of the tribulation period. Specifically, the 12 apostles will be judging the 12 tribes of Israel. (Judas Iscariot is excluded, and Matthias is included, as we find out later in Acts 1:20,26.)

Jesus says the Father appointed to Him a kingdom, and so Jesus appoints the kingdom to the 12, as well (22:29). However, the disciples will not receive that kingdom until Jesus receives the kingdom at His second coming. Therefore, the Jewish religious leaders will continue to rule over Israel during the tribulation period, and they do so through their appointed leader, the Antichrist. That is why, even under the power of the Holy Ghost in Acts 2-7, the 12 apostles are persecuted by the Jewish religious leaders.

22:31-32 Because the 12 apostles are in a state of unbelief with regard to Jesus' death (Matthew 17:20), they will flee from Jesus when He is arrested (Matthew 26:56). Jesus had appointed Simon Peter as the leader of the apostles (Matthew 16:16-19). Therefore, he will need to take charge in bringing them back to believing in Jesus again. That is why Jesus prays for him that he will not continue in his state of unbelief. Jesus knows that Peter will turn back to God because Jesus says "WHEN thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." It is not "if," but "when." Jesus knows Peter will fall, because He even tells him that he will deny Jesus 3 times that day (22:34). Therefore, Jesus does not pray for Peter to stay true to Him. Rather, He prays for his faith not to fail in the long run. In other words, Jesus prays that Peter be converted and for him to get the rest of the disciples back on track once Peter has repented himself.

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My church," with the Rock being Christ. But, here in 22:31, Jesus calls him, "Simon, Simon." This different name of Simon signals that he will follow his flesh in denying Christ, while the name of Peter shows that he will follow the spirit in leading Christ's church in early Acts.

22:34 In Matthew, Peter denies Christ to a damsel in the palace. Then, he goes out to the porch and denies the Lord two more times. Then, the cock crows. Then, he remembers Jesus' words and goes out and weeps bitterly (Matthew 26:69-75).

In Mark, Peter denies Christ to a damsel in the palace, the cock crows, then he goes out to the porch and denies the Lord two more times. Then, the cock crows a second time (Mark 14:66-72).

In Luke, Peter denies Christ three times in the palace. Then, the cock crows, the Lord looks at him, and he goes out and weeps bitterly. The third denial is with a man and occurs one hour after the first two (22:54-62).

In John, Peter denies the Lord three times in the palace, and then the cock crows. Peter's third denial is with the servant whose ear he cut off (18:15-18, 25-27).

You may ask, "What's the big deal? Why are you going into so much detail?" The point is to show that Peter denied the Lord at least six times and probably more. We know from Luke and John that he denied the Lord three times before he went out to the porch, and we know from Matthew and Mark that he denied the Lord at least two times on the porch. The first denial, in Matthew and Mark, is with a damsel, while the third denial, in Luke and John, is with a man, which means that there had to have been at least four denials in the palace, since these two denials do not match up.

From Luke, we learn that Peter acts like a boy, who just got caught by his dad. Jesus looks at him, he runs out to the porch, and weeps bitterly (22:61-62), hoping that Jesus will run after him and tell him everything is okay. From Mark, we learn that, after at least two more denials on the porch, "he thought thereon," and then "he wept" (Mark 14:72). The point is that, after each set of denials, Peter remembers the Lord's words and weeps over them, but the reason for weeping in each case is different. He weeps in his pride after the first set of denials because he leaves and then continues to deny the Lord. After the second set of three denials, though, a broken Peter "thought thereon" and "wept" (Mark 14:72), showing that he now had the godly sorrow that works repentance, instead of the sorrow of the world that works death (II Corinthians 7:10), which means that he is repentant at this point.

All of this is important because Peter's denials are a type of what the little flock will face in the last half of the tribulation period. Revelation 20:4 tells us that the Antichrist will behead those who do not worship the image of the beast. Revelation 14:9-11 tells us that those, who do worship the image of the beast, will spend eternity in the lake of fire, which is why Jesus says, in Matthew 10:33, "Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven." However, just like Peter had to deny the Lord at least six times before he left, God will extend His mercy to a member of the little flock, such that he will probably have to deny the Lord many times in order to avoid being beheaded. This shows that the decision to worship the image is not a rash decision that results in eternal damnation. Rather, it will be a long, drawn-out, thought process, such that, those, who do worship the image, have made the decision completely out of unbelief in God's promises to them. Then, for those, who deny many times but come to a place of repentance and do not ultimately worship the image or take the mark, Jesus will restore them in the kingdom, as He restored Peter by having Peter profess his love for Jesus three times before men

(John 21:15-17).

22:35-38 When Jesus was arrested, Peter wrongfully cut off the ear of one of the Romans arresting Him, and Jesus rebuked him for doing so (Matthew 26:51-54). But, you can see why Peter cut off the guy's ear when you read these verses in Luke, where Jesus specifically told the 12 apostles to bring swords with them. So, why would Jesus tell His apostles to bring swords with them, especially when He told them not to before (9:3), and, when Peter uses one of the swords, Jesus actually rebukes him for doing so?

I believe the reason is because of the different audiences between now and in chapter 9. In Israel's kingdom program, Israel is to be saved first as a kingdom of priests. Jesus has come to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24). When the 12 apostles go to the lost sheep of Israel, they do not need to bring anything with them (Matthew 10:6-10) because the lost sheep should take care of them as they travel from city to city in Israel. However, now, apostate Israel is coming to arrest Jesus, who, because they are not saved, are unclean Gentiles in God's sight. Since the 12 apostles represent the rulers in God's kingdom, who will take over the rule from the Jewish religious leaders in God's kingdom, the swords they carry represent God's judgment of them. The apostles are not supposed to use the swords at this time. They are just supposed to hold them up to demonstrate to the religious leaders, who are coming to arrest Jesus, that they will bear the sword in God's kingdom. Therefore, if they arrest Jesus and crucify Him, they will be guilty of killing "the Prince of life" (Acts 3:15).

22:39-40 "Wont," in verse 39, means His ordinary practice. This, coupled with "the place" in verse 40, shows that Jesus normally went to a certain spot each day to pray. John 18:2 tells us the same thing. That is why Judas Iscariot knew where to lead the mob to, in order to arrest Jesus. Praying to the Father is what the perfect man, Jesus, does, so that He does His Father's will. Jesus encourages His disciples to do the same thing, since they will soon be tempted to forsake Jesus when He is arrested for His crucifixion.

22:42 Luke portrays Jesus as the perfect man. As a man, He has the battle between the flesh and the spirit within Him. The flesh says "remove this cup from me." In other words, the flesh does not want to die. The spirit, though, says, "Not My will, but Thine, be done." Ultimately, Jesus looks at eternity and goes to the cross. "For the joy that was set before Him, [Jesus] endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 11:2). Therefore, as the perfect man, Jesus is willing to die, if it accomplishes His Father's will.

22:43 So great was the agony Jesus was in at this time that He literally would have died, according to Matthew 26:38, before He ever made it to the cross. Therefore, an angel comes and strengthens Him so that He can do His Father's will. We saw an angel strengthening Him at the beginning of His ministry as well (Matthew 4:11). This shows that it is possible for a man to

obey God's law covenant perfectly, but no one ever did it except for the Lord Jesus Christ because: 1) All men, with the exception of Adam and the Lord Jesus Christ, are born with a sin nature, and 2) The flesh is so strong that, to overcome it at times, Jesus literally almost had to kill Himself!

22:44 Now, Jesus has the strength to pray even more earnestly to overcome the flesh, such that He literally sweats great drops of blood. No other man has ever warred with his flesh to this extent, such that most Christians do not even believe that Jesus sweat great drops of blood, but that is what this verse says He did.

What Jesus prayed this second time is recorded in Matthew 26:39. "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." This shows that the victory over the flesh was won at this point. Before, He asked the Father to remove this cup from Him. Now, He just asks for it to pass from Him, if possible. The hard part is over now, because the perfect man has completely yielded His flesh over to His Father.

22:45 The disciples slept, instead of praying, which is why they will forsake Jesus and flee (Matthew 26:56). As such, they are a type of most Israelites who make it into God's kingdom. They sleep during the entire tribulation period and squeeze into the kingdom thanks to the midnight cry of the little flock (Matthew 25:5-10).

22:47-48 The multitude is a group sent by the Jewish religious leaders, since the leaders themselves would not dare be defiled by arresting Jesus. Jesus gives Judas one, last chance not to betray Him, by questioning him to get him to think about what he is doing.

22:49-51 Before Jesus responds to their question, Peter cuts off a servant's ear (John 18:10). Jesus had the disciples bring 2 swords as a sign to the servants of the Jewish religious leaders that they will be punished by God for arresting their Messiah. The disciples were not supposed to use the swords. Therefore, Jesus rebukes Peter's action (Matthew 26:52-54). Jesus could have called 12 legions of angels (Matthew 26:53) to protect Him. In fact, Satan tempted Him to do just that at the beginning of His ministry (4:9-11). Yet, Jesus knows that, as the perfect man, He is to do His Father's will above everything else. Therefore, not only does Jesus not call angels to help Him, but He also actually heals the ear of the servant that was cut off!

22:52-53 Jesus speaks to those arresting Him to let them know that He is fully aware that they are taking Him away to be crucified because Satan wants them to do so. Jesus is obeying His Father's will, and the religious leaders are obeying their father's (Satan's) will (John 8:44). Jesus points this out to them so that they will realize what they are doing and may repent during the Holy Ghost's ministry in early Acts. If they were doing God's will, they would have had no problem arresting Jesus in the temple. The fact that they do so at night, away from the temple, shows that they are doing Satan's

will.

22:54 Jesus is taken to the high priest's house to be officially declared worthy of death under Jewish law. Peter's following from afar shows how he is far away from doing God's will.

22:55 Peter is both physically and spiritually close to the fire. He is about to deny his Lord and Messiah. As such, he is a type of the seed among stony places. He has no root in God's Word, such that he is offended by God's Word and denies his Lord and Messiah when the threat of persecution comes his way (Matthew 13:20-22). Many will fall into this category during the tribulation period. They will take the mark of the beast and worship his image in order to save their physical lives. However, Peter will soon repent of his denials, and Jesus will later restore him as the leader of the little flock (John 21:15-17). Psalm 1:1 says, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Peter is not blessed, here, because he does all three. He walks, following the council of the religious leaders from afar (22:54). Then, he stands at the outside door of the palace (John 18:16). Then, he sits down in the midst of the scornful (22:55).

22:57-59 Peter denies his Lord twice, and then he has a whole hour to think about what he has done. However, he continues to sit in the seat of the scornful, and, by denying the Lord a third time, he is part of those scorning Jesus.

22:60-62 Jesus then looks at Peter to remind him of Jesus' prophecy that he would deny his Lord thrice before the cock crows once. Peter then leaves and weeps bitterly. Even after this, Peter is still in the flesh. His open show of weeping is what religion often does to show their sorrow, but it is fake. For example, Ezekiel 8:14 shows women in the temple weeping for Tammuz. Another example is of the hypocrite Jewish religious leaders, who appear to fast by being sad and disfiguring their faces (Matthew 6:16). Peter is following in their footsteps here. We know this by the fact that he will deny Jesus at least two more times (Mark 14:66-71). It is only after that second series of denials that Peter thinks about Jesus' words and weeps in godly sorrow (Mark 14:72) that leads to his repentance (II Corinthians 7:10).

22:63-65 These are not the Roman guards, as Jesus is still in the high priest's palace. This is the treatment Jesus receives from the religious leaders. So, Jesus upheld the law perfectly, did many miracles, and forgave people's sins, and the thanks He got for it was a brutal beating and mocking by the Jewish religious leaders. What's more is that the Jewish religious leaders broke the law by beating Jesus, because they were not allowed to punish someone before he is found guilty (Deuteronomy 25:1-2).

22:66-67 The religious leaders know that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah), but they will not believe the gospel of the kingdom. Therefore, there is no

need for Christ even to acknowledge that He is the Christ.

22:68 When Jesus asked them if John the Baptist was from heaven or from men, they would not answer Him (20:3-8). They certainly, then, will not answer Jesus if He asks them if HE is the Christ.

22:69 Because they will not believe the gospel of the kingdom, they will not make it into the kingdom. The next time they see Him will be when He is sitting "on the right hand of the power of God." This is when He sits on "a great white throne" and judges them into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15). Therefore, Jesus tells them that they may be judging Him to a physical death now, but He will later judge them to an eternal physical and spiritual death in the lake of fire for not believing the gospel of the kingdom.

22:70-71 Next, we see that the religious leaders can only condemn Jesus to death by twisting His words. Jesus said that He is "the Son of man" (22:69), but they ask Him if He is the Son of God. Jesus does not admit or deny this. He just says that the religious leaders say that He is. In other words, they themselves have admitted that Jesus is the Son of God. Yet, the religious leaders condemn Jesus to death for something that THEY THEMSELVES have said about Jesus, and they say that they have heard it "of His Own mouth!"

23 For the most part, Gentiles find no fault in Jesus, e.g., Pilate (v. 14), Herod (v. 15), and the Roman centurion (v. 47). The Jewish religious leaders kill Him (vs. 21-23), and the 12 apostles are nowhere to be found. Women are about the only ones, who follow Jesus to His death (v. 27).

23:2 The religious leaders twisted Jesus' words to condemn Him to death in their court. Now, they twist Jesus' words to get the Roman governor to condemn Him to death in his court by saying that Jesus forbade people from giving tribute to Caesar, when He actually said: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's" (20:25).

This is a good lesson for us today. When you come across Christian religious people, your best course of action is to have nothing to do with them, because, if you speak the truth to them and the truth is against their religion, they will twist your words to try to make you look like the liar, instead of them.

23:3-4 The Roman governor may or may not be a just judge, but he is certainly more just than the religious leaders are. It was supposed to have been the opposite. Israel was God's chosen nation, set apart from other nations with special rules. They were supposed to administer God's justice within their nation as an example to the Gentiles of what it is like to be under God's rule. Instead, we see a Gentile governor, who gives a just judgment, here, while the Pharisees unjustly condemned Jesus to death.

Compare 22:70-71 with 23:3-4. In both cases, Jesus' response to the question is essentially: "That's what you said." The Pharisees' response was to condemn Jesus to death, saying that He said He is the Son of God, while Pilate's response was to say, "I find no fault in this man." This shows that religion will lie and murder to get its own way, while even a government official is more reasonable than religion is!

23:5 The Jews have freedom of religion in Rome. Therefore, Pilate does not really care what is taught in their synagogues. This is why he tells the religious leaders to "take Ye him, and judge Him according to your law" (John 18:31). However, the religious leaders will not give up, and Pilate knows Jesus is innocent and that the religious leaders want Him crucified because they are envious of Jesus' sway over the Jewish people (Mark 15:10). Therefore, Pilate pawns Jesus off on Herod, who is the religious king over the Jews (Matthew 2:1), to try to get him to deal with the religious leaders without them causing an insurrection.

23:7-8 Herod is probably in Jerusalem at the time because it is Passover. This is not the same Herod, who was ruling over 30 years ago at Jesus' birth. This Herod does not see Jesus as a threat. He was actually looking forward to being entertained by Him performing some great miracle.

23:9-11 Jesus answered the religious leaders and Pilate when He had to, because it would be against God's law not to respect those over Him. Since Herod has no authority over Jesus in this matter, Jesus will not answer Him. Rather, He opened not His mouth "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb" (Isaiah 53:7). Although Herod did not desire to kill Jesus, he tries to keep the religious leaders from rioting by mocking Jesus. He also is probably bummed over the fact that Jesus did not perform a miracle for him, so, he gets some entertainment value out of Jesus by mocking Him. Note that Herod and his men do not smite Jesus, while the Jewish religious leaders did just that (22:63-64), breaking their own law (Deuteronomy 25:1-2).

23:12 Christians like to quote this verse and say something like, "See! God makes friends out of the worst of enemies." That may sound good, but it is for the wrong reason that they came together. These enemies become friends, as they united to keep the Roman government strong against God's kingdom. We saw this with the Jewish religious leaders, as well, when the Pharisees and the Sadducees came together to tempt Jesus (Matthew 16:1). What Jesus did in Israel's program with those who believed the gospel of the kingdom was actually DIVIDE families. He sent a sword between in the middle of families (Matthew 10:34-36). So much for the feel-good Jesus of the gospels!

23:13-19 Both Pilate and Herod find Jesus unworthy of death. Because it was Passover, Pilate was required to pardon one, Jewish prisoner. Therefore, he tries to release Jesus as that one prisoner, but he will chastise Him first

to try to appease the Jewish religious leaders. The religious leaders will not go for that. They would rather have a murderer released to them, who actually started an insurrection himself (23:19), rather than have the Messiah and Son of God go free, who they said must be killed, lest He start an insurrection (23:2). Religious logic is always flawed.

23:18 The fact, that the Jewish religious leaders "cried out all at once" to have Jesus crucified and release Barabbas, shows that this was a carefully premeditated murder of the Lord Jesus Christ. If they had not planned out the contingency that Pilate would try to release Jesus, they would not have "cried out all at once" for a specific prisoner to be released in His stead. As such, Barabbas acts like the scapegoat. When the high priest was to offer a sin offering for the sin of the people, he was to take two goats. One would go free, and one would be killed for the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:7-10). This is where the term "scapegoat" comes from. Similarly, Barabbas was worthy of death, but he goes free while Jesus is killed. Similarly, the nation of Israel is worthy of death for their sins, but they are the scapegoat if they repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), because Jesus Christ died for their sins.

23:20-24 Pilate tries three times to release Jesus (23:22). All three times, the Jewish religious leaders cry for Jesus to be crucified, even though all three times, Pilate asks what Jesus is guilty of and all three times the religious leaders have no legitimate reason. The three times is important, because, under Israel's program, we see the repeated pattern of God giving Israel three chances to repent before He sets them aside. All three members of the Trinity try to convince Israel to believe the gospel and repent. God the Father gives Israel a chance with John the Baptist; God the Son gives Israel a chance with the Lord Jesus Christ; and God the Holy Ghost gives Israel a chance with His ministry through the little flock in Acts 1-7. Jesus is also rejected three times by the religious leaders before He is crucified, and the Holy Ghost is rejected three times by the religious leaders in Acts 1-7. Then, Israel rejects the gospel of grace under Paul three time in Acts 13:46, 18:6, and 28:28. Therefore, after the third time that the Jewish religious leaders implore Pilate to crucify Jesus, he relents.

23:25 Note that Pilate is not guilty of killing the Lord Jesus Christ, because, three times, he told them that he found no fault in Him (23:4,14, and 22). This verse says that it was the will of the religious leaders that crucified Jesus. We see this in Pilate's statement: "Take ye Him, and crucify Him: for I find no fault in Him" (John 19:6). We also see this in the religious leaders' statement: "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matthew 27:25). We also see this in Peter's statement on the day of Pentecost, speaking by the Holy Ghost: "Him...ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23). It is clear, then, that it was the Jewish religious leaders who caused Jesus Christ to be put to death.

23:26 Simon of Cyrene is often mentioned as a believer, who followed

Jesus, and willingly carried Jesus' cross. This idea allows Christians to come up with a feel-good story of how we may have to carry a cross that we did not expect to bear, and we should do it by faith like Simon of Cyrene did. Simon came "out of the country," probably for Passover, and may have been a Jewish religious man. However, he did NOT carry Jesus' cross willingly. This verse says "they laid hold upon" him, and Mark 15:21 says that they compelled him to bear Jesus' cross.

Luke 23:26 also explains an apparent contradiction between Matthew - Luke and the gospel of John. Matthew (Matthew 27:32), Mark (Mark 15:21), and Luke (Luke 23:26) all say that Simon carried Jesus' cross. John 19:17 says that Jesus bore His Own cross. Luke 23:26 provides the answer, saying that both are true. Jesus carried the top part of His cross, and Simon of Cyrene carried the bottom part of the cross bearing it "AFTER Jesus."

23:27 Although there may be a few exceptions, we can at least say that the majority of the believers still following Jesus are women. Most of the little flock of men have forsaken Jesus and fled (Matthew 26:56) out of fear of being killed themselves. As such, they are like the stony-ground believers of the tribulation period. They believe the gospel with joy, but they are offended when persecution comes (Matthew 13:20-21). The 12 apostles were offended by Jesus (Matthew 26:31) and had to be restored after Jesus' resurrection. The women represent the good-ground believers of the tribulation period (Matthew 13:23), who endure unto the end to enter God's kingdom (Matthew 24:13).

23:28 Jesus tells the women not to weep for Him. After all, He will rise from the dead and save believing Israel from their sins, ransoming many (Matthew 20:28). Rather, they should weep for the nation of Israel, who have rejected their Messiah, which makes them God's enemy, worthy of being thrown into hell.

23:29 When the Antichrist sets up the image of the beast in the temple and causes all to worship it or be killed, pregnant women and those with newborns will be killed because they will not be able to flee from Judea fast enough (21:21-24). Also, a lot of women will probably choose to take the mark of the beast, just so they have food to give to their starving children. Therefore, the blessed women, are the ones without children, because they can flee to the mountains, and they do not have the added pressure of taking the mark of the beast to feed their children. Therefore, these barren women are blessed above those with children.

23:30 Jesus quotes Hosea 10:8, and the fulfillment of this verse is seen in Revelation 6:16 when the stars are falling to the earth, the heaven is rolled together and departs, and every mountain and island move during the sixth seal of judgment. Specifically, this refers to Jesus' second coming, when unbelievers recognize that they are about to receive Jesus' wrath, and they are so scared about it, that they beg to be killed by rocks, rather than

experience “the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” directly (Revelation 19:15)!

23:31 If most of Israel will not believe the gospel while Jesus was performing miracles, they will have a much more difficult time believing the gospel when the Antichrist is killing people for doing so. That is what is meant by the contrast between a green tree (Jesus' miracles and preaching of the gospel of the kingdom) and a dry tree (the Antichrist ruling and snuffing out witnesses for Christ).

When you look at the history of man, the dispensation of grace represents a green tree, because it is the only time in history when saved man has had the permanent, indwelling Holy Spirit to walk in (Ephesians 1:13-14; Galatians 5:16). Christians say, “I wish I was alive when Jesus performed all of those miracles.” While that would have been neat to see, it is FAR BETTER to have the opportunity to present your bodies a living sacrifice for God the Holy Spirit to use for God’s glory (Romans 12:1).

23:33 Jesus' being crucified between two malefactors fulfills Isaiah 53:12, which says "He was numbered with the transgressors." In fact, Mark 15:28 specifically references this Old-Testament scripture. Also, this is the only time in scripture where the word “Calvary” is used.

23:34a The perfect man, the Lord Jesus Christ, would no longer be perfect if He did not forgive men, as He had commanded His disciples to do (Matthew 6:14-15). It was also necessary for Jesus to forgive the religious leaders for crucifying Him so that they would have another chance to believe the gospel and enter the kingdom through the ministry of the Holy Ghost.

It should also be noted that the reason the religious leaders even had the opportunity under the law to be forgiven by God was because they killed Jesus out of ignorance. Deuteronomy 19:11-13 says that the ones killing someone, who is innocent, shall be put to death. Acts 2:23 says that the religious leaders took Jesus, "and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Therefore, God's law says they are to die, except that the Holy Ghost, through Peter, says "that through ignorance ye did it" (Acts 3:17). Deuteronomy 19:4 says that ones killing out of ignorance may live. Therefore, the religious leaders have a renewed opportunity to be forgiven and enter the kingdom of heaven during the ministry of the Holy Ghost in Acts 1-7, because they killed Jesus out of ignorance.

23:34b The parting of Jesus' raiment and casting lots for His vesture fulfilled Psalm 22:18. Only God would know the free-will actions of man to the minute detail of soldiers divvying up certain garments while casting lots for His vesture.

23:35 This statement is a little off, but that is exactly what religion does. It takes truth and twists it a little bit to make it a lie (John 8:44). Jesus did

not save others in the past. He cast out devils and healed people, but He did not save them. He could only save them by suffering their eternal punishment for them by dying for them. Therefore, He could not save Himself and save others. An accurate statement would be: "He is saving others by NOT saving Himself." If He saved Himself, He would not be "Christ, the chosen of God," since prophecy said that "He was wounded for our transgressions" (Isaiah 53:5). The fact, that the religious leaders did not know this and that the Holy Ghost says they crucified Jesus out of ignorance (Acts 3:17), shows that these religious rulers did not know the Old Testament that well. Sure, they had head knowledge, but, because they did not believe what the scriptures said, they did not understand the scripture. They only knew scripture as it fit into their own traditions.

23:36 Giving Jesus vinegar to drink fulfills Psalm 69:21 for another proof that Jesus is the Messiah.

23:37 Again, Jesus could not save Himself and still be the king of the Jews. If He was not crucified for the sins of Israel, Satan would be the king of the Jews and of the whole world for that matter (4:5-7).

23:38 The sign above Jesus' cross was written by Pilate to mock the religious leaders. The Pharisees knew that the sign was true, which is why they asked Pilate to change it to read that He said He was the King of the Jews, but Pilate said, "What I have written I have written" (John 19:21-22). So, here are the Pharisees, trying to get rid of Jesus by killing Him, and this sign is written so that everyone present can read it and know Who He really is. It is really a great statement because it tells everyone, who sees it, that dying on a cross is what it takes for Jesus to become the King of the Jews.

23:39-43 One malefactor railed on Jesus, while the other one asked for mercy. All people who ever lived fall into one of these two categories. They either think they will have eternal life by their own merits, like the first malefactor, or they have faith in God to receive His imputed righteousness, like the second malefactor. The fact that one malefactor becomes a believer through seeing Jesus' crucifixion shows that an objective observer could clearly see that the Lord Jesus Christ is both Lord and King. His faith is better than the 12 apostles' faith, because the 12 apostles abandoned Jesus in His crucifixion, thinking that their kingdom hopes had vanished. This malefactor sees, in Jesus' death, his kingdom hopes come alive.

Two other things that should be noted: 1) Both Jesus and this man went to paradise, which was in Abraham's bosom in the earth. Jesus went there to bring Abraham's bosom into heaven, since the sacrifice for the atonement of their sins was now accomplished (Ephesians 4:8-10). What an honor for this thief to accompany Jesus on His way to paradise! (This is how they could both be in paradise "To day," when Jesus stayed in the grave for three days and three nights (Matthew 12:40).) 2) There were five crosses on Mount Calvary. The two malefactors described here were closest to Jesus, having

actual conversations with Him. The other two were on crosses on the outside of these two. This is how both Luke 23:39-43 and Matthew 27:42-44 can be true, when Luke says that one malefactor was saved, and Matthew says that both thieves mocked Jesus.

23:44 There were three hours of darkness from 12 - 3 PM, the brightest part of the day. Such a miraculous occurrence would cause all people to look up in the sky to find out what is going on. Since “the sun was darkened” (23:45) and the moon is a reflection of the sun, the only light they would see would be the stars.

Psalm 19:1-2 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” The gospel in the stars was so definite that wise men travelled for 2 years, because they saw the Messiah’s star and followed it to His house. Therefore, the three hours of darkness during Christ’s crucifixion was a proclamation of the gospel to the whole world that the Messiah was dying for their sins. “There is no speech nor language” where the voice of the heavens “is not heard” (Psalm 19:3).

23:45 The veil of the temple being torn in two does NOT mean God eliminated the difference between Jew and Gentile at this point, since Israel continued in their favored-nation status because God's plan to reconcile the earth involves Israel being a kingdom of priests to reach the nations with the gospel of the kingdom (Exodus 19:5-6). (In Matthew 10:6-7, Jesus commissions the disciples to preach to Israel only, and He says that they will still be preaching to Israel at Jesus’ second coming (Matthew 10:23).) Rather, the veil's purpose was to keep unholy man from a holy God to keep man from being killed. Now though, through Jesus' sacrifice, God could declare that those with faith are now holy. Therefore, the saved Jew could now boldly approach the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16), rather than only the high priest approaching God once per year (Hebrews 9:7). Man is now declared holy through Jesus' propitiatory sacrifice on the cross. This veil, then, is a MUCH larger barrier to remove than the one between Jew and Gentile, which will be removed beginning with the dispensation of grace in Acts 9!

23:46 Jesus relies upon the justice of God the Father to raise Him out of hell. He also knows, from Psalm 16:10, that the Father will not leave His soul in hell. This shows the complete trust that the Son has in the Father in that He knows that His soul will go to hell and travail there (Isaiah 53:11), yet He also completely trusts the Father to raise His soul out of hell, even after the Father has already forsaken Him (Matthew 27:46) because He has already placed the sins of the world upon Him (II Corinthians 5:21). In other words, Jesus has just been separated from the Father for the first time ever, and He STILL completely trusts the Father!

Also note from this verse that Jesus "gave up" the ghost. This fulfills what

He said in John 10:18 in that no man takes His life from Him. Rather, He lays it down Himself.

23:47 Both Matthew 27:54 and Mark 15:39 have the centurion saying that this man "was the Son of God." Because Luke portrays Jesus as the perfect man, he quotes the centurion saying, "Certainly this was a righteous man." The centurion must have made both confessions, which shows that this Gentile believed Jesus was God and man, something that the Jews refused to recognize. This also shows that this was no ordinary crucifixion.

23:48 It seems that even the Jewish religious leaders struck their breasts over the sight of a righteous man crucified. Even they could not escape the realization that they killed their Messiah.

23:50-51 Luke mentions a religious leader who did not go along with the religious leaders in crucifying their Messiah. This shows that, while the nation of Israel as a whole rejected their Messiah, individuals from that nation could still break away, join the little flock, and have everlasting life in God's kingdom. Nicodemus is also an example of this, and John 19:38-40 mentions that Nicodemus also came with Joseph of Arimathaea.

23:52-53 Jesus was crucified between wicked people, and He was buried in a rich man's tomb (Matthew 27:57). This is how He fulfilled Isaiah 53:9, which says "He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death." If Jesus was not the Messiah, there is no way He could have accomplished this, as man has no control over what happens to his body after his death.

Jesus' body wrapped in linen is a sign of His righteousness (Revelation 19:8). The sepulchre being "hewn in stone" should remind us of Daniel 2:34, where the stone hewn out of the mountain is God's eternal kingdom coming to crush the Antichrist's kingdom, and I Corinthians 10:4 says that the Rock is Christ. Thus, Jesus' death represents God's victory over Satan's earthly kingdom. Also, note that Jesus, born of a virgin, was also placed into a virgin grave.

23:54 and 24:1 23:54 says that Jesus was crucified on the day of preparation and that the sabbath drew on, which is normally Saturday. Then, 24:1-3 says that Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week, which is Sunday. Therefore, the assumption is made that Jesus was crucified on a Friday and rose from the dead on a Saturday.

However, Matthew 12:40 says, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." 24:1 fixes Jesus' resurrection as being on a Sunday morning. Therefore, in order to fulfill the prophecy of Matthew 12:40, He had to be dead on Sunday morning, all day Saturday, all day Friday, and Thursday night. Matthew 27:46-50 says that Jesus died a little

after 3 PM, which means that He had to have died on Thursday—not on Friday, as most Christians believe.

The key, to understanding this confusion, lies in the parenthetical reference in John 19:31 that the day after Jesus' death was a sabbath day that was "an high day," and the day He was crucified was the preparation day for the sabbath. John 19:14 says that "it was the preparation of the passover." Exodus 12:11-17 says that the passover is the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, and that no work is to be done on that day. Therefore, the passover is a sabbath. This would be a high-day sabbath, since it is not the normal one that happens every week.

Therefore, Jesus was crucified on a Thursday, which was the preparation day for the passover, which was on a Friday. Because it was a high day (passover), Friday was a sabbath day. Then, Saturday was the normal, weekly sabbath. Then, Jesus rose from the dead "upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning" (24:1). As such, Jesus was dead 3 days and 3 nights, due to both of the next two days after His death being sabbaths. No doubt God planned it that way so that no one would even visit His grave until after His resurrection. Jesus' resurrection very early in the morning on the first day of the week represents the new dawning for Israel—a new covenant of sin-free living by saved Israel, that Jesus will bring after the tribulation period, thanks to His death, burial, and resurrection.

23:56 Jesus' death did not bring an abolition of God's law covenant with Israel. These women are still obeying the commandment to rest on the Sabbath. Incidentally, God did the same thing. His work was completed on the day of preparation, and He rested on the Sabbath day.

24 Jesus rises from the dead, but the little flock does not believe, even after they see Him (v. 41). However, after Jesus opens their understanding (v. 45), they obey His command (v. 53) and are ready to continue His ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

24:1-3 It is interesting that Luke says that "certain others" came with the women with the spices they had prepared to anoint Jesus' body. The other gospel writers do not mention these "certain others." They are probably other women. After all, the grave is guarded by Roman soldiers, and so the women probably asked others to go with them for protection. However, 24:9 seems to indicate that the little flock did not go to the tomb and 24:10 and 22 say that men did not tell the little flock about Jesus' resurrection. John 20:19 shows the disciples in a locked room for fear of the Jewish religious leaders. Therefore, the apostles must have been too scared to go to the tomb with the women. Also, the people, who went with them, were probably not men, because they asked themselves the question, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" (Mark 16:3). Therefore, it is probably only a group of women, who went to the tomb on resurrection day.

Now, before we give the women a standing ovation, we must note that they did not believe that Jesus would rise from the dead. If they did believe, they would not have brought spices to make His dead body smell good. If they did believe, they would not have gone into the tomb and searched for the Lord Jesus' body. Finally, if they did believe, they would not have been "much perplexed" (24:4) about the location of His body.

Therefore, the stone was not rolled away for Jesus to get out; it was rolled away for people to look in and see that He had risen from the dead (Matthew 28:1-2). Jesus rose from the dead "when it was yet dark" (John 20:1) while the guards were still guarding the tomb (Matthew 28:4). Therefore, Jesus was gone before the angel rolled the stone away from the tomb.

24:4 Even after seeing the empty tomb, the women STILL do not believe in Jesus' resurrection. They come to the conclusion that someone must have moved Jesus' body (John 20:2). That is why they are perplexed. Martha believes in the resurrection at the beginning of the kingdom (John 11:24), but she does not believe in it right then, even though she just saw her brother, Lazarus, raised from the dead by Jesus (John 11:43-44)!

24:5-8 This is a great demonstration of Romans 10:17, which says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." The women see the evidence that Jesus has risen from the dead, but they believe that someone moved His body instead. But, when angels say, "He is not here, but is risen" (24:6), they believe.

24:9 "The eleven" is mentioned, because Judas Iscariot is not among the apostles any more, since he betrayed Jesus and then hung himself.

24:10-12 Even after hearing eyewitness accounts of Jesus' resurrection, the 11 apostles still do not believe that Jesus has risen from the dead. Peter, their leader, does not believe in Jesus' resurrection even after he looked in the empty tomb himself! Certainly, then, the 12 apostles, when they went to the cities of Israel preaching the gospel (9:6), did not preach Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection for atonement of sins, since they did not believe it themselves after hearing about it and Peter did not believe after seeing it himself! "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead" (John 20:9). Among the 11 apostles, only John believed after seeing the empty tomb (John 20:8). We also learn from 24:11 that ole doubting Thomas has gotten a bad rap, since ALL of them, not just Thomas, did not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead.

24:13 These two men show the little flock's unbelief in Jesus' resurrection. Even after hearing eyewitness accounts of being told by angels that Jesus had risen from the dead and after seeing the empty tomb, these two men walk 7 ½ miles (60 furlongs) AWAY from Jerusalem! If they believed there was even a chance that Jesus rose from the dead, they would have at least stuck around to find out.

24:14-15 Before His death, Jesus told the Father that He kept all of the believers from being lost (John 17:12). These two sheep have now lost their way. Therefore, Jesus chases them down to lead them back to the fold. "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it" (15:4). That is what Jesus is doing here.

24:16 24:27 says, "and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." If their eyes were not holden from seeing Who He is, they would not have listened to the scriptures, because they would have been too excited over seeing the risen Jesus. They would have believed He rose from the dead, but they would not have understood why He had to die. Their faith needed to be increased through the hearing of the Word in order to endure persecutions from the Jewish religious leaders before they could recognize Him. Therefore, God did not allow them to recognize Who Jesus was.

24:17 They would not be sad if they believed Jesus rose from the dead.

24:19 Obviously, Jesus knows what happened, but He asks them to find out their take on the whole thing so that He knows what scripture to share. This is how Jesus, the perfect man, shares scripture with them. This is a great application for us today. We need to ask questions to find out where people are at to determine what scripture to share with them to correct the error in their thinking.

Right away, we see that even these members of the little flock did not believe Jesus was their Messiah. They just thought He was a prophet. Since salvation came by trusting in God's law covenant and being water baptized, instead of by believing in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sins, these people were members of the little flock without believing that Jesus is Lord or that He died for their sins.

24:21 This is the fundamental reason why the confidence of the little flock was shaken, and they stopped following Jesus. They absolutely refused to believe that their Messiah would die, even though He told them this many times. They continued to believe what their religion taught them, which was that the Messiah would come and overturn their Roman oppressors, and they would rule with Him. When this did not happen, they were offended in Christ, such that they no longer believe that He is the Messiah. Now, Jesus has to bring them back to faith in God's program for the nation of Israel.

24:23 The women at Jesus' tomb did not see "a vision of angels." They saw "two men...in shining garments" (24:4). Granted, these men were angels, but they were literally standing in front of the women. They were not visions. See how easily the truth is lost among people who do not believe?

24:24 This verse shows that the little flock did not believe the report of the

women, because they expected to see Jesus if He was alive. What? Did they expect Jesus to stand at the tomb yelling, “Yoo hoo! I’m alive”? No, He had things to do. He needed to ascend to His Father (John 20:17) and offer His blood in the heavenly tabernacle as atonement for their sins (Hebrews 9:24-26).

24:26 The Old Testament prophets told of “the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (I Peter 1:11).

24:27 Jesus now shows them how the Old Testament prophets told of how the Christ would suffer and then enter into His glory. Although we do not know the scriptures Jesus shared, the following is a likely path He took them on:

1) Genesis 3:15 “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” This is the first promise of a redeemer in the Bible.

2) Exodus 19:5-6 “Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine. And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.” These verses show how God chose the nation of Israel to reconcile the earth back to God.

3) Isaiah 53:5-6 “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” These verses show how the Messiah must suffer in order to atone for the sins of Israel.

4) Isaiah 53:10 “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.” This verse shows how God’s kingdom can only come by the Messiah suffering first.

5) Psalm 22:1 “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?”

Psalm 22:6 “But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.”

Psalm 22:16 “For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.”

Psalm 69:1 “Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul.”

Psalm 69:7 “Because for Thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered My face.”

These verses detail some of the suffering the Messiah went through in bearing the sins of Israel.

6) Psalm 16:10 “For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.” This verse shows the faith of the Messiah in believing that His suffering is not permanent.

7) Psalm 110:1 “The Lord said unto My Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.” This shows the promise of God the Father to bring the kingdom to God the Son after He suffers and His enemies are destroyed.

In this manner, the Old Testament prophets show how the Messiah must suffer before entering into His glory. 24:27 says that Jesus “expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.” 24:44 tells you that “All the scriptures” are “the law of Moses...the prophets..., and the psalms.” Thus, Jesus used scripture from those three sections, as I have just demonstrated. Also, note how several scriptures come from the Psalms, which means there is sound doctrine there about the Messiah. It is not just some devotional book to read and make up your own relative truth as God “speaks” to you as you read.

Also, note in 24:27 that, since Jesus used all of the Old Testament, He undoubtedly showed them these scriptures so that they could see for themselves. This demonstrates that they must have had the scriptures in a book form. They were not carrying around 20-30 scrolls and unrolling them to find the specific scriptures Jesus wanted to show them, as scholars want you to believe.

24:28 Is this the Lord’s Great Fake Out? No, He went to these two guys first because they were lost sheep, straying away from Jerusalem, when they should have been sharing the gospel of the kingdom in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). Therefore, He goes and corrals these lost sheep first. Now that He has explained the scriptures to them, His work is done here. He can now go to the rest of the disciples (24:33,36), who are safely locked away in a house (John 20:19).

24:31 Now that the two men have heard God’s Word, such that they can see that the Messiah’s death was part of God’s plan all along, “their eyes were opened” so that they now recognize Jesus. (His breaking of bread with them, and the communion that is associated with that, may also have played a part in them recognizing Jesus at this point.) Since Jesus is in His glorified body, He is able to dematerialize and materialize. Therefore, He is able to vanish from them, which He could not do when He appeared in mortal flesh before His crucifixion. Now, He is in an eternal, glorified body, being the firstfruits of the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:20).

Another reason Jesus may have had to leave at this point, is because He had told His disciples that He would not drink of the fruit of the vine until He drinks it in the kingdom of God (22:18), and He is now sitting down at a table where wine may be served.

24:32 Their hearts burned within them, not because Jesus spoke to them, but because He spoke to them God's Word. "For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword" (Hebrews 4:12). God's Word caused their hearts to burn.

24:33-35 Jesus was successful in corralling these lost sheep, as they now return to Jerusalem, where the little flock is supposed to be at this point. When these two men return to Jerusalem, they find that Jesus has already appeared to Simon. (Note how Peter is still called Simon because Jesus has not yet restored him as the leader of the little flock, which He does in John 21:15-17. We are not told otherwise of this meeting, except that Paul says in I Corinthians 15:5 that Jesus was seen of Cephas (Simon Peter) before He was seen of the 12 (This also shows that Paul is not one of the 12 apostles, since he does not include himself here. "The eleven" (24:33) apostles include Matthias, because Thomas is not with them here (John 20:19,24).) Now, these men further substantiate the story of Jesus' resurrection by telling of how He appeared to them, also. This also shows that Jesus, in His glorified body, does not need travel time, since He was able to leave the two men, appear to Peter, and Peter went to the rest of the apostles and told them about it, all before the two men could travel 7 ½ miles to tell them of Jesus appearing to them, even though the men left for Jerusalem "the same hour" as Jesus left (24:33).

24:36 Note how Jesus appears out of nowhere, which shows the ability of the new body to disappear and re-appear somewhere else. His greeting to them of "Peace be unto you" is not just some nice saying. He never gave them such a greeting before. Rather, He is saying that, not that He has atoned for their sins, they can have peace with God, and He will leave peace with them through the person of the Holy Ghost dwelling with them. John 14:26-27 says, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things....Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you." John 16:7 says, "For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Therefore, in the four little words of "peace be unto you," Jesus is saying that they now have peace with God through His sacrifice on the cross, and they will continue to have peace after He leaves through the Holy Ghost comforting them through the tribulation period.

24:37-41 The unbelief of the little flock is amazing. Jesus told them multiple times that He would die and rise from the dead the third day, and they did not believe. They heard eyewitness testimony from women, Peter, and John of an empty tomb and angels saying He is risen, and they did not believe. Jesus appeared to two men of the little flock, and they did not

believe. Jesus appeared separately to Simon, and they did not believe. Now, Jesus is standing right in front of them, He materialized out of nowhere, and He has shown them the nail prints in His hands and feet, and they STILL do not believe! How, then, do people think that the disciples believed in Jesus' death and resurrection as the gospel that saved them before the cross, when they did not believe in His resurrection after it happened?!

These verses also show us the bum rap that Thomas gets. He is called "Doubting Thomas" because he said, "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" (John 20:25). Yet, when Jesus did appear to him, he immediately said, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). Contrast this with the other apostles who, after beholding Jesus' hands and feet (24:39), STILL do not believe (24:41)! This shows that Thomas has more faith than some of the other apostles!

24:39 This verse tells us a little about the glorified body. While Jesus can dematerialize and materialize anywhere He wants, He is not a ghost. He still has flesh and bones and can eat food (24:42-43).

24:42-43 Jesus' glorified body makes the disciples "terrified and affrighted," and they think He is a spirit (24:37), such that Jesus has to eat some food in front of them to show that He has a body. This shows that the glorified body returns to the pre-fallen state of man, in which man is clothed with a garment of light. We know this because man was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and God is clothed with a garment of light (Psalm 104:2).

24:44 If the disciples had discarded religion and believed God's word to them, they would have known that Jesus would have had to suffer, die, be buried, and rise from the dead the third day, because this was all foretold in the Old Testament scriptures.

Note that the Old Testament is divided into three sections: 1) The Law of Moses, 2) The Prophets, and 3) The Psalms.

24:45-46 Because of their unbelief, the disciples did not have the ears to hear what Jesus told them about His death and resurrection, which is why they forsook Him and did not believe He had risen from the dead. Jesus has to open their ears here so that they will finally understand what the Old Testament says about the Christ—the Messiah.

24:47 This is the "Great Commission" found in Luke that fundamental Christianity ignores, or they pervert this commission by saying that "Jerusalem" means "your home town."

God will reconcile the earth back to Himself as He promised (Exodus 19:5). However, He will do so through the nation of Israel being a kingdom of

priests to the Gentiles (Exodus 19:6). That is why they must begin preaching the gospel of the kingdom in Jerusalem and then to all of Israel before finally going to the Gentiles in the millennial reign. This is the progression Jesus mentions to them in Acts 1:8. Note that it is still the gospel of the kingdom being preached, as He says that repentance is to be preached. In Mark 16:16, He also mentions that water baptism is required to be saved. We see Peter following this on the day of Pentecost, saying that both repentance and water baptism are required for salvation (Acts 2:38).

24:49 “The promise of My Father” is the gift of the Holy Ghost. This will give them the power needed to overcome religion. Before the Holy Ghost came upon them, they were a bunch of scaredy cats, fleeing when the religious leaders came to arrest Jesus (Matthew 26:56). After the Holy Ghost comes upon them, they preach to the religious leaders with boldness (Acts 4:13, 31) and rejoice that they are “counted worthy to suffer shame for His name” (Acts 5:41). That is the power of the Holy Ghost; it is not speaking a bunch of jibberish, as Pentecostals today would have you believe.

24:50 John 11:18 says that Bethany was 15 furlongs from Jerusalem, which is about 2 miles away. Zechariah 14:4 says that, when Jesus comes back, He will stand upon the Mount of Olives. Acts 1:11 says, “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.” According to Luke 19:29, the Mount of Olives is at Bethany. Therefore, the reason Jesus takes the disciples to Bethany is so He can ascend to heaven from the Mount of Olives, because He will descend upon this same mountain at His second coming.

24:51 Now that the disciples finally believe and know how they are to carry out Jesus’ ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel once He is gone, Jesus ascends to heaven.

24:52-53 Finally, the disciples understand what Jesus has shared with them, and they are obeying His Word to them to tarry in Jerusalem until they receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Then, Luke will show the ministry of the Holy Ghost in the little flock with the book of Acts.