

Luke

INTRODUCTION

The Gospel according to St. Luke has been called “the loveliest book in the world.” Most people would agree that this third Gospel is the best life story of Christ ever written.

Luke was a Gentile, and he has the unique distinction of being the only New Testament writer who was not a Jew. He was a physician by profession (Col 4:14); and he was also Paul’s companion. No doubt this gave him the wide sympathy and respect that he possessed.

The book was written to a man called Theophilus, whose name means “*Beloved of God*,” and the title given to this man is the normal title for a high official in the Roman government. No doubt Luke wrote it to tell him, as an earnest inquirer, more about Jesus, and indeed this book would accomplish that in superlative form.

Luke presents Jesus as the perfect Man—God manifest in the flesh—so that a Greek would understand the Gospel as a Gentile. He seldom quotes the Old Testament, and he often gives Hebrew words in their Greek equivalent, to give them more clarity. He never uses the Jewish term *Rabbi* of Jesus, but always the Greek word meaning *Master*. When he is tracing the descent of Jesus, he traces it not to Abraham, the founder of the Jewish race (as Matthew does), but to Adam, the founder (head) of the human race. Because of this, Luke is the easiest of all the Gospels to read. He was writing, not for Jews, but for people very much like ourselves.

Luke deals with the humanity of our Lord, and shows Him as a Man with all His sympathies, feelings and growing powers—a Savior suited to all. This Gospel is for the outcast on earth, and it strongly depicts Jesus’ compassion for every hurting and suffering soul. Luke speaks more of the prayers of our Lord than any other Gospel writer. Another great fact in this book is shown in that the Jews and early Christians had to learn that the Gentile would also have full and free admission into the Kingdom and into the Church.

The book of Luke has been called all of the following: The Gospel for the Gentiles, The Gospel of Prayer, The Gospel of Women and Children, The Gospel of Praise, The Universal Gospel.

Luke 1:1-4

The Gospel of Luke is the picture of the Son of Man. The very fact that it begins with a preface is significant. The other Gospels have no preface, but immediately introduce us to the very heart of the subject. Luke presents to us the human medium through which this revelation of the Master comes. It is no disparagement to inspiration to recognize the coloring of the earthly medium through which the light is communicated.

Luke tells us of his careful investigation (Luke 1:3) of all things of which he writes and leaves us to conclude that, with his trained mind, he has given the most thorough and painstaking inquiry into every fact and question that has come to him, and that while the Holy Spirit has guided and controlled, at the same time the instrument has been used with the fullest recognition of all his special qualifications for the task assumed.

(The Christ In the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Luke being a doctor, he probably was very methodical and did his homework before writing this book. **Don't you think Luke was too self confident when he said in Luke 1:3, 4, "it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed"(NKJV)?**

Luke 1:5-23

The first two chapters of Luke contain a number of testimonies to our Lord, especially in connection with His birth, which have not been recorded by any other evangelist.

The first of these is the announcement to Zechariah of the birth of John, the great forerunner. The revelation comes to him from the angel Gabriel as he is ministering in the holy place in the due course of his priesthood. The messenger informs him that his prayer is heard and that God is about to give a son to him and his godly wife after long delay, and when, in the course of human events, such a blessing had become improbable. Zechariah receives the message with astonishment and doubt, and asks for a sign to confirm his hesitating faith. The angel gives him a sign which is at once a reproof to his unbelief and a prop to his faith. He tells him that he shall be mute until the prophecy shall have been fulfilled.

There was extraordinary significance in this sign. It was not merely a miraculous testimony of the prophecy just given, but it was a striking symbol of a still greater fact.

Zechariah represented the priesthood of Israel, and his unbelief was just a type of the unbelief of the nation in the coming Messiah, and the judgment upon that priesthood for its unbelief. Israel was to be silenced as the messenger of God because she had failed to be true to her divine commission and to believe the gospel of which she had been made the trustee, and God was to put her aside and choose instead a new body of inspired messengers. And so God will silence every voice that fails to honor His well-beloved Son, and honor every voice that bears witness to Jesus Christ.

This is in keeping with Luke's special ministry to portray the Savior and His wider relation to the Gentiles rather than to Israel. With the ministry of Zechariah and John, his distinguished son, the voice of Israel was to cease and the Church of God was to come instead.

(The Christ In the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

As you consider Zacharias' response to the angel, try putting yourself in his place and ask yourself what your reaction would be to such stunning news. Also, what was especially significant to any Jewish woman of that day that made this of the highest importance?

Gen. 12:1-3 Ps. 2:7 Jer. 23:5

Luke 1:24-38

Here we see that Elizabeth did conceive, and is now in her sixth month. The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, a young Jewish girl in her early teens, and told her that she, too, would bear a son, for she had found favor in God's sight. His name would be Jesus—He would be great and He would be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of David His father, and He will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and there will be no end to His kingdom. Mary then asks, "How shall this be since I do not know a man?" To which the angel replies that the Spirit of the Most High would overshadow her, so that the child who would be born would be called Holy, the Son of God.

Please state the difference between Zacharias' response to the angel, and that of Mary. What does this teach us in God's dealings with us?

This passage presents one of the great controversial doctrines of the Christian faith—the Virgin Birth. **If He had not been born of the Holy Spirit, but of a human father, could He have been our Savior? By what means is the sin nature passed from one generation to the following? And in pondering the answers to these questions, have you ever wondered why God sent His Son to us as a baby, and not a full-grown man?**

Isa. 7:14 Matt. 1:18-25 Rom. 5:8-10 Gal. 4:4 Rev. 12:5

Luke 1:39-45

This Scripture is a lyrical song on the blessedness of Mary, for to her was granted the sacred and high honor of being the mother of the Son of God. Certainly she was filled with a wondering great joy at such a privilege—yet that very honor would come to mean a sword piercing her heart, for some day she would see Him hanging on a cross.

To be chosen by God very often means a crown of joy as well as a cross of sorrow. When God chooses a person, that one must lay aside all his own plans, dreams and ambitions in order to fulfill the larger purposes of God. **Use the examples in the following verses to show this to be true.**

Gen. 12:1-3 Gen. 37:3-11 2 Cor. 4:7-18

Luke 1:46-56

The song of Mary which follows rises to a higher plane. It is Jewish throughout, breathing the very essence of the old covenant and the spirit of the ancient prophets; but it goes back beyond Moses to Abraham, and thus rises to that lofty plane from which the Apostle Paul ever grasped the gospel plan of salvation. But while a Hebrew psalm, Mary's Magnificat is in perfect keeping with Luke's purpose to reveal the Savior to the Gentiles. As someone has well said, it is the swan song of Judaism, the dying dirge of the old dispensation. Mary reaches the very highest point of Hebrew poetry and lofty vision, and then she stands aside lost in the light of her greater Son as the chorus of redemption begins with its worldwide and eternal refrain.

(The Christ In the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

This passage has become one of the great hymns of the church—the *Magnificat*. It is reflected in all praises unto God, and is very similar to Hannah's song of praise in 1 Sam. 2:1-10. **We ask you to prayerfully meditate and comment on this portion of Scripture, noting the following three things that God does:**

- 1) He scatters the proud in the plans of their hearts;**
- 2) He casts down the mighty and exalts the humble, and**
- 3) He has filled those who are hungry while those who are rich He has sent away empty.**

Luke 1:57-66

We see in the conduct of Zacharias in this passage, a *striking example of the benefit of affliction*. He resists the wishes of his relations to call his new-born son after his own name. He clings firmly to the name "John," by which the angel Gabriel had commanded him to be called. He shows that his nine months' dumbness had not been inflicted on him in vain. He is no longer faithless, but believing. He now believes every word that Gabriel had spoken to him, and every word of his message shall be obeyed.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Find Old Testament Scriptures foretelling of the one who should go forth to prepare the way for God's elect King, the Son of David.

Luke 1:67-79

We should notice *what clear view of doctrine Zacharias enjoyed*. He ends his hymn of praise by addressing his infant son John the Baptist. He foretells that he shall "go before the face" of Messiah, and "give knowledge of the salvation" that He is about to bring in—a salvation which is all of grace and mercy—a salvation of which the leading privileges are "remission of sins," "light," and "peace."

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Zacharias' prophecy in this Scripture is the very hope of all Israel—for the promise that God made to Abraham is about to be fulfilled. **Explain how this would be the day that Abraham rejoiced to see!**

Gen. 17:19 Isa. 60:15b-21 John 8:56

Luke 1:80

Seasons of comparative retirement have usually preceded and proved a precious preparative for great public usefulness. For example, Moses' sojourn in Midian; the Baptist's stay in the Judean desert (v. 80); our Lord's own privacy at Nazareth; Paul's three years in Arabia; Luther's ten month's seclusion at Wartburg; and Zwingli's two years and a half at Einsiedeln.

(The Four Gospels, David Brown)

We are reminded of the lives of a number of missionaries also, who had to live in quiet and preparation—often when all they could do was attempt to translate the Bible into a native language, with no souls won. **Do you believe that these times are also necessary with regard to what the Lord has in mind for each person? Is this His agenda for them? Please comment on this, and add, if possible, what God is doing along this line in you.**

Luke 2:1-7

The overruling providence of God appears in this simple fact. He orders all things in heaven and earth. He turns the hearts of kings withersoever He will. He overruled the time when Augustus decreed the taxing. He directed the enforcement of the decree in such a way, that Mary must needs be at Bethlehem when "the days were accomplished that she should be delivered." Little did the haughty Roman emperor, and his officer Cyrenius, think that they were only instruments in the hand of the God of Israel, and were only carrying out the eternal purposes of the King of kings. Little did they think that they were helping to lay the foundation of a kingdom, before which the empires of this world would all go down one day, and Roman idolatry pass away. The words of Isaiah, upon a like occasion, should be remembered, "Yet he does not mean so, nor does his heart think so" (Isaiah 10:7).

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

We've all heard it said, "History is His story," and U.S. President Garfield called history "the unrolled scroll of prophecy." Certainly if God's Word controls all our lives, then the events of history only help us fulfill the will of God. **Can we "fast-forward" and recognize that the rulers of today are also instruments in the hand of God to fulfill His plan? How should we be praying for the rulers and people everywhere in the world?**

Rom. 13:1-7 1 Tim. 2:1-3

Luke 2:8-12

The angel said, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." We need not wonder at these words. The spiritual darkness which had covered the earth for four thousand years, was about to be rolled away. The way to pardon and peace with God was about to be thrown open to all mankind. The head of Satan was about to be bruised. Liberty was about to be proclaimed to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind. The mighty truth was about to be proclaimed that God could be just, and yet, for Christ's sake, justify the ungodly. Salvation was no longer to be seen through types and figures, but openly, and face to face. The knowledge of God was no longer to be confined to the Jews, but to be offered to the whole Gentile world. The days of heathenism were numbered. The first stone of God's kingdom was about to be set up. If this was not "good tidings," there never were tidings that deserved the name.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

How did the birth of Jesus Christ affect the following:

1) Jews 2) Gentiles 3) Satan

In your reply, give at least one Scripture verse for confirmation for each.

Luke 2:13-20

"Glory to God in the highest!" the song begins. Now is come the highest degree of glory to God, by the appearing of

His Son Jesus Christ in the world. He by His life and death on the cross will glorify God's attributes—justice, holiness, mercy and wisdom—as they never were glorified before. Creation glorified God, but not so much as redemption.

"Peace on earth!" the song goes on. Now is come to earth the peace of God which passeth all understanding—the perfect peace between a holy God and sinful man, which Christ was to purchase with His own blood—the peace which is offered freely to all mankind—the peace which, once admitted into the heart, makes men live at peace one with another, and will one day overspread the whole world.

"Good will towards men!" the song concludes. Now is come the time when God's kindness and good will towards guilty man is to be fully made known. His power was seen in creation. His justice was seen in the flood. But His mercy remained to be fully revealed by the appearing and atonement of Jesus Christ.

Such was the purport of the angels' song. Happy are they that can enter into its meaning, and with their hearts subscribe to its contents. The man who hopes to dwell in heaven, should have some experimental acquaintance with the language of its inhabitants.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

The heavenly intelligence (angels) understood who this newborn infant truly was, and they praised God even if most of the world did not. A few lowly shepherds immediately went to pay Him honor and give praise. **Why is it that today many shun God and fail to praise Him? And what type of person is likely to have a heart that grasps the tremendous and all-powerful truth of the Gift that only God through Christ can give?**

Luke 2:21-40

The first point which demands our attention in this passage is *the obedience which our Lord rendered, as an infant, to the Jewish law*. We read of His being circumcised on the eighth day. It is the earliest fact which is recorded in His history.

It is mere waste of time to speculate, as some have done, about the reason why our Lord submitted to circumcision. We know that "in Him was *no sin*," either original or actual (1 John 3:5). His being circumcised was not meant in the least as an acknowledgment that there was any tendency to corruption in His heart. It was not a confession of inclination to evil, and of need of grace to mortify the deeds of His body. All this should be carefully borne in mind.

Let it suffice us to remember that our Lord's circumcision was a public testimony to Israel that, according to the flesh, He was a Jew, made of a Jewish woman, and "made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). Without it He would not have fulfilled the law's requirements. Without it He could not have been recognized as the son of David, and the seed of Abraham. Let us remember, furthermore, that circumcision was absolutely necessary before our Lord could be heard as a teacher in Israel. Without it He would have had no place in any lawful Jewish assembly, and no right to any Jewish ordinance. Without it He would have been regarded by all Jews as nothing better than an uncircumcised Gentile, and an apostate from the faith of the fathers.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Anna, a holy widow of many years, daily served God in the temple with prayers and fastings. Her own widowed heart no doubt felt the misery of Israel, a people to whom God was no longer a Husband. **Why, in your opinion, do you think these tremendous revelations about Jesus and His future in His relationship to Israel and the Gentiles were revealed to Simeon and Anna—and not to other Jewish people?**

1 Kings 19:14-18 Isa. 45:25 Rom. 1:3,4 Rom. 1:22 1 Cor. 1:23 2 Cor. 2:16

Luke 2:41-52

Let us draw from this passage *an example for all true Christians*. We have it in the solemn words which our Lord addressed to His mother Mary when she said to Him, "Son, why hast thou dealt with us thus?" — "Why did you seek me," was the reply, "that I must be about my father's business?" A mild reproof was evidently implied in that reply. It was meant to remind His mother that He was no common person, and had come into the world to do no common work. It was a hint that she was insensibly forgetting that He had come into the world in no ordinary way, and that she could not expect Him to be ever dwelling quietly at Nazareth. It was a solemn remembrance that, as God, He had a Father in heaven, and that this heavenly Father's work demanded His first attention.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Christ's "problem," which probably was no problem at all for Him, was to live in obedience to His earthly parents while at the same time being in complete subjection to His Father in heaven. We, too, are directed by God's Word to honor our parents—but in every case our first loyalty must be to Father God. **How can these two requirements be balanced as we carry out our daily lives?**

Luke 3:1-2

The opening verses of the chapter tell us the names of some who were rulers and governors in the earth, when the ministry of John the Baptist began. It is a melancholy list, and full of instruction. There is hardly a name in it which is not infamous for wickedness. Tiberius, and Pontius Pilate, and Herod, and his brother, and Annas, and Caiaphas, were men of whom we know little or nothing but evil. The earth seemed given into the hands of the wicked (Job 9:24). When such were the rulers, what must the people have been?—Such was the state of things when Christ's forerunner was commissioned to begin preaching. Such were the times when the first foundation of Christ's church was brought out and laid. We may truly say that God's ways are not our ways.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Israel as a nation was in ruins spiritually for having forsaken the Lord. God's blessings on them as His covenant people had already left, and they were being ruled by the Gentiles. **Yet in the sovereign manifestation of the grace of God, what was Israel to be at this point?**

Isa. 7:14 Dan. 9:24-27 Micah 5:2 Matt. 1:18-25 Mark 1:15

Luke 3:3-6

We are told that John the Baptist came "preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." The plain meaning of this expression is that John preached the necessity of being baptized in token of repentance, and that he told his hearers that except they repented of sin, their sins would not be forgiven.

We must carefully bear in mind that no repentance can make atonement for sin. The blood of Christ, and nothing else, can wash away sin from man's soul. No quantity of repentance can ever justify us in the sight of God. "We are accounted righteous before God only for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings."

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Ephesians 2:8, 9 tells us: "*For by grace are ye saved through faith—and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, and not of works, that no man may boast.*" **Since man is the one who must do the repenting, how does the teaching of John's (repentance) fit together with the New Testament truth of Christ and of Paul?**

Mark 1:15 John 3:3-8,14-36 Acts 2:21 2 Tim 3:15

Luke 3:7-20

How plainly John speaks to his hearers *about hell and danger*. He tells them that there is a "wrath to come." He speaks of "the axe" of God's judgments, and of unfruitful trees being cast into "the fire."

The subject of hell is always offensive to human nature. The minister who dwells much upon it, must expect to find himself regarded as coarse, violent, unfeeling and narrow-minded.

Men love to hear "smooth things" and to be told of peace and not of anger (Isa. 30:10). But the subject is one that ought not to be kept back, if we desire to do good to souls. It is one that our Lord Jesus Christ brought forward frequently in His public teaching. That loving Savior, who spoke so graciously of the way to heaven, has also used the plainest language about the way to hell.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

In John's day many of the Jews thought they were destined for heaven simply because they were descendants of Abraham (see John 8:31-34; Rom 4:12-17; Gal 3:26-29). John reminded them that God gets to the root of things and is not impressed with religious profession that does not produce fruit. **Upon your reading of these Scriptures, do you agree that John would have done them a great "disfavor" by not warning them, as he did, that the true believers (wheat) will be gathered by God, while the lost sinners (chaff) will be burned in the fire (hell)? Give at least one Scripture where Jesus also warned sinners of the end judgment if they did not believe in Him.**

Luke 3:21-22

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

In no respect was the perfect humanity of Jesus Christ, and His entire identification with our fallen race, more strikingly manifested than in His submission to the ordinance of baptism at the hands of John. That ordinance was an explicit confession on the part of those receiving it of their utter sinfulness, and their need of the divine forgiveness. And the act was a striking symbol of death and resurrection on the part of the subjects of baptism. It was an actual confession that they were so utterly guilty and lost that there was no hope of self-improvement, and they must therefore yield to the judgment of God and die, so far as every personal merit was concerned, and then be brought back to an entirely new life through the sovereign mercy and grace of God.

SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST'S BAPTISM

The impropriety of Christ submitting to such baptism, in view of His personal innocence and utter freedom from all taint of sin, was so obvious to John the Baptist that he at first refused to allow the Lord to be baptized by him, and only consented because of Christ's insistence. Why then did our Lord insist on receiving a rite which was so explicit a confession of sin? The answer is very solemn and glorious. It was because He identified Himself with sinful men, and in symbol went down with them to the death which they deserved as He was afterwards to suffer that death in actual reality. No wonder that when He came forth from the waters of baptism the great forerunner pointed to Him on the banks of the Jordan and cried, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). His baptism had been a rehearsal of the cross and a type of the great atonement which He was afterwards to accomplish on Calvary.

SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR BAPTISM

This is the deepest significance of the ordinance of baptism for us, His disciples today. As He went down with us to death and took away our curse and sin, so we go down with Him by baptism into death, and become partakers of His atonement and redemption. Baptism is therefore not a symbol of cleansing, but of crucifixion; not of self-improvement, but of self-effacement and resurrection life in Him, our risen Head:

Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?.....just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (Romans 6:3, 4)

Luke gives a fine touch to the human picture of our Lord's baptism by a single phrase in the 21st verse of the third chapter: "When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened." It was when all the people were baptized that He went into the Jordan's flood unostentatiously just like anybody else. Probably to the ordinary observer there was nothing to distinguish Him from the crowds of sinful men that pressed into the waters, and but for the special sign which had been given to John, even he would not have recognized Him, for speaking of it himself he says, "I myself did not know him" (John 1:31). There was no parade of His importance. There was no halo around His brow. There was no proclamation of His divine condescension, but standing on the level of our lost humanity, going down with us into the common grave, which typified our just doom, "he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17).

There is also another touch of humanness in Luke's narrative. It is found in the words "and as he was praying" (Luke 3:21). As He went down to His baptism, He was in the attitude of a dependent man, having no strength of His own, and looking up to God for grace and blessing. There is nothing more comforting than the uniform attitude of the Lord Jesus Christ to that heavenly grace upon which we are so dependent through the open gates of prayer. He, who might have commanded all the resources of the skies, took the lowly position of a suppliant at the throne of grace, and still bends with us as we also come coupling His personality with our own as we say, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name" (Matthew 6:9).

THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

But the scene which followed gives a grander climax to this picture of the human Christ: "Heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased'" (Luke 3:21-22). The baptism of Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit marks an epoch in His earthly life. From this moment all His public ministry began and all His work was accomplished in dependence upon the Holy Spirit. He did not claim to work miracles through His essential deity, but acknowledged, "But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon You" (Matthew 12:28). He did not meet the tempter in the wilderness in His own inherent strength, but "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil" (4:1). And He went back from the conflict "in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14). He did not stand before the people as a

great Teacher through His wisdom, but He stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth and declared,

The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to release the oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.
(4:18, 19)

The Apostle John, in quoting His own words, says, "I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me" (John 8:28).

THE REAL HUMANITY OF CHRIST

Is it not true that we have been accustomed to think of the Lord Jesus as having some special and individual advantage of us through His divine nature and perhaps to say, "Christ could do that because He was the Son of God, but I cannot be expected to do such things"? Have we not failed to realize that while Christ was indeed the Son of God, and can never cease to be, yet when He came down as the Son of Man to represent our race and to work out our salvation, He suspended the prerogatives and resources of His deity, and took the place of a dependent man, drawing all His strength from God through faith and prayer even as we must do? How near this brings Him to us, and how truly He could say, "But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matthew 12:28). That is to say, the same Spirit that dwelt in Him is now given to us, and through Him we may share the same endowment of power from on high.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND JESUS

In receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was our Forerunner. Let us bear in mind that up to this time He had not been without the Holy Spirit. He was born of the Spirit, for had not the angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). In like manner we are also born of the Spirit from the moment of our conversion, and become the children of God. But that day on the banks of the Jordan something more than this came to our Lord. The Holy Spirit as a person actually moved from the heavens and came down to earth, and henceforth resided as a distinct Person in union with the Son of Man. From this time forward there were two persons united in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus, and all He said and did was in the power of the Spirit. This is just what happens to the consecrated believer when he receives the baptism with the Holy Spirit. He has been a child of God before. Born of the Spirit he has had the Spirit with him. But now the Holy Spirit comes to be in him, so united to him that all his life henceforth is accomplished in constant dependence upon and fellowship with that divine Presence. It is as when the bride loses her personality, in a sense, in dependence upon her husband. Down that aisle they walk alone, but from that marriage altar they return no longer alone, but united. Henceforth her name is lost in his. Her support is derived from him, or ought to be, and her will is yielded to him. Something infinitely greater than this comes to pass when our life passes out of the human into the divine, and we can truly say,

Once it was my working,
His it hence shall be;
Once I tried to use Him,
Now He uses me.

If the Lord Jesus did not presume to begin His public ministry or perform a single service as our Teacher and Example until He received the Holy Spirit, what right have we to go forth in our self-sufficiency and attempt to minister at the altar of Christian service until we be endued with power from on high?

(The Christ In the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Do we have a spiritual baptism similar to what Jesus had and if so when does this happen to us?

Luke 3:23-38

In striking testimony to the perfect humanness of all this scene is the fact that Luke introduces the genealogy of the Lord Jesus at this very point. This genealogy, unlike that in Matthew, is traced back, not to Abraham, but to Adam. "The son of Adam, the son of God" (3:38), is the sublime climax of this long list of names which links the blessed Jesus with our fallen race. His pedigree therefore is not that of a Jew, but of a man; not the descendant of Abraham, but the son of Adam. Well may the apostle say, "Verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham" (Hebrews 2:16, KJV).

(The Christ In the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Due to Adam's disobedience death reigned from Adam until Christ. **Explain in your own words how this sentence of death upon all mankind was reversed.**

John 14:19 Rom. 5:12-21 1 Cor. 15:20-23

Luke 4:1-13

That old serpent who tempted Adam to sin in Paradise, was not afraid to assault the second Adam, the Son of God. Whether he understood that Jesus was "God manifest in the flesh" may perhaps be doubted. But that he saw in Jesus One who had come into the world to overthrow his kingdom, is clear and plain. He had seen what happened at our Lord's baptism. He had heard the marvelous words from heaven. He felt that the great Friend of man was come, and that his own dominion was in peril. The Redeemer had come. The prison door was about to be thrown open. The lawful captives were about to be set free. All this, we need not doubt, Satan saw, and resolved to fight for his own. The prince of this world would not give way to the Prince of peace without a mighty struggle. He had overcome the first Adam in the garden of Eden—why should he not overcome the last Adam in the wilderness? He had spoiled man once of Paradise—why should he not spoil him of the kingdom of God?

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

In His temptation by Satan, Jesus exposed the tactics of the enemy and revealed to us how we can overcome when we are tempted. This experience helped prepare our Lord for His present ministry as our sympathetic high priest, and we may come to Him for the help we need to overcome the tempter. **What were Satan's tactics—are they the same today—and how can we overcome even as Jesus did?**

John 8:44 2 Cor. 2:11 Eph. 6:11-16 Jas 4:7 1 John 2:13,15-17 Rev. 12:10,11 Rev. 13:2,7

Luke 4:14-21

We may well believe that there was a deep meaning in our Lord's selection of this special passage of Isaiah. He desired to impress on His Jewish hearers, the true character of the Messiah, whom He knew all Israel were then expecting. He well knew that they were looking for a mere temporal king, who would deliver them from Roman dominion, and make them once more first among the nations. Such expectations, He would have them understand, were premature and wrong. Messiah's kingdom at His first coming was to be a spiritual kingdom over hearts. His victories were not to be over worldly enemies, but over sin. His redemption was not to be from the power of Rome, but from the power of the devil and the world. It was in this way, and in no other way at present, that they must expect to see the words of Isaiah fulfilled.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Luke is careful to tell us in this passage that "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out throughout all the surrounding region." In the synagogue on the Sabbath day, He read only verses 1 and 2a from Isaiah 61, then He closed the book (or scroll) and sat down. **Why do you think Jesus stopped there and did not continue reading the remainder of chapter 61?** Keep in mind as you do answer this, that Jesus was called to a certain ministry, and that following His would come the ministry of the Church. **Give Scripture to back your statements where possible.**

Luke 4:22-31

How diligently we ought to persevere in well doing, notwithstanding discouragements. We are doubtless meant to draw this lesson from the conduct of our Lord, after His rejection at Nazareth. Nothing moved by the treatment He received, He patiently works on. Thrust out of one place, He passes on to another. Cast forth from Nazareth, He comes to Capernaum, and there "teaches on the Sabbath days."

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

For what reason did those in the synagogue cast Jesus out of the city, and attempt to kill Him? And, does this kind of “reasoning” still exist today where the story of Jesus and His teaching is refused?

Luke 4:32-44

We see sicknesses and devils alike yielding to His command. He rebukes unclean spirits, and they come forth from the unhappy people whom they had possessed. He rebukes a fever, and lays His hands on sick people, and at once their diseases depart, and the sick are healed.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Give other examples in the Gospels of unclean spirits and demons being subject to Christ. Was there ever a time that they did not submit to Him? In what ways did they show evidence of recognizing who He was?

Matt. 8:28-34 Matt. 9:32,33 Matt. 15:22-28 Matt. 17:14-21 Mark 1:24 Mark 16:9

Luke 5:1-11

What encouragement our Lord gives to unquestioning obedience! We are told, that after preaching He bade Simon “launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” He receives an answer which exhibits in a striking manner the mind of a good servant. “Master,” says Simon, “we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing; nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net.” And what was the reward of this ready compliance with the Lord’s commands? At once, we are told “they caught a great number of fish; and their net was breaking.”

We need not doubt that a practical lesson for all Christians is contained under these simple circumstances. We are meant to learn the blessing of ready, unhesitating obedience to every plain command of Christ. The path of duty may sometimes be hard and disagreeable. The wisdom of the course we propose to follow may not be apparent to the world. But none of these things must move us. We are not to confer with flesh and blood. We are to go straight forward when Jesus says, “Go;” and do a thing boldly, unflinchingly, and decidedly, when Jesus says, “Do it.” We are to walk by faith and not by sight, and believe that what we see not now to be right and reasonable, we shall see hereafter. So acting, we shall never find in the long run that we are losers.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Through this miracle of the great catch of fish at Jesus’ command, we see in verse 8 how the very power of God Himself had been revealed to Peter, as well as to James and John. Then, stricken in conscience, Peter cries out, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” **If you, also, like Peter, have experienced the deep workings of God Himself within your spirit so that you, too, are able to identify with that sharp striking of your conscience brought on by His inner revelation in your heart, please share something of that occasion here.** These confessions can be a strong testimony for someone else.

Luke 5:12-15

We see in this passage, *our Lord Jesus Christ’s power over incurable diseases.* “A man full of leprosy,” applies to Him for relief, and is at once healed. This was a mighty miracle. Of all ills which can afflict the body of man, leprosy appears to be the most severe. It affects every part of the constitution at once. It brings sores and decay upon the skin, corruption into the blood, and rottenness into the bones. It is a living death, which no medicine can check or stay. Yet here we read of a leper being made well in a moment. It is but one touch from the hand of the Son of God, and the cure is effected. One single touch of that almighty hand! “And immediately the leprosy departed from him.”

We have in this wonderful history a lively emblem of Christ’s power to heal our souls. What are we all but lepers spiritually in the sight of God? Sin is the deadly sickness by which we are all affected. It has eaten our constitution. It has infected all our faculties. Heart, conscience, mind, and will, all are diseased by sin. From the sole of our foot to the crown of our head, there is no soundness about us, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores. (Isaiah 1:6) Such is the state in which we are born. Such is the state in which we naturally live. We are in one sense dead long before we are laid in the grave. Our bodies may be healthy and active, but our souls are by nature dead in trespasses and sins.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

How can we be delivered from this body of death?

Matt. 23:37 John 5:40 2 Pet. 3:9

Why did Jesus tell him to show himself to the priest in Luke 5:14?

1 John 2:8

Luke 5:16-26

Jesus withdrew into the desert places and he continued in prayer. On a certain day he was teaching and, sitting listening, there were Pharisees and experts in the law who had come from every village in Galilee and from Judaea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was there to enable him to heal. (Luke 5:16,17)

There are only two verses here; but as we read them we must pause, for this indeed is a milestone. The scribes and the Pharisees had arrived on the scene. The opposition which would never be satisfied until it had killed Jesus had emerged into the open.

If we are to understand what happened to Jesus we must understand something about the Law, and the relationship of the scribes and the Pharisees to it. When the Jews returned from Babylon about 440 B.C. they knew well that, humanly speaking, their hopes of national greatness were gone. They therefore deliberately decided that they would find their greatness in being a people of the law. They would bend all their energies to knowing and keeping God's law.

The basis of the law was the Ten Commandments. These commandments are principles for life. They are not rules and regulations; they do not legislate for each event and for every circumstance. For a certain section of the Jews that was not enough. They desired not great principles but a rule to cover every conceivable situation. From the Ten Commandments they proceeded to develop and elaborate these rules.

(The Gospel of Luke, W. Barclay)

Here speak to the way Jesus handled these self-deceived hypocrites who were out to destroy Him.

Luke 5:27-32

We are told that when Levi was converted, and had made a feast on the occasion, he invited "a great company of publicans" to share it. Most probably these men were his old friends and companions. He knew well what their souls needed, for he had been one of them. He desired to make them acquainted with that Savior who had been merciful to himself. Having found mercy, he wanted them also to find it. Having been graciously delivered from the bondage of sin, he wished others also to be set free.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Compare the heart and the religious backgrounds of the scribes and Pharisees with that of Levi who now would be leaving his tax collecting to follow Jesus. Explain how this fits in with vv. 36-39 where Jesus tells them to put only new wine into new wineskins.

Luke 5:33-39

The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, v. 35. When Christ shall leave them with their hearts full of sorrow, their hands full of work, and the world full of enmity and rage against them, *then shall they fast*, and shall not be so well fed as they are now. *We both hunger and thirst and are naked* (1 Cor. 4:11). Then they shall keep many more *religious fasts* than they do now, for Providence will call them to it; they will then serve the Lord *with fastings* (Acts 13:2).

(Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Matthew Henry)

The Jews had an idea that a man was not being religious unless he was being uncomfortable. They believed in fasting, mainly to bring attention to the one fasting. Jesus was radically opposed to "religion by rule," and thus he used vivid pictures, even likening the Christian life to a wedding feast, because it is the joy of the presence of God. **Jesus also was well aware that He had come to die, and that the cross awaited Him, was He not? Based on this, and His sacrifice for us, what does the Word tell us about fasting and praying? Are there times when this is important in God's sight? Give Scripture references if possible.**

Luke 6:1-12

It is a bad symptom of any man's state of soul, when he begins to put the second things in religion in the first place, and the first things in the second, or the things ordained by man above the things ordained by God. Let us beware of falling into this state of mind. There is something sadly wrong in our spiritual condition, when the only thing we look at is others in their outward Christianity, and the principal question we ask is, whether they worship in our communion, and use our ceremonial, and serve God in our way.—Do they repent of sin? Do they believe on Christ? Are they living holy lives? These are the chief points to which our attention ought to be directed. The moment we begin to place anything in religion before these things, we are in danger of becoming as thorough Pharisees as the accusers of the disciples.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

It is now becoming clear in the opposition to Jesus by the Pharisees that their immediate charge against Him was the breaking of the Sabbath. The Pharisees also knew the Scriptures and read them meticulously. **However, would you say that, yes, they knew the Scriptures inside and out, but that they did not know the *real meaning*? Why did the Pharisees miss the meaning—and why do we so often miss it also? Were their minds truly open? And what about their hearts—were they truly *needy*? Can a *true need* unlock the Scriptures?**

Luke 6:13-19

How little we are told of the worldly position of the first ministers of the Christian Church! Four of them, we know, were fishermen. One of them, at least, was a publican (tax collector). Most of them, probably were Galileans. Not one of them, so far as we can see from the New Testament, was great, or rich, or noble, or highly connected. Not one was a Pharisee, or scribe, or priest, or ruler, or elder among the people. All were, apparently, “unlearned and ignorant men” (Acts 4:13). All were poor.

There is something deeply instructive in the fact which is now before us. It shows us that our Lord Jesus Christ's kingdom was entirely independent of help from this world. His Church was not built by might, or by power, but by the Spirit of the living God. (Zech. 4:6)—It supplies us with an unanswerable proof of the divine origin of Christianity. A religion which turned the world upside down, while its first preachers were all poor men, must needs have been from heaven. If the apostles had possessed money to give their hearers, or been followed by armies to frighten them, an infidel might well deny that there was anything wonderful in their success. But the poverty of our Lord's disciples cuts away such arguments from beneath the infidel's feet. With a doctrine most unpalatable to the natural heart—with nothing whatever to bribe or compel obedience—a few lowly Galileans shook the world, and changed the face of the Roman empire. One thing only can account for this. The Gospel of Christ, which these men proclaimed, was the truth of God.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

What criteria, or guidelines, should church leaders prayerfully use before appointing key workers in the church?

Matt. 28:18-20 Eph. 4:11-15 1 Tim. 3:1-5 2 Tim. 2:1-5 Titus 1:5-16

Luke 6:20-26

Who are the persons to whom our Lord says, “Woe unto you?” They are the men who refuse to seek treasure in heaven, because they love the good things of this world better, and will not give up their money, if need requires, for Christ's sake. They are the men who prefer the joys and so-called happiness of this world, to joy and peace in believing, and will not risk the loss of the one in order to gain the other. They are those who love praise of men more than the praise of God, and will turn their backs on Christ, rather than not keep in with the world.—These are the kind of men whom our Lord had in view when he pronounced the solemn words, “Woe, woe unto you!” He knew well that there were thousands of such persons among the Jews,—thousands who, notwithstanding His miracles and sermons, would love the world better than Him. He knew well that there would always be thousands of such in His professing Church—thousands who, though convinced of the truth of the Gospel, would never give up anything for its sake. To all such He delivers an awful warning—“Woe, woe unto you!”

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

There were—the blessed and those receiving “woes” from Jesus. The temporal rewards of the blessed were anything but inviting, as compared with the temporal situation of those of the world who were not willing to forsake it for Jesus' sake. **In your own words, what needs to happen within and without a person, to cause him to be willing, not only to stand openly for Jesus, but also to suffer for His sake? Also, what is the end result of those who choose only the**

present pleasures and cannot endure to the end for Christ?

Matt. 24:14 John 3:16 John 12:47 John 15:19 John 16:8,33 John 17:14,16,18 Acts 17:31 Rom. 5:12
Rom. 3:19 Rom. 12:1,2 2 Cor. 5:19 Gal. 6:14 Titus 2:12 Jas. 1:27 2 Pet. 3:6,7 1 John 5:4,5

Luke 6:27-38

The disciples might ask, "Whom are we to love?" He bids them "love their enemies, do good to them that hate them, bless them that curse them, and pray for them that despitefully use them." Their love was to be like His own towards sinners—unselfish, disinterested and uninfluenced by any hope of return.—What was to be the manner of this love? the disciples might ask. It was to be self-sacrificing and self-denying. "Unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other."—"Him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also." They were to give up much, and endure much, for the sake of showing kindness and avoiding strife. They were to forego even their rights, and submit to wrong, rather than awaken angry passions and create quarrels. In this they were to be like their Master long-suffering, meek and lowly of heart.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Still today we are challenged by our Lord and the Holy Spirit to bear this same love, compassion and caring toward our enemies, many of whom it is difficult to like, let alone love. **How is this to be brought about, especially when this is opposite to our flesh nature?**

Luke 10:33 Rom. 8:22-28 Heb. 10:14 1 Pet. 3:8 Jude 22

Luke 6:39-45

We learn, in the first place, from these verses, *the great danger of listening to false teachers in religion*. Our Lord compares such teachers and their hearers to the blind leading the blind, and asks the reasonable question, "Shall they not both fall into the ditch?" He goes on to confirm the importance of His warning by declaring, that "the disciple is not above his master," and the scholar cannot be expected to know more than his teacher. If a man will hear unsound instruction, we cannot expect him to become otherwise than unsound in the faith himself.

The subject which our Lord brings before us here deserves far more attention than it generally receives. The amount of evil which unsound religious teaching has brought on the Church in every age is incalculable. The loss of souls which it has occasioned is fearful to contemplate. A teacher who does not know the way to heaven himself, is not likely to lead his hearers to heaven. The man who hears such a teacher runs a fearful risk himself of being lost eternally. "If the blind lead the blind, both must fall into the ditch."

If we would escape the danger against which our Lord warns us, we must not neglect to prove the teaching that we hear by the holy Scriptures. We must not believe things merely because ministers say them. We must not suppose, as a matter of course, that ministers can make no mistakes. We must call to mind our Lord's words on another occasion, "Beware of false prophets" (Matt 7:15). We must remember the advice of St. Paul and St. John: "Prove all things" "Try the spirits whether they are of God" (1 Thess 5:21; 1 John 4:1). With the Bible in our hands, and the promise of guidance from the Holy Ghost to all who seek it, we shall be without excuse if our souls are led astray. The blindness of ministers is no excuse for the darkness of the people. The man who from indolence, or superstition, or affected humility, refuses to distrust the teaching of the minister whom he finds set over him, however unsound it may be, will at length share his minister's portion. If people will trust blind guides, they must not be surprised if they are led to the pit.

We learn, secondly, from these verses, that *those who reprove the sins of others should strive to be of blameless life*. Our Lord teaches us this lesson by a practical saying. He shews the unreasonableness of a man finding fault with "a mote," or trifling thing in a brother's eye, while he himself has a "beam," or some large and formidable object sticking in his own eye.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Fill in the blank spaces by using the words below:

Jesus is still dealing with the matter of hypocritical _____, which violate the law of _____. A person who is quick to _____ the faults of others, while ignoring his own _____, will be of little help to others. Here Jesus particularly has in mind the _____ and their disciples.

Moses commend condemn good deeds shortcomings teachers

Also, please read the following Scripture verses in connection with the above teaching:

Prov. 2:1-22 2 Tim. 2:15,16 Jas. 1:2-8 2 Pet. 3:13-16

Luke 6:46-49

What a mournful picture our Lord draws of the religion of the man who hears Christ's sayings, but does not obey them. He compares him to one who, "without a foundation, built an house upon the earth."

Such a man's religion may look well for a season. An ignorant eye may detect no difference between the possessor of such a religion, and a true Christian. Both may worship in the same church. Both may use the same ordinances. Both may profess the same faith. The outward appearance of the house built on the rock, and the house without any solid foundation, may be much the same. But the day of trial and affliction is the test which the religion of the mere outward professor cannot stand. When storm and tempest beat on the house which has no foundation, the walls which looked well in sunshine and fair weather, are sure to come to the ground. The Christianity which consists of merely hearing religion taught, without doing anything, is a building which must finally fall. Great indeed will be the ruin! There is no loss like the loss of a soul!

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

If we asked you what made the foolish builder in this Scripture passage choose so unwisely, we think you would say he wanted to avoid toil and also that he was definitely short-sighted. **Now, regarding your own life in Christ, when you find you are in difficult trials and affliction, what will be your chances of becoming victorious in them, if prior to their arrival you (by the strength of the Holy Spirit of Christ) have laid aside pride, self-righteousness, rebellious flesh, and have counted all things but loss for Christ's sake? We will give you one set of Scriptures; please add those of your own to this list to help answer this question.**

Rom. 8:12-17

The disciples certainly had to learn these lessons and we, too, are not exempt.

Luke 7:1-10

Faith like this was indeed rare when the Lord Jesus was upon earth. "Show us a sign from heaven," was the demand of the sneering Pharisees. To see something wonderful was the great desire of the multitudes who crowded after our Lord. No wonder that we read the remarkable words, "Jesus marveled at him," and said unto the people, "I have not found so great faith, no, not even in Israel." None ought to have been so believing as the children of those who were led through the wilderness, and brought into the promised land. But the last was first and the first last. The faith of a Roman soldier proved stronger than that of the Jews.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

This centurion had an unusual attitude toward his slaves. He also was a very humble man and he surely had an unusual attitude toward the Jews, since he, himself, was Roman (Gentile). And, finally, he had a great faith in God, which Jesus evidently prized above all. **Tell us from your knowledge of these times how the centurion came to be such an unusual leader with the great faith that he had. Also, look up any mention you can find of "God-Fearers" in the Word.**

Psalms 103:7

Luke 7:11-18

We learn from these verses, *what sorrow sin has brought into the world*. We are told of a funeral at Nain. All funerals are mournful things, but it is difficult to imagine a funeral more sorrowful than the one here described. It was the funeral of a young man, and that young man the only son of his mother, and that mother a widow. There is not an item in the whole story, which is not full of misery. And all this misery, be it remembered, was brought into the world by sin. God did not create it at the beginning, when He made all things "very good." Sin is the cause of it all. "Sin entered into the world" when Adam fell, "and death by sin" (Rom. 5:12).

Let us never forget this great truth. The world around us is full of sorrow. Sickness, and pain, and infirmity, and poverty, and labor, and trouble, abound on every side. From one end of the world to the other, the history of families is full of lamentation, and weeping, and mourning, and woe. And whence does it all come? Sin is the fountain and root to which all must be traced. There would neither have been tears, nor cares, nor illness, nor deaths, nor funerals in the

earth, if there had been no sin. We must bear this state of things patiently. We cannot alter it. We may thank God that there is a remedy in the Gospel, and that this life is not all. But in the meantime, let us lay the blame at the right door. Let us lay the blame on sin.

How much we ought to hate sin! Instead of loving it, cleaving to it, dallying with it, excusing it, playing with it, we ought to hate it with a deadly hatred. Sin is the great murderer, and thief, and pestilence, and nuisance of this world. Let us make no peace with it. Let us wage a ceaseless warfare against it. It is "the abominable thing which God hateth." Happy is he who is of one mind with God, and can say, I "abhor that which is evil" (Rom. 12:9).

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

In this v. 16 passage, the people watching no doubt remembered the story of the prophet Elisha raising another widow's son in an area very close to Nain (2 Kings 4:18-37). They indeed glorified God as they saw Jesus demonstrate such utter compassion for this widow. In the day in which this miracle took place, many had placed their faith in Stoicism which believed that God really had no "feelings" for His creatures; that His characteristic was *apathy, totally incapable of feeling*. **If you could have been there at this miracle by Jesus who claimed to be their Messiah, as He now showed and demonstrated the highest form of *compassion* for this widow and her son in raising him from the dead—do you think you would have seen a complete turn-around in their judging of the true God?**

Luke 7:19-35

J. C. Ryle's view on why John sent his disciples to Jesus to ask, "Are You the Coming One or do we look for another?" is the following:

John's message was not sent on his account, but on account of his disciples. It was not sent because his own faith was failing, but because he wished those he was about to leave behind him to believe in Jesus as the Messiah.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Since John had been languishing in prison for some time now with plenty of time to think and ponder, does it appear that he is now possibly doubting Jesus' divinity as the true Messiah and Deliverer? Or are you able to accept J. C. Ryle's view above?

Isa. 29:18, 19 Isa. 35:5, 6

Luke 7:36-50

A sense of having our sins forgiven is the mainspring and life-blood of love to Christ. This, beyond doubt, was the lesson which our Lord wished Simon the Pharisee to learn, when He told him the story of the two debtors. "One owed his creditor five hundred pence, and the other fifty." Both had "nothing to pay," and both were forgiven freely. And then came the searching question: "Which of them will love him most?" Here was the true explanation, our Lord told Simon, of the deep love which the penitent woman before Him had displayed. Her many tears, her deep affection, her public reverence, her action in anointing His feet, were all traceable to one cause. She had been much forgiven, and so she loved much. Her love was the effect of her forgiveness, not the cause—the consequence of her forgiveness, not the condition—the result of her forgiveness, not the root. Would the Pharisee know why this woman showed so much love? It was because she felt much forgiven. Would he know why he himself had shown his guest so little love? It was because he felt under no obligation—had no consciousness of having obtained forgiveness—had no sense of debt to Christ.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Paul knew that the one thing which shuts a man off from God is self-sufficiency. **Using 1 Tim. 1:15, show how Paul finally viewed himself.**

With the words listed below, fill in the following blanks:

The greatest of _____ is to be conscious of no _____; but a sense of _____ will open the door to the forgiveness of _____, because God is _____, and love's greatest glory is to be _____.

need sin God sins needed love

Also, tell what is your greatest motivation for worshipping God.

Luke 8:1-15

Beware of any religion which does not bear fruit in our lives. Our Lord tells us that the hearts of those who hear the word aright, are like good ground. The seed of the Gospel sinks down deeply into their wills, and produces practical results in their faith and practice. They not only hear with pleasure, but act with decision. They repent. They believe. They obey.

Forever let us bear in mind that this is the only religion that saves souls. Outward profession of Christianity, and the formal use of church ordinances and sacraments, never yet gave man a good hope in life, or peace in death, or rest in the world beyond the grave. There must be fruits of the Spirit in our hearts and lives or else the Gospel is preached to us in vain. Those only who bear such fruits, shall be found at Christ's right hand in the day of His appearing.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Below are four statements that teach about the ground in which the seeds are planted, and within them are blanks for you to fill in. Following the statements will be a choice of a word or words that belong in the blanks.

**1) The hard path represents the _____ mind, the mind that refuses to take it in.
inquiring inquisitive shut**

**2) The shallow ground represents those who accept the word but who _____ it out, and never realize its consequences.
are careful never think pause and think**

**3) The thorny ground stands for those whose lives are _____ that the things of God get crowded out. The worst enemy of the _____ is the second best.
so full so entangled so busy excellent worker best**

**4) The good ground stands for the _____ heart.
noble hopeful good understanding**

If you fear you are lukewarm and not striving for God's best, take time to meditate on Jesus' words in Rev. 3:14-22.

Luke 8:16-21

These verses form a practical application of the famous parable of the sower. They are intended to nail and clench in our minds the mighty lesson which that parable contains. They deserve the especial attention of all true-hearted hearers of the Gospel of Christ.

We learn, firstly, from these verses, that *spiritual knowledge ought to be diligently used*. Our Lord tells us that it is like a lighted candle, utterly useless, when covered with a bushel, or put under a bed,—only useful when set upon a candlestick, and placed where it can be made serviceable to the wants of men.

When we hear this lesson, let us first think of *ourselves*. The Gospel which we possess was not given us only to be admired, talked of, and professed,—but to be practiced. It was not meant merely to reside in our intellect, and memories, and tongues,—but to be seen in our lives. Christianity is a talent committed to our charge, and one which brings with it great responsibility. We are not in darkness like the heathen. A glorious light is put before us. Let us take heed that we use it. While we have the light let us walk in the light. (John 12:35)

But let us not only think of ourselves. Let us also think of *others*. There are millions in the world who have no spiritual light at all. They are without God, without Christ, and without hope. (Eph. 2:12) Can we do nothing for them?—There are thousands around us, in our own land, who are unconverted and dead in sins, seeing nothing and knowing nothing aright? Can we do nothing for them?—These are questions to which every true Christian ought to find an answer. We should strive, in every way, to spread our religion. The highest form of selfishness is that of the man who is content to go to heaven alone. The truest charity is to endeavor to share with others every spark of religious light we possess ourselves, and so to hold our own candle that it may give light to every one around us. Happy is that soul, which, as soon as it receives light from heaven, begins to think of others as well as itself! No candle which God lights was ever meant to burn alone.

Take heed how ye hear. Let it be remembered in reading such sayings as these, that the bulk of mankind in all ages are peculiarly dependent on oral teaching. The number of those who have time and abilities for reading and private study will always be small. In the days when printing was not invented, and the writings of men were few, the lesson must have been especially important. But it will never lose its importance as long as the world endures. (Luke 8:16)

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Explain the remainder of verse 18: “For whoever has, to him more will be given, and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him.” Give Scripture if you can.

Luke 8:22-25

Be prepared for storms if you link your lives with Christ. But they cannot hurt you. Men and demons will rage against you, but there is a limit to their power. Jesus rules the waves. “The sea is His and He made it.” If only you can include yourself and Christ in that pronoun “we” of v. 24, you can never perish, although there be as many demons against you as tiles on the house roofs. So Luther found it. See Isa. 54:17.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

If you believe that Christ has complete and absolute control over the sea when a violent storm arises, are you able to extend that belief to every vicissitude and every power that is beyond your own control? For instance, over every atom and molecule, over every bacteria and virus, over every hurricane, tornado, earthquake, fire and flood, and all the shifting plates of earth under the surface of our continents—in other words, over *all* things which you are unable to control. Another way of saying this is, are you able to fully trust His power and His wisdom *in everything*?

If you are saying a wholehearted “yes” (though it may be with a tremor), can you then freely declare that you have come to the place of *rest in Him*? (Hebrews chapter 4 and John 11:28)

It has been said with Biblical backing that if a man is not living in the place of *rest in God*, then he is out of God’s will. (Here recall that God created man on the sixth day, and on the seventh, He rested—showing man his first duty—to rest with His Maker.) Here please make your personal comments regarding the spiritual status of your own life at this time.

Luke 8:26-36

Marvelous as the change was which appeared in this demoniac’s condition when healed, it is not one whit more marvelous than the change which passes over every one who is born again, and turned from the power of Satan to God. Never is a man in his right mind until he is converted, or in his right place until he sits by faith at the feet of Jesus, or rightly clothed until he has put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Have we ever considered what real conversion to God is? It is nothing else but the miraculous release of a captive, the miraculous restoration of a man to his right mind, the miraculous deliverance of a soul from the devil.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

This man was now in his right mind. Jesus had cast out the demons in his life and he now begins a new life that is able to turn away the evils that come into his path. In the classic *Pilgrim’s Progress* John Bunyan shows us that the Christian journey is a daily process for everyone who accepts Christ. The Chinese author Watchman Nee has given us a book entitled “*Sit, Walk, Stand*” which takes the new Christian through three processes in the study of Ephesians, in order to progress in the way of Christ. **Why is it necessary to grow daily in our walk in the Lord following salvation, and what is the second step after receiving Him? Please use Scripture references.**

Gal. 5:16-25 Gal. 6:7,8,14 Eph. 2:4-10,19-22 Eph. 4:11-16,20-32 Eph. 5:8-19 Eph. 6:14-18 Phil. 1:8-11
Phil. 2:2-5 Phil. 4:4-8 Col. 1:21-23 Col. 3:1-17

Luke 8:37-40

Let us take heed that we do not sin the sin of the Gadarenes. Let us beware lest by coldness, and inattention, and worldliness, we drive Jesus from our doors, and compel Him to forsake us entirely. Of all sins which we can sin, this is the most sinful. Of all states of soul into which we can fall, none is so fearful as to be “let alone.” Let it rather be our daily prayer that Christ may never leave us to ourselves. The old wreck, high and dry on the sand-bank, is not a more wretched sight, than the man whose heart Christ has visited with mercies and judgments, but has at last ceased to visit, because He was not received. The barred door is a door at which Jesus will not always knock. The Gadarene mind must not be surprised to see Christ leaving it and going away.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

These Gadarenes asked Jesus to go away for they hated having the routine of their life disturbed. **In any event, can we compare the value of a herd of swine with the value of a man's immortal soul? Does it appear that they loved their swine more than they valued the soul of this particular man?**

Also, compare this to the requests that Jesus does make in lives—is it quite similar? For instance, Jesus says to an employer: “You can't be a Christian and make people work under conditions like that.” Or, He might say to an individual, “You must give up that controlling habit; you must change your life in order to walk with Me.” Please comment on the inner spiritual changes that are required when Jesus brings His new life into a person.

Luke 8:41-56

This passage relates the account of a desperate woman whose healing was the result of a great and persistent faith. Her illness made her ceremonially unclean and disqualified her for mixing with crowds of people, yet she was certain that “if only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.” Jesus did not rebuke her, but delayed His mission to the home of Jairus, whose daughter was dying, in order to assure her of healing and salvation.

Jesus later raised Jairus' daughter from the dead, but here He took time to minister to one with positive faith. That such persistence is rewarded is not to suggest healing or any other work of God is earned by human effort. It rather illustrates the need to be bold in what we believe—to not be deterred by circumstance or discouraged by others. “All things are possible to him [or her] who believes” and they all are by God's grace (Eph 2:8, 9).

(Kingdom Dynamics Note, Spirit Filled Life Bible)

The story of the sudden illness of Jairus' daughter depicts the pathos of life suddenly turned to gladness. The little girl, about 12 years of age, was an only child. Her father, Jairus, was the president of the synagogue, and was responsible for its administration and ordering of public worship. No doubt he was a man of means, but now, the most precious thing in his household was to be taken from him. When Jesus finally arrived, the customary wailing had begun by the neighbors and friends, for they believed her to have died, but Jesus would have none of this publicity, and he had them leave. Then in the quiet of His tender caring, He bid her rise, calling her “Daughter,” which is a term of gentle love, and He restored her to her parents. As for Jairus, his name means “whom God enlightens,” which no doubt helps to explain his solid faith in Jesus' power to heal.

Both the woman with the issue of blood, and Jairus had great faith, and they demonstrated it by their actions. They were willing to “hope against hope,” for no doubt in their hearts they were saying, “You never know what this Jesus can do.”

And none of us knows what Jesus can or will do until we trust Him and wait to see what His actions on our behalf will be.

Can you recall some vital incident in your life where you had to let go of all human solutions and just step out in solid faith upon the One who has promised to keep us in all our ways? Would you say that we can still hope in the unsearchable riches and the all-sufficient grace and the unconquerable power of God?

Luke 9:1-6

All ministers of the Gospel would do well to read carefully this portion of our Lord's instructions. All missionaries, and district visitors, and Sunday School teachers, would do well to lay it to heart. Let them not be cast down if their work seems in vain, and their labor without profit. Let them remember that the very first preachers and teachers whom Jesus employed were sent forth with a distinct warning, that not all would believe. Let them work on patiently, and sow the good seed without fainting. Duties are theirs. Events are God's. Apostles may plant and water. The Holy Ghost alone can give spiritual life. The Lord Jesus knows what is in the heart of man. He does not despise His laborers because little of the seed they sow bears fruit. The harvest may be small. But every laborer shall be rewarded according to his work.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Is this commission that Jesus now gives to His twelve disciples, and its purpose, the same as the Lord had for His larger group of disciples in Acts 1:8—does He speak of an added power there? How important is the enabling of the Holy Spirit? And, finally, is this the same commission that Jesus has given to His church (i.e., to us)?

Luke 9:7-9

Let us mark, in this passage, *the power of a bad conscience*. We are told, that when “Herod the tetrarch heard of all

that was done by our Lord, he was perplexed.” He said, “John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?” Great and powerful as he was, the tidings of our Lord’s ministry called his sins to remembrance, and disturbed him even in his royal palace. Surrounded as he was by everything which is considered to make life enjoyable, the report of another preacher of righteousness filled him with alarm. The recollection of his own wickedness in killing John the Baptist flashed on his mind. He knew he had done wrong. He felt guilty, self-condemned, and self-dissatisfied. Faithful and true is that saying of Solomon’s, “The way of transgressors is hard” (Prov. 13:15). Herod’s sin had found him out. The prison and the sword had silenced John the Baptist’s tongue, but they could not silence the voice of Herod’s inward man. God’s truth can neither be silenced, nor bound, nor killed.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Elaborate (or more fully explain) the following Scriptures:

Proverbs 13:15: “Good understanding gains favor, but the way of the transgressor (unfaithful) is hard.”

Isaiah 59:1, 2: “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor His ear heavy that it cannot hear; But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear.”

Luke 9:10-17

“*Give Ye Them to Eat.*” The disciples passed the bread from His hands to those of the hungry crowds. What an honor that though we are least of saints we should have this opportunity of cooperation! But how often are we prepared for our work by being compelled to study the inadequacy of our resources. The only thing for us to do is to place them at His disposal.

But the bread of life is sufficient for all mankind. “They ... were all filled.” There is a universal connection between hunger and bread. Other foods are confined to special countries and districts, but bread is for the educated and ignorant, the rich and poor, the old and young. So with Jesus Christ. To every soul on earth His living, dying love makes its appeal and is enough to satisfy.

The fragments feed the distributors. More was left over than had been possessed at first. To impart to others is to gain for oneself. Fling the seed generously. With what measure ye measure, it shall be measured to you!

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

The twelve disciples had just returned from the preaching and healing ministry on which Jesus had sent them, and now they all longed to be together. Yet the expectant multitude crowded around wanting to hear Him and also expecting healing. This canceled the privilege of Jesus and His disciples enjoying much needed privacy together. **Here speak to Jesus’ great understanding of the people and their need, and also His understanding of their hunger inasmuch that not only all their needs were supplied, but much was left over. Do we believe this passage and His miracle power, and yet in our times of need have a fear that we will not be supplied?**

Luke 9:18-22

Let us notice in this passage, *the variety of opinions about our Lord Jesus Christ, which prevailed during His earthly ministry.* We are told that some said that He was John the Baptist;—some that He was Elias;—and some that one of the old prophets was risen again. One common remark applies to all these opinions. All were agreed that our Lord’s doctrine was not like that of the Scribes and Pharisees. All saw in Him a bold witness against evil that was in the world.

Let it never surprise us, to find the same variety of opinions about Christ and His Gospel in our own times. God’s truth disturbs the spiritual laziness of man. It obliges them to think. It makes them begin to talk and reason, and speculate, and invent theories to account for its spread in some quarters, and its rejection in others. Thousands in every age of the Church spend their lives in this way, and never come to the point of drawing near to God. They satisfy themselves with a miserable round of gossip about this preacher’s sermons, or that writer’s opinions. They think “this man goes too far,” and “that man does not go far enough.” Some doctrines they approve, and others they disapprove. Some teachers they call “sound,” and others they call “unsound.” They cannot quite make up their own minds what is true, or what is right. Year rolls on after year, and finds them in the same state—talking, criticizing, fault-finding, speculating, but never getting any farther—hovering like the moth around religion, but never settling down like the bee, to feed on its treasures. They never boldly lay hold of Christ. They never set themselves heartily to the great business of serving God. They never take up the cross, and become thorough Christians. And, at last, after all their talking, they die in their sins, unprepared to meet God.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

This was one of the most crucial moments in the life of Jesus. He *knew* that He was going to a cross to *die*, and *he wanted to know* before He went, if there was *anyone* who had really discovered who He was.

Paul did not say, "I know *what* I have believed"—no, he said, "I know *whom* I have believed" (2 Tim. 1:12). Christianity does not mean reciting a creed; it means *KNOWING* a person. **Can you here proclaim (without equivocation) that you have personally grasped, experienced and possessed the above truth? If for any reason, you are not positive in this claim, here read and pray about the following Scriptures:**

Ps. 139:23,24 John 3:35,36 John 7:17 John 17:24 Rom. 12:1,2 2 Tim. 2:15 1 Cor. 6:19,20 1 Cor. 7:23

John 9:23-27

The possession of the whole world, and all that it contains, would never make a man happy. Its pleasures are false and deceptive. Its riches, rank and honors, have no power to satisfy the heart. So long as we have not got them they glitter, and sparkle, and seem desirable. The moment we have them we find that they are empty bubbles, and cannot make us feel content. And, worst of all, when we possess this world's good things, to the utmost bound of our desire, we cannot keep them. Death comes in and separates us from all our property for ever. Naked we came upon earth, and naked we go forth, and of all our possessions we can carry nothing with us. Such is the world, which occupies the whole attention of thousands! Such is the world, for the sake of which millions are every year destroying their souls!

The loss of the soul is the heaviest loss that can befall a man. The worst and most painful of diseases—the most distressing bankruptcy of fortune—the most disastrous shipwrecks—are a mere scratch of a pin compared to the loss of a soul. All other losses are bearable, or lost for a short time, but the loss of the soul is for evermore. It is to lose God and Christ and heaven and glory and happiness, to all eternity. It is to be cast away for ever, helpless and hopeless in hell!

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

A man must deny himself. A man must take up his cross. A man must spend his life, not hoard it. A man must be loyal to Christ and His kingdom.

How do you think God will look upon the commitments stated above? Please comment, and give Scripture where possible.

Luke 9:28-36

We are told that when Moses and Elijah appeared in glory with our Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration, they "talked with Him." And what was the subject of their conversation? We are not obliged to make conjectures and guesses about this. St. Luke tells us, "they spoke of His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." They knew the meaning of that death. They knew how much depended on it. Therefore they "talked" about it.

It is a grave mistake to suppose that holy men and women under the Old Testament knew nothing about the sacrifice which Christ was to offer up for the sin of the world. Their light, no doubt, was far less clear than ours. They saw things afar off and indistinctly, which we see, as it were, close at hand. But there is not the slightest proof that any Old Testament saint ever looked to any other satisfaction for sin, but that which God promised to make by sending Messiah. From Abel downwards the whole company of old believers appear to have been ever resting on a promised sacrifice, and a blood of almighty efficacy yet to be revealed. From the beginning of the world there has never been but one foundation of hope and peace for sinners—the death of an Almighty Mediator between God and man. That foundation is the center truth of all revealed religion. It was the subject of which Moses and Elijah were seen speaking when they appeared in glory. They spoke of the atoning death of Christ.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

How blessed indeed are we who live in the present New Testament time as Christians and followers of the Lord! **List some of the advantages that we as His people have over the saints of the Old Testament, for they are many.**

Luke 9:37-45

There are many Christian fathers and mothers at this day who are just as miserable about their children as the man of whom we are reading. The son who was once the "desire of their eyes," and in whom their lives were bound up, turns out a spendthrift, a profligate, and a companion of sinners. The daughter who was once the flower of the family, and of whom they said, "this same shall be the comfort of our old age," becomes self-willed, worldly-minded, and a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God. Their hearts are well nigh broken. The iron seems to enter into their souls. The devil appears

to triumph over them, and rob them of their choicest jewels. They are ready to cry, "I shall go to the grave sorrowing. What good shall my life do to me?"

Now what should a father or mother do in a case like this? They should do as the man before us did. They should go to Jesus in prayer, and cry to Him about their child. They should spread before that merciful Savior the tale of their sorrows, and entreat Him to help them. Great is the power of prayer and intercession! The child of many prayers shall seldom be cast away. God's time of conversion may not be ours. He may think fit to prove our faith by keeping us long waiting. But so long as a child lives, and a parent prays, we have no right to despair about that child's soul.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

In today's society which is mainly secular without any consideration of God as a ruling factor, it is extremely difficult for young people who have not placed their trust in Christ. The world promises them everything, yet not only gives them nothing, but robs them of what they did have, leaving them finally in destruction and despair. **If they continue on arrogantly choosing not to allow Jesus Christ to be Lord and Savior, will it become progressively harder to "hear that still inner Voice calling them?" (Give an example from Scripture if possible.)**

Luke 9:46-50

We are told that "there arose a reasoning among the disciples as to which of them should be the greatest." Wonderful as it may seem, this little company of fishermen and publicans was not beyond the plague of a self-seeking and ambitious spirit. Filled with the vain notion that our Lord's kingdom was to appear immediately, they were ready to wrangle about their place and precedency in it. Each thought his own claim the strongest. Each thought his own deserts and right to honor most unquestionable. Each thought that, whatever place was assigned to his brethren, a principal place ought to be assigned to himself. And all this happened in the company of Christ Himself, and under the noon-tide blaze of His teaching. Such is the heart of man!

There is something very instructive in this fact. It ought to sink down deeply into the heart of every Christian reader. Of all sins there is none against which we have such need to watch and pray, as pride. It is a pestilence that walketh in darkness, and a sickness that destroyeth at noon day. No sin is so deeply rooted in our nature. It cleaves to us like our skin. Its roots never entirely die. They are ready, at any moment, to spring up, and exhibit a most pernicious vitality. No sin is so specious and deceitful. It can wear the garb of humility itself. It can lurk in the hearts of the ignorant, the ungifted, and the poor, as well as in the minds of the great, the learned, and the rich.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Do you grasp clearly how there must be a total renunciation of the flesh (with all its selfish desires) in order to walk in the true steps of Christ? Here read Romans 6:2-14, and from this tell what Christ has done for us so that flesh can be truly overcome. Also, please note that this Scripture (and others) teaches us that we alone have no power to overcome the works of the flesh; therefore the work of Christ on His cross is the only means by which it can be accomplished. Note also the words "know," "reckon," and "yield" as used in this text, and apply them to your own learning and yielded surrender unto Christ. Comment as you feel appropriate.

Luke 9:51-56

Let us notice in these verses, *the steady determination with which our Lord Jesus Christ regarded His own crucifixion and death.* We read that "when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." He knew full well what was before Him. The betrayal, the unjust trial, the mockery, the scourging, the crown of thorns, the spitting, the nails, the spear, the agony on the cross—all, all were doubtless spread before His mind's eye, like a picture. But He never flinched for a moment from the work that He had undertaken. His heart was set on paying the price of our redemption, and going even to the prison of the grave, as our surety. He was full of tender love towards sinners. It was the desire of His whole soul to procure for them salvation. And so, "for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross despising the shame" (Heb 12:2).

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Show in your own words how Jesus was fulfilling the prophecy concerning Him in Isaiah 50:5-7.

Luke 9:57-62

We learn from this saying that it is impossible to serve Christ with a divided heart. If we are looking back to anything in this world, we are not fit to be disciples. Those who look back, like Lot's wife, want to go back. Jesus will not share His throne with anyone—no, not with our dearest relatives. He must have all our heart, or none. No doubt we are to honor father and mother, and love all around us. But when love to Christ and love to relatives come in collision, Christ must have the preference. We must be ready, like Abraham, if needs be, to come out from kindred and father's house for Christ's sake. We must be prepared in case of necessity, like Moses, to turn our backs even on those who have brought us up, if God calls us, and the path is plain. Such decided conduct may entail sore trials on our affections. It may wring our hearts to go contrary to the opinions of those we love. But such conduct may sometimes be positively necessary to our salvation, and without it, when it becomes necessary, we are unfit for the kingdom of God. The good soldier will not allow his heart to be entangled too much with his home. If he daily gives way to unmanly repinings about those he has left behind him, he will never be fit for a campaign. His present duties—the watching, the marching, the fighting,—must have the principal place in his thoughts. So must it be with all who would serve Christ. They must beware of softness spoiling their characters as Christians. They must endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. (2 Tim. 2:3)

Let us leave the whole passage with many searchings of heart. The times are undoubtedly much changed since our Lord spoke these words. Not many are called to make such real sacrifices for Christ's sake as when Christ was upon earth. But the heart of man never changes. The difficulties of salvation are still very great. The atmosphere of the world is still very unfavorable to spiritual religion. There is still need for thorough, unflinching, whole-hearted decision, if we would reach heaven. Let us aim at nothing less than this decision. Let us be willing to do anything, and suffer anything, and give up everything for Christ's sake. It may cost us something for a few years, but great will be the reward in eternity.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Fill in the following statements by using the words below:

To _____ life is to _____ it. To _____ is to _____. To _____ oneself is not to assume some false, external asceticism. Rather it is to put the _____ of the _____ first and foremost in one's _____.
Kingdom find die lose live interest life deny

Where do you stand with regard to these statements?

Luke 10:1-16

Our Lord declared that it shall be "more tolerable at the last day for Sodom" than for those who receive not the message of His disciples. And He proceeds to say that the guilt of Chorazin and Bethsaida, cities in Galilee, where He had often preached and worked miracles, but where the people had nevertheless not repented, was greater than the guilt of Tyre and Sidon.

Declarations like these are peculiarly awful. They throw light on some truths which men are very apt to forget. They teach us that all will be judged according to their spiritual light, and that from those who have enjoyed most religious privileges, most will be required.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

From this study, would it be likely that there are degrees of guilt and punishment in hell? From the following Scriptures regarding hell, describe the various punishments. Also, can anyone escape from God?

Matt. 5:29,30 Matt. 10:28 Matt. 23:14 Luke 16:22-31 Ps. 139:8

Luke 10:17-20

It is written that our Lord said to the seventy disciples, "In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." It was doubtless an honor and a privilege to be allowed to cast out devils. The disciples were right to be thankful. But it was a far higher privilege to be converted and pardoned men, and to have their names written in the register of saved souls.

The distinction here drawn between grace and gifts is one of deep importance, and often and sadly overlooked in the present day. Gifts, such as mental vigor, vast memory, striking eloquence, ability in argument, power in reasoning, are often unduly valued by those who possess them, and unduly admired by those who possess them not. These things ought not so to be. Men forget that gifts without grace save no one's soul, and are the characteristic of Satan himself. Grace, on the contrary, is an everlasting inheritance, and, lowly and despised as its possessor may be, will land him safe in glory. He that has gifts without grace is dead in sins, however splendid his gifts may be. But he that has grace without

gifts is alive to God, however unlearned and ignorant he may appear to man. And “a living dog is better than a dead lion” (Eccles. 9:4).

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

In today's secularized culture, there is a great tendency to give honor and special attention to those who possess and use exceptional natural abilities, and they often have quite a following. **However, from the Scriptures listed, speak to the limitations and dangers when their wisdom and abilities remain outside of the realm of grace and the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Isa. 47:10 Jer. 8:9 Jer. 9:23 Ezek. 28:17 1 Cor. 1:19-21 1 Cor. 2:1-13 1 Cor. 3:19 Jas. 3:15

Luke 10:21-24

We read that our Lord says to His Father, “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes.” The meaning of these words is clear and plain. There are some from whom salvation is “hidden.” There are others to whom salvation is “revealed.”

The truth here laid down is deep and mysterious. “It is high as heaven; what can we do? It is deep as hell; what do we know?” Why some around us are converted and others remain dead in sins, we cannot possibly explain. Why England is a Christian country and China buried in idolatry, is a problem we cannot solve. We only know that it is so. We can only acknowledge that the words of our Lord Jesus Christ supply the only answer that mortal man ought to give. “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

Let us, however, never forget that God's sovereignty does not destroy man's responsibility. That same God who does all things according to the counsel of His own will, always addresses us as accountable creatures—as beings whose blood will be on their own heads if they are lost. We cannot understand all His dealings. We see in part and know in part. Let us rest in the conviction that the judgment day will clear up all, and that the Judge of all will not fail to do right. In the meantime, let us remember that God's offers of salvation are free, wide, broad and unlimited, and that “in our doings that will of God is to be followed which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.” (*17th Article of Church of England*) If truth is hidden from some and revealed to others, we may be sure that there is a cause.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

How has Christianity changed in England and China since the above words were written about 150 years ago?

Also, read Matthew 24:14 (Jesus' words) and tell us how near you believe we are to “the end shall come.”

Luke 10:25-37

While in its first application this beautiful parable is of course designed to exemplify the duties of humanity and kindness to our neighbor, in answer to the man's question, “Who is my neighbor?” (10:29), and in illustration of the Lord's teaching about love; yet deeper than all this it unfolds the glorious picture of the Lord Jesus Himself as the Friend and Deliverer of ruined and helpless sinners. The unhappy traveler, attacked, robbed, almost murdered on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho, is the type of the sinner who on his downward path has fallen into the hands of Satan, and been stripped of his raiment, wounded in every part of his soul and body, and left, not only half dead, but spiritually dead in trespasses and sins.

The priest and the Levite who pass him by in his misery, represent the failure of all human resources, and all human schemes of benevolence and reform, to reach and relieve his distress. The first stands for Jewish sacerdotalism, and the cold and selfish priesthood of every age; and the other for humanitarianism in all its forms and failures. The lowly despised Samaritan is a good type of the rejected Nazarene. “Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?” (John 8:48) was the very germ of the treatment that the Pharisees gave to Jesus; and He is willing for a time to accept the obloquy, and to glorify it by the love that puts to shame all their pretensions. And so this good Samaritan does for the unfortunate traveler what none of the others had thought of doing. Although the man has no sort of claim upon him, and has perhaps also regarded him as an enemy and an alien, yet the sight of his distress is enough to call forth all his love and strength for instant help and deliverance. First, he goes right to him, undeterred by fear of lurking enemies and a similar fate himself. Next, he has compassion on him; his whole heart swells with tenderness and pity, and all thought of selfishness is at once driven out by the one overwhelming impulse of sympathy and love. Then with his own hands, tenderly bending over him, he binds up his hideous wounds, pouring in oil and wine. And when the poor victim is able to rise, he gently seats him on his own beast, conducts him to the nearest inn, takes him to a chamber, and watches tenderly by his side all the night. On the morrow before he departs, he pays in advance for his expenses, and

gives his pledge to see that all else he may need shall be honorably paid for when he comes again.

What an exquisite picture of the love and compassion of Christ. First, He pities us. Then He comes to us even before we go to Him. He heals the wounds of our sin; yes, even of our body. He pours in the oil of His Holy Spirit in comforting, quickening and healing love and power, and revives us with the wine of His own love and joy. He does not send us on our way alone, but carries us Himself, bearing us in His own arms, or walking by our side. The inn in which He shelters His rescued ones, is the blessed Church of Christ. There He Himself takes care of us, watching all through the night of our trial; and when He seems to pass on and withdraw His more manifest presence, He still leaves ample provision for all our need, and assures us that everything we can require is already paid for and may be freely drawn from the resources of grace. And best of all, He adds the precious promise that He is coming again; and every kindness rendered to His brethren, shall receive a hundredfold recompense.

(The Christ In the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

People who belong to Christ, endeavoring daily to have their lives fully committed to Him, have much more to offer the hurting and the wounded all over the world than those who do not have the Lord's compassion and discernment. **What are the benefits for those who are helped when the gift that is given is from the heart and not from fleshly duty? And what joys do the "givers" experience?**

Luke 10:38-42

"Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her." There was a deep meaning in those words. They were spoken not for Mary's sake only, but for the sake of all Christ's believing people in every part of the world. They were meant to encourage all true Christians to be single-eyed and whole-hearted—to follow the Lord fully, and to walk closely with God—to make soul-business immeasurably their first business, and to think comparatively little of the things of this world.

What do we know of this "good part" which Mary chose? Have we chosen it for ourselves? Can we say with truth that it is ours? Let us never rest till we can. Let us "choose life," while Christ offers it to us without money and without price. Let us seek treasure in heaven, lest we awake to find that we are paupers forevermore.

(Luke Volume One, J. C. Ryle)

Life is filled with so many detailed "things" that the true Bible student also may find it difficult to "choose the good part," though in his heart that is what he truly desires. Here we ask you to meditate upon Mark 9:7: "*And a cloud came and overshadowed them, and a Voice came out of the cloud saying, 'This is My beloved Son—hear Him!' Suddenly, when they looked around they saw no one any more, but only Jesus with themselves.*" **Tell us in your own words what Godly privilege we are able to draw upon when we hear that quiet, inner Voice calling us unto Himself—alone. What part does our "will" or "free volition" have to play?**

Luke 11:1-4

The substance of the Lord's Prayer is a mine of spiritual treasure. To expound it fully in a work like this, is manifestly impossible. The prayer, on which volumes have been written, does not admit of being handled properly in a few pages. For the present it must suffice us to notice its leading divisions, and to mark the leading trains of thought which it should suggest to us for private meditation.

The first division of the Lord's Prayer *respects the God whom we worship*. We are taught to approach Him as our Father in heaven—our Father no doubt as our Creator, but specially as our Father reconciled to us in Christ Jesus—our Father whose dwelling is "in heaven," and whom no temple on earth can contain. We then make mention of three great things: our Father's name, our Father's kingdom, and our Father's will.

We are taught to pray that the name of God may be sanctified: "Hallowed be thy name." In using these words, we do not mean that God's name admits of degrees of holiness, or that any prayers of ours can make it more holy than it is. But we declare our hearty desire that God's character and attributes and perfections may be more known, and honored, and glorified, by all His intelligent creatures. In fact it is the very petition which the Lord Jesus Himself puts up on another occasion, "Father, glorify thy name" (John 12:28).

We are next taught to pray that God's kingdom may come: "Thy kingdom come." In so saying, we declare our desire that the usurped power of Satan may speedily be cast down—that all mankind may acknowledge God as their lawful King, and that the kingdoms of this world may become in fact, as they are in promise, the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. The final setting up of this kingdom has been long predicted, even from the day of Adam's fall. The whole creation groans in expectation of it. The last prayer in the Bible points to it. The canon of Scripture almost closes with the words, "Come Lord Jesus" (Rev. 11:15; Gen. 3:15; Rom. 8:22; Rev. 22:20).

We are taught, thirdly, to pray that God's will may be done: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In so saying, we express our longing desire that the number of God's converted and obedient people on earth may greatly increase, that His enemies who hate His laws, may be diminished and brought low, and that the time may speedily arrive when all men shall do their willing service to God on earth, even as all the angels do in heaven (Hab. 2:14; Heb. 8:11).

We are taught to ask for bread: "Give us this day our daily bread." Under this word "bread," no doubt, is included everything which our bodies can require. We acknowledge our entire dependence upon God for life, and breath, and all things. We ask Him to take charge of us, and provide for us in all that concerns this world. It is the prayer of Solomon under another form, "Feed me with food convenient for me." (Prov. 30:8)

We are taught to ask, in the next place, for forgiveness: "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us." In so saying, we confess that we are fallen, guilty, and corrupt creatures, and in many things offend daily. We make no excuse for ourselves. We plead nothing in our own behalf. We simply ask for the free, full, gracious mercy of our Father in Christ Jesus. And we accompany the petition by the only profession which the whole Lord's Prayer contains. We profess that we "forgive every one that is indebted to us."

The combined simplicity and richness of the second division of the Lord's Prayer can never be sufficiently admired. How soon the words are spoken! And yet how much the words take in! Daily bread and daily mercy are by far the first and principal things that mortal man wants. He is the rich man who possesses them. He is the wise man who is not ashamed to pray for them every day. The child of God, no doubt, is fully justified before God, and all things are working for his good. But it is the life of true faith to apply daily for fresh supplies of all our wants. Though the promises are all ours, our Father likes His children to remind Him of them. Though washed, we need daily to wash our feet.

The third division of the Lord's Prayer *respects our daily dangers*. We are taught to make mention of two things which we ought to fear every day, and which we must expect to meet with as long as we are in this world. One of these things is the "temptation." The other is "evil."

We are taught to pray against temptation: "Lead us not into temptation." We do not mean by this expression that God is the author of evil, or that He tempts man to sin. (James 1:13) But we entreat Him who orders all things in heaven and earth, and without whom nothing can happen, so to order the course of our lives, that we may not be tempted above what we can bear. We confess our weakness and readiness to fall. We entreat our Father to preserve us from trials, or else to make a way for us to escape. We ask that our feet may be kept, and that we may not bring discredit on our profession and misery on our souls.

We are taught, lastly, to pray against evil: "Deliver us from evil." We include under the word evil, everything that can hurt us, either in body or soul, and especially every weapon of that great author of evil, the devil. We confess that ever since the fall, the world "lies under the sway of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) We confess that evil is in us, and about us, and near us, and on every side, and that we have no power to deliver ourselves from it. We apply to the strong for strength. We cast ourselves on Him for protection.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

We are told not only to pray for our *physical* sustenance but for our *spiritual* well-being as well. **Why has God allowed us to be vulnerable to temptations? And, according to God's teachings, how should we react to them?**

Matt. 6:13 John 17:15 1 Cor. 10:13 2 Cor. 12:8, 9 Gal. 6:1 1 Tim. 6:9 Jas. 1:2-4, 12-15 1 Pet. 1:5, 6 2 Pet. 2:9 1 John 2:15-17 Rev. 3:10

Luke 11:5-13

In these verses our Lord Jesus Christ instructs us about prayer. The subject is one which can never be too strongly impressed on our attention. Prayer lies at the very root of our practical Christianity. It is part of the daily business of our religious life. We have reason to thank God, that upon no point has our Lord Jesus Christ spoken so fully and frequently as upon prayer.

We learn for one thing, from these verses, *the importance of perseverance in prayer*. This lesson is conveyed to us in the simple parable, commonly called the "Friend at Midnight." We are there reminded what man can obtain from man by dint of importunity. Selfish and indolent as we naturally are, we are capable of being roused to exertion by continued asking. The man who would not give three loaves at midnight for friendship's sake, at length gave them to save himself the trouble of being further entreated. The application of the parable is clear and plain. If importunity succeeds so well between man and man, how much more may we expect it to obtain mercies when used in prayer to God.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

The meaning of the word "parable" is *something laid alongside to compare*. The lesson may be drawn from the fact that the things are like each other—or, from the fact that the things are a contrast to each other. **What is the message that Jesus is attempting to give for their understanding? In your reply, include verse 13, which states: "... how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"**

Luke 11:14-20

The connection between these verses and those which immediately precede them, is striking and instructive. In the preceding verses, our Lord Jesus Christ had been showing the power and importance of prayer. In the verses before us, He delivers a man from a dumb devil. The miracle is evidently intended to throw fresh light on the lesson. The same Savior who encourages us to pray, is the Savior who destroys Satan's power over our members, and restores our tongues to their proper use.

Let us notice, firstly, in these verses, *the variety of ways in which Satan exhibits his desire to injure man*. We read of a dumb devil. Sometimes in the Gospel we are told of an "unclean" devil. Sometimes we are told of a raging and violent devil. Here we are told of one under whose influence the unhappy person possessed by him became "dumb." Many are the devices of Satan. It is foolish to suppose that he always works in the same manner. One thing only is the common mark of all his operations—he delights to inflict injury and do harm.

There is something very instructive in the case before us. Do we suppose, because bodily possession by Satan is not so glaringly manifest as it once was, that the great enemy is less active in doing mischief than he used to be?—If we think so we have much to learn.—Do we suppose that there is no such thing as the influence of a "dumb" devil in the present day? If we do, we had better think again. What shall we say of those who never speak to God, who never use their tongues in prayer and praise, who never employ that organ which is a man's "glory," in the service of Him who made it? What shall we say, in a word, of those who can speak to everyone but God? What can we say but that Satan has despoiled them of the truest use of a tongue? What ought we to say but that they are possessed with a "dumb devil?" The prayerless man is dead while he lives. His members are rebels against the God who made them. The "dumb devil" is not yet extinct.

The state of mind here described, is a most formidable disease, and one unhappily not uncommon. There are never wanting men, who are determined to see no good in the servants of Christ, and to believe all manner of evil about them. Such men appear to throw aside their common sense. They refuse to listen to evidence, or to attend to plain arguments. They seem resolved to believe that whatever a Christian does must be wrong, and whatever he says must be false!—If he does right at any time, it must be from corrupt motives! If he speaks truth, it must be with sinister views! If he does good works, it is from interested reasons! If he casts out devils, it is through Beelzebub!

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

The passage in these verses deals strongly with two kingdoms—the one of Satan, and the other of Christ. **The following are four sets of two opposite answers. Mark true or false next to each statement.**

a) The Pharisees were anxious to see how demons could be cast out and they rejoiced in Jesus' redeeming work.

b) The Pharisees in their accusation of Jesus were tempting God, which is a dangerous thing to do.

a) The Pharisees believed correctly that Jesus got His power from Beelzebub, the ruler of demons.

b) Jesus' reply to them was that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and His question to them was of this manner, "Why would Satan fight against himself and divide his own kingdom?"

a) Jesus then asked them, "By what power do you Jews cast out demons? Do your works differ from My works?"

b) Jesus replied to them, "Your sons cast out demons; therefore we must be on the same side."

a) Their accusation was really an admission of Jesus' power, for He could not defeat Satan unless He were stronger than Satan.

b) Although Jesus did cast out demons while He was on earth, the kingdom of God would not be fully come until His crucifixion.

Luke 11:21-26

The subject of these words of Christ is mysterious, but deeply important. They were spoken concerning Satan and his agency. They throw light on the power of Satan, and the nature of his operations. They deserve the close attention of all who would war the Christian warfare with success. Next to his friends and allies, a soldier ought to be well acquainted with his enemies. We ought not to be ignorant of Satan's devices.

Let us observe in these verses *what a fearful picture our Lord draws of Satan's power*. There are four points in His

description, which are peculiarly instructive.

Christ speaks of Satan as a “strong man.” The strength of Satan has been only too well proved by his victories over the souls of men. He who tempted Adam and Eve to rebel against God, and brought sin into the world—he who has led captive the vast majority of mankind, and robbed them of heaven—that evil one is indeed a mighty foe. He who is called the “Prince of this world,” is not an enemy to be despised. The devil is very strong.

Christ speaks of Satan as a “strong man, armed.” Satan is well supplied with defensive armor. He is not to be overcome by slight assaults and feeble exertions. He that would overcome him must put forth all his strength. “This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” And Satan is also well supplied with offensive weapons. He is never at a loss for means to injure the soul of man. He has snares of every kind, and engines of every description. He knows exactly how every rank and class and age and nation and people can be assailed with most advantage. The devil is well armed.

Christ speaks of man’s heart as being Satan’s “palace.” The natural heart is the favorite abode of the evil one, and all its faculties and powers are his servants and do his will. He sits upon the throne which God ought to occupy, and governs the inward man. The devil is the “spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2).

Christ speaks of Satan’s “goods being at peace.” So long as a man is dead in trespasses and sin, so long his heart is at ease about spiritual things. He has no fear about the future. He has no anxiety about his soul. He has no dread of falling into hell. All this is a false peace, no doubt. It is a sleep which cannot last, and from which there must be one day an awful awaking. But there is such a peace beyond question. Thoughtless, stolid, reckless insensibility about eternal things is one of the worst symptoms of the devil reigning over a man’s soul.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

For your learning consideration, apply these verses, 21-26, to the history of Israel, the Jewish nation. Also apply them to apostate “Christians” down through the years since Christ’s life on earth. Is there more failure than victory? However, can you also think of people whom God has brought from the “gutter” to high positions of faithfulness in Him?

Luke 11:27-36

Here we see *the desperate unbelief of the Jews in our Lord’s time*. We are told that though they “gathered thick together” to hear Christ preach, they still professed to be waiting for a sign. They pretended to want more evidence before they believed. Our Lord declares that the Queen of Sheba and the men of Nineveh would put the Jews to shame at the last day. The Queen of Sheba had such faith that she traveled a vast distance in order to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Yet Solomon, with all his wisdom, was an erring and imperfect king. The Ninevites had such faith that they believed the message which Jonah brought from God, and repented. Yet even Jonah was a weak and unstable prophet. The Jews of our Lord’s time had far higher light and infinitely clearer teachings than either Solomon or Jonah could supply. They had among them the King of kings, the Prophet greater than Moses. Yet the Jews neither repented nor believed.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Jesus was not impressed by the big crowds, but His disciples were. He used three illustrations to show the seriousness of spiritual opportunities. When the Jews asked for a sign to prove that He was the Messiah, He gave them the “sign” of the prophet Jonah—*death, burial and resurrection*. Then he told them about Solomon and the Queen of Sheba—here the emphasis is on the *wisdom of the king, not the works of a prophet*, for Jesus was the very Son of God in their midst. Then He used the illustration that God’s Word is a light that shines in the dark world (Ps. 119:105)—but He told them that it is not enough that the light is shining *externally* but it must enter our lives before it can do any good. **State in your own words why you believe the Jews were so stubborn and hard-hearted in not believing Jesus when He walked among them without one character flaw—He had only love and concern for them to come to Him. Did their human expectations in a Messiah blind them to His quieter ways of love and truth?**

Luke 11:37-54

The literal meaning of the Greek words is as follows: “*But rather give the things that are in, as alms.*” The simplest sense of this sentence appears to be, “Give first the offering of the inward man. Give your affections and your will to God, as the first great alms which you bestow, and then all your other actions, proceeding from a right heart, are an acceptable sacrifice, and a clean offering in the sight of God. Give the inner man first, and then the gifts and service of the external man will be acceptable. Give yourselves first to the Lord, and then He will be pleased with your gifts. See that your persons are first accepted, and then our works will be acceptable. To the pure all things are pure.”

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

What is the meaning of Christ's words in Luke 11:44 when He told the scribes and Pharisees that they were "as graves which are not seen, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them"? (Remember that to a Jew walking on a grave would definitely defile him, and he was very leery of any unmarked grave.)

Luke 12:1-7

The fear of man is one of the greatest obstacles which stand between the soul and heaven. "What will men say of me? What will they think of me? What will they do to me?"—How often these little questions have turned the balance against the soul, and kept men bound hand and foot by sin and the devil! Thousands would never hesitate a moment to storm a breach or face a lion, who dare not face the laughter of relatives, neighbors and friends. Now if the fear of man has such influence in these times, how much greater must its influence have been in the days when our Lord was upon earth! If it be hard to follow Christ through ridicule and ill-natured words, how much harder must it have been to follow Him through prisons, beatings, scourgings and violent deaths! All these things our Lord Jesus knew well. No wonder that He cries, "Be not afraid."

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

These verses, 1-7, teach against hypocrisy and fear, and Jesus endeavored to teach them the *fear of God* instead. **Here please give Bible verses that are helpful to overcome both of these traits that are not of the nature of God. We will start you out with the following two:**

Isa. 41:10 Isa. 65:1-7

Luke 12:8-12

The grand motive to stir us up to bold confession is forcibly brought before us in the words which we are now considering. Our Lord declares that if we do not confess Him before men, He will "*not confess us before the angels of God*" at the last day. He will refuse to acknowledge us as His people. He will disown us as cowards, faithless, and deserters. He will not plead for us. He will not be our Advocate. He will not deliver us from the wrath to come. He will leave us to reap the consequences of our cowardice, and to stand before the bar of God helpless, defenseless and unforgiven. What an awful prospect is this! How much turns on this one hinge of "confessing Christ before men!" Surely we ought not to hesitate for a moment. To doubt between two such alternatives is the height of folly. For us to deny Christ or be ashamed of His Gospel, may get us a little of man's good opinion for a few years, though it will bring us no real peace. But for Christ to deny us at the last day will be ruin in hell to all eternity! Let us cast away our cowardly fears. Come what will, let us confess Christ.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

With regard to this passage the following statements are given to strengthen the believer.

- 1) This passage tells of the forbidden sin, which is hypocrisy. **What is its meaning and what is its basis?**
- 2) It tells of the correct attitude to life, which is an attitude of fearlessness. **How does a person fully come into this attitude—can you give Scripture verses to substantiate? What are God's promises against fear—can we trust them?**
- 3) It tells of the unforgivable sin, which is the sin against the Holy Spirit. **Here look up Matt 12:31,32 and Mark 3:28,29. Is it a matter of blindness by calling good evil, and evil good? And why is it unforgivable? Is repentance impossible?**
- 4) It tells us of rewarded loyalty. **Is this a concern which all Christians should desire?**
- 5) It tells us of the help of the Holy Spirit. **Here read John 16:5-15 and speak to the work and power of the Holy Spirit as told us by Jesus, that is ours by His gift.**

Luke 12:13-21

Let us mark, in these verses, what a *solemn warning our Lord pronounces against covetousness*. "He said unto them, take heed and beware of covetousness."

It would be vain to decide positively which is the most common sin in the world. It would be safe to say that there is none, at any rate, to which the heart is more prone, than covetousness. It was this sin which helped to cast down the angels who fell. They were not content with their first estate. They coveted something better. It was this sin which helped to drive Adam and Eve out of paradise, and bring death into the world. Our first parents were not satisfied with the

things which God gave them in Eden. They coveted, and so they fell. It is a sin which, ever since the fall, has been the fertile cause of misery and unhappiness upon earth. Wars, quarrels, strife, divisions, envyings, disputes, jealousies, hatreds of all sorts, both public and private, may nearly all be traced up to this fountain-head.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Mark Twain once defined “civilization” as “a limitless multiplication of unnecessary necessities” — would you agree? Another statement is: People who are satisfied only with the things that money can buy are in great danger of losing the things that money cannot buy! Please look up the following Scriptures that pertain to those who have set their heart on the things of God:

1 Cor. 3:23 Phil. 4:11 1 Tim. 6:10 Heb. 13:5 Rev. 2:9 Rev. 3:18

Luke 12:22-31:

The kingdom of God is the only kingdom worth laboring for. All other kingdoms shall, sooner or later, decay and pass away. The statesmen who rear them are like men who build houses of cards, or children, who make palaces of sand on the seashore. The wealth which constitutes their greatness is as liable to melt away as the snow in spring. The kingdom of God is the only kingdom which shall endure forever. Happy are they who belong to it, love it, live for it, pray for it, and labor for its increase and prosperity. Their labor shall not be in vain. May we give all diligence to make our calling into this kingdom sure! May it be our constant advice to children, relatives, friends, servants, neighbors, “Seek the kingdom!” Whatever else you seek, “Seek first the kingdom of God!

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

“Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow,” said Corrie Ten Boom; “It empties today of its strength.”

Below are a number of statements that, according to the Bible, might fit into Jesus’ teaching regarding people worrying. Place a check (✓) by the words that apply, and draw a line through the ones that are wrong.

Destructive Deceptive Right kind of concern False view of life Helps one become responsible
 Blinds us to the world around us In the now it is more important to make a living We forget that God cares for us
 Sometimes worry accomplishes good things We cannot add a minute to our life Worry can send us to the hospital or grave
 The problem is little power The problem is little faith Worry is deformative
 Worry is a natural thing; everybody does Worry is unChristian Worry is a sin

Add any further statement of your own from your study of the lesson, or Scriptures that apply.

Luke 12:32-40

The Lord Jesus knew well the hearts of His disciples. He knew how ready they were to be filled with fears of every description—fears because of the fewness of their numbers—fears because of the multitude of their enemies—fears because of the many difficulties in their way—fears because of their sense of weakness and unworthiness. He answers these many fears with a single golden sentence: “Fear not, little flock, it is our Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom!”

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

How does Jesus teach us to conquer all these human fears? Find Scriptures for the following, and keep them in your heart.

a) God knows our needs -

b) We can trust Him to meet them – Phil. 4:19

c) With His kingdom He will give us all that we need -

d) We must look at earth from God’s point of view and make sure we place His kingdom first -

e) We are to fix our hearts on the eternal –

f) God’s peace will guard our minds and hearts – Phil. 4:6, 7

g) Watch, wait and be ready for the coming of Christ - 1 Thess. 4:16-18

Luke 12:41-48

We learn from these verses, *the importance of doing, in our Christianity*. Our Lord is speaking of His own second

coming. He is comparing His disciples to servants waiting for their master's return, who have each their own work to do during His absence. "Blessed," He says, "is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find *so doing*."

The warning has doubtless a primary reference to ministers of the Gospel. They are the stewards of God's mysteries, who are specially bound to be found "doing" when Christ comes again. But the words contain a further lesson, which all Christians would do well to consider—that lesson is, the immense importance of a working, practical, diligent, useful religion.

The lesson is one which is greatly needed in the churches of Christ. We hear a great deal about people's intentions, and hopes, and wishes, and feelings, and professions. It would be well if we could hear more about people's practices. It is not the servant who is found wishing and professing, but the servant who is found "doing" whom Jesus calls "blessed."

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

This passage has two senses - in its narrower sense it refers to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. In its wider sense it refers to the time when God 's summons are heard - a call to prepare to meet our God. **In this light, speak to the matters and values that a true Christian would seek to have in place prior to this Higher Call. Use Scripture where possible.**

1 Cor. 15:58

Luke 12:49-50

How thoroughly the heart of Christ was set on finishing the work which He came into the world to do! He says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with"—a baptism of suffering, of wounds, of agony, of blood and of death. Yet none of these things moved Him. He adds, "How distressed I am till it is accomplished!" The prospect of coming trouble did not deter Him for a moment. He was ready and willing to endure all things in order to provide eternal redemption for His people. Zeal for the cause He had taken in hand was like a burning fire within Him. To advance His Father's glory, to open the door of life to a lost world, to provide a fountain for all sin and uncleanness by the sacrifice of Himself, were continually the uppermost thoughts of His mind. He was pressed in spirit till this mighty work was finished.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

The Apostle Paul teaches us, "Let this mind be in you which was in Jesus Christ," and in another place we are told, "You have the mind of Christ." **In these serious end-time days in which we are living, how can our minds be kept fully in accord with His, so that His purposes can be accomplished and our lives will be that living testimony that He needs?**

Luke 12:51-53

We learn from these verses *how useless it is to expect universal peace and harmony from the preaching of the Gospel*. The disciples, like most Jews of their day, were probably expecting Messiah's kingdom immediately to appear. They thought the time was at hand when the wolf would lie down with the lamb, and men would not hurt or destroy any more (Isaiah 11:9). Our Lord saw what was in their hearts, and checked their untimely expectations with a striking saying, "Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division."

There is something at first sight very startling in this saying. It seems hard to reconcile it with the song of angels, which spoke of "peace on earth" as the companion of Christ's Gospel (Luke 2:14). Yet startling as the saying sounds, it is one which facts have proved to be literally true. Peace is undoubtedly the result of the Gospel wherever it is believed and received. But wherever there are hearers of the Gospel who are hardened, impenitent and determined to have their sins, the very message of peace becomes the cause of division. They that are after the flesh will hate those that are after the Spirit. They that are resolved to live for the world will always be evil affected toward those that are resolved to serve Christ. We may lament this state of things, but we cannot prevent it. Grace and nature can no more amalgamate than oil and water. So long as men are disagreed upon first principles in religion, there can be no real cordiality between them. So long as some men are converted and some are unconverted, there can be no true peace.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Today there is great temptation everywhere for Christians to compromise their godly principles in order to have harmony with non-believing relatives and friends. **How does God teach us about the deceptive and serious danger there is in doing this?**

Lev. 18:21 Lev. 19:15 Ezek. 39:6 Hosea 8:14 Amos 2:4-6 Amos 3:1-3 Gal. 1:10 Jas. 4:4

Luke 12:54-59

This passage teaches us *the immense importance of seeking reconciliation with God before it is too late*. This is a lesson which our Lord illustrates by a parable or comparison. He compares us to a man on his way to a magistrate with an adversary, in consequences of a difference or dispute, and describes the course which such a man ought to take. Like him, we are upon our way to the presence of a Judge. We shall all stand at the bar of God. Like him, we have an adversary. The holy law of God is against us, and contrary to us, and its demands must be satisfied. Like him, we ought to give diligence to get our case settled, before it comes before the Judge. We ought to seek pardon and forgiveness before we die. Like him, if we let our opportunity slip, the judgment will go against us, and we shall be cast into the prison of hell. Such appears to be the meaning of the parable in the passage before us. It is a vivid picture of the care which men ought to take in the great matter of reconciliation with God.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Should we not only have full knowledge (in our minds) but also true heart assurance that we have been reconciled to God through Christ's finished work on the cross?

Job 33:23-30 John 5:24 Rom. 5:1 1 Cor. 6:15 Eph. 1:4,5 1 John 5:13

Luke 13:1-5

The murder of the Galileans, mentioned in the first verse of this passage, is an event of which we know nothing certain. The motives of those who told our Lord of the event, we are left to conjecture. At any rate, they gave Him an opportunity of speaking to them about their own souls, which He did not fail to employ. He seized the event, as His manner was, and made a practical use of it. He bade His informants look within, and think of their own state before God. He seems to say, "What though these Galileans did die a sudden death? What is that to you? Consider your own ways. Except you repent you shall all likewise perish."

Let us observe, for one thing, in these verses, *How much more ready people are to talk of the deaths of others than their own*. The death of the Galileans, mentioned here, was probably a common subject of conversation in Jerusalem and all Judea. We can well believe that all the circumstances and particulars belonging to it were continually discussed by thousands who never thought of their own latter end. It is just the same in the present day. A murder, a sudden death, a shipwreck or a railway accident, will completely occupy the minds of a neighborhood, and be in the mouth of everyone you meet. And yet these very persons dislike talking of their own deaths, and their own prospects in the world beyond the grave. Such is human nature in every age. In religion, men are ready to talk of anybody's business rather than their own.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Jesus leads their thoughts from the outward and present happening to the unseen and eternal; in other words, from the natural to the spiritual. **What is needed to make this transition and to be able to see the eternal?**

Isa. 57:15 1 Cor. 2:9-16 2 Cor. 4:16-18

Luke 13:6-9

While the rich fool represents the worldling, the fruitless fig tree represents the nominal Christian, as well as the Jewish nation for whom, of course, it was primarily intended. It is not enough that we should be planted in His vineyard, and even watered by His grace and care. The only ultimate test of reality and ripeness is fruit. Long the husbandman bears with the empty branches. Patiently he waits, and seeks by careful culture to cherish the decaying life and save the fruitless tree from destruction. Lovingly the interceding Savior pleads for the faithless one, and renews the influences of His grace and Spirit—digging about its roots by trial, and seeking to fertilize them by the influences of truth, and the blessed Holy Spirit. But at last there is a limit, and even the Savior will plead no more. Love must not betray itself by displacing and injuring others for the sake of one that will not improve its opportunities. The fruitless tree cumbers the ground. It not only wastes the soil and the space of the vineyard, but disfigures it, overshadows others, and brings reproach upon the gardener. So at last, the word goes forth, "Cut it down"; and the intercessor raises no pleading voice against the fatal blow.

So Jerusalem was cut down in the days of captivity. So again, the fruitless tree that Jesus and His disciples so patiently labored to nourish into life and fruition, fell before the Roman armies. So the Master threatened the churches of Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea with His judgment stroke. And so each individual soul that proves faithless to its trust, neglects its opportunities, and wastes the rich grace of a loving Savior in selfishness and negligence, shall be put aside from the place of privilege and opportunity, and summoned to the judgment of the unprofitable servant. How

solemnly, sometimes, comes the stroke of death to the unfaithful Christian. And although, perhaps, the soul may not be hopelessly lost, yet it is dragged away with the awful sense of lost opportunities, neglected truths, forfeited rewards, and the disapproval at last of the Master to whom it had pledged its undivided love and service. How sad and bitter the departing cry,

Must I go, and empty handed,
Must I meet my Savior so?

And how wise the solemn question,

And shall I thus the Master meet,
And at the awful judgement seat,
Bring nought but withered leaves?

(The Christ In the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

In the new covenant of Christ God has also given spiritual privileges, and again He expects proportional returns. **From the Scriptures below, what are the “returns” that God expects from the Church of today? Also, can these “fruits” be expected even in older age?**

Ps. 92:14 John 12:24 John 15:2-8 Rom. 6:13-23 Rom. 7:4 2 Pet. 1:5-11

Luke 13:10-17

The charge of Sabbath-breaking by these men was very unreasonable, because on that very morning each of them had loosened his beast to lead him to the well. And if it was not wrong in their judgment to untie a beast, surely it would not be wrong to untie the knotted disease that bound this woman’s head to her feet by an invisible thong! Great human needs must have precedence over the observance of details of ritual.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

This ruler of the synagogue was actually “literally” correct in his interpretation regarding the Sabbath laws. Jesus showed him that in God’s sight a standard law can be superceded by a “higher” law. **From the Scriptures below, speak to these other examples of how one can be “literally” correct, but very “spiritually” wrong!**

Gen. 2:1-3 Isa. 53 Micah 6:6-8 Matt. 25:24-30 Luke 12:16-21

Luke 13:18-21

The grain of mustard seed “grew and became a great tree.” In spite of persecution, opposition and violence, Christianity gradually spread and increased. Year after year its adherents became more numerous. Year after year idolatry withered away before it. City after city, and country after country, received the new faith. Church after church was formed in almost every quarter of the earth then known. Preacher after preacher rose up, and missionary after missionary came forward to fill the place of those who died. Roman emperors and heathen philosophers, sometimes by force and sometimes by argument, tried in vain to check the progress of Christianity. They might as well have tried to stop the tide from flowing, or the sun from rising. In a few hundred years, the religion of the despised Nazarene—the religion which began in the upper chamber at Jerusalem—had overrun the civilized world. It was professed by nearly all Europe, by a great part of Asia, and by the whole northern part of Africa. The prophetic words of the parable before us were literally fulfilled. The grain of mustard seed “became a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.” The Lord Jesus said it would be so. And so it came to pass.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

We saw here the outward movement of the mustard seed but what about the inward movement; the seed of the divine nature that is sown in secret working its way into manifestation?

Luke 13:22-30

There is something peculiarly striking in our Lord’s language in this prophecy. It reveals to us the awful fact, that men may see what is right when it is too late for them to be saved. There is a time coming when many will repent too late, and

believe too late—sorrow for sin too late, and begin to pray too late—be anxious about salvation too late, and long for heaven too late.

Myriads shall wake up in another world, and be convinced of truths which on earth they refused to believe. Earth is the only place in God's creation where there is any infidelity. Hell itself is nothing but truth known too late.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

How many of the following statements could be reasons why people were “too late?”

- They waited too long to respond.
- The world's way is easier, so it is easier to walk with them.
- They enjoyed fellowship with Jesus, but they didn't trust Him.
- Their pride kept them from getting there ahead of the Gentiles.
- They felt their ancient tradition was enough for them.
- Their wills were stubborn and they would not submit their wills to Him.
- They thought they had plenty of time.

Luke 13:31-35

There is something in our Lord's words which demands the attention of all true Christians.

There is a frame of mind exhibited to us which we should do well to copy. Our Lord, no doubt, spoke with a prophetic foresight of coming things. He knew the time of His own death, and He knew that this time was not yet come. We ought, in a certain measure, to aim at having the mind that was in Christ Jesus. We ought to seek to possess a spirit of calm, unshaken confidence about things to come. We should study to have a heart “not afraid of evil tidings,” but quiet, steady and trusting in the Lord (Psalm 112:7).

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Here are a few thoughts for your personal life as you consider these passages. Jesus was not afraid of danger, for He followed His Father's schedule and His will. It had been decreed from eternity that the Son of God would be crucified in Jerusalem at the Passover (1 Pet. 1:20; Rev.13:8), so even Herod Antipas could not hinder the purposes of God. We, too, can know peace in our walk if we are wholly following after the Lord (Josh. 14:9).

Jesus used “holy sarcasm” in calling Herod a fox, an animal that was not held in high esteem by the Jews. Jesus would indeed accomplish His work, for He walked in the light (John 11:9-10) and foxes went hunting in the darkness. In Jesus' lament He was addressing the whole nation and not just the Pharisees who had tried to provoke Him. He knew the city and temple would be destroyed and the people would be scattered. But He also knew there is a future for Israel—a time when their Messiah would return and be fully received by His people! (Matt. 24:29-31 Luke 13:35 Ps. 118:26)!

We, too, can have lives of peace and even joy, knowing that all of God's promises in our behalf will be fulfilled!

Luke 14:1-6

We read that when He went to eat bread on the Sabbath day, in the house of a Pharisee, “they watched Him.”

The circumstance here recorded, is only a type of what our Lord was constantly subjected to, all through His earthly ministry. The eyes of His enemies were continually observing Him. They watched for His halting, and waited eagerly for some word or deed on which they could lay hold, and build an accusation. Yet they found none. Our blessed Lord was ever holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from evil. Perfect indeed must that life have been, in which the bitterest enemy could find no flaw, or blemish, or spot, or wrinkle or any such thing!

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

The lawyers and Pharisees “kept silent” and “could not answer Him regarding these things” (Luke 14:4,6). **From the following Scriptures, describe how this is a picture of what will happen at the final judgment.**

Rom. 1:20 Rom. 2:1-6 Rom. 3:19,20 Phil. 2:9-11 Rev. 20:11-13

Luke 14:7-14

Would we know the root and spring of humility? One word describes it. The root of humility is right *knowledge*. The man who really knows himself and his own heart—who knows God and His infinite majesty and holiness—who knows Christ, and the price at which He was redeemed—that man will never be a proud man. He will count himself, like Jacob, unworthy of the least of all God's mercies. He will say of himself, like Job, “I am vile.” He will cry, like Paul, “I am chief of

sinners” (Gen. 32:10; Job 40:4; 1 Tim. 1:15). In lowliness of mind he will esteem everyone else to be better than himself (Phil. 2:3). Ignorance—nothing but sheer ignorance—ignorance of self, of God and of Christ, is the real secret of pride. From that miserable self-ignorance may we daily pray to be delivered! He is the wise man who knows himself—and he who knows himself, will find nothing within to make him proud. (Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Why is pride the most deadly of sins? What can it do to a Christian’s walk?

Ps. 10:4 Prov. 13:10 Prov. 16:18 Prov. 26:12 Jer. 43:2 Jer. 49:16 Dan. 5:20 Hos. 7:9, 10 Mark 7:21,22
Luke 18:11, 12 1 Tim. 3:6

Luke 14:15-24

God has made a great provision for the salvation of men’s souls. This is the meaning of the words, “a certain man made a great supper, and invited many.” This is the Gospel.

The Gospel contains a full supply of everything that sinners need in order to be saved. We are all naturally starving, empty, helpless and ready to perish. Forgiveness of all sin and peace with God;—justification of the person and sanctification of the heart—grace by the way and glory in the end—are the gracious provision which God has prepared for the wants of our souls. There is nothing that sin-laden hearts can wish, or weary consciences require, which is not spread before men in rich abundance in Christ. Christ, in one word, is the *sum and substance* of the “great supper.” “I am the bread of life,” He declares—“he that comes unto me shall never hunger, and he who believes on me shall never thirst.”—“My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.”—He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood, *has eternal life*” (John 6:35, 55, 56).

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Do you believe these excuses in this teaching to be legitimate ones? Someone has defined an excuse as “the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie,” and “the person who is good at excuses is usually not good at anything else.” These three guests may have expected to get another invitation in the future, but, did it ever come?

Since the host did not want to waste his food and generosity, he invited all those out in the streets—the homeless, undesirables, the outcast. **Did they come? Did any have excuses? Why not? And then after they were all in, what did the host do? God, too, has anger when people have excuses and refuse Him. What is the solemn warning in the Word about this? What message does this have for the proud Jewish people who were so sure they would “eat bread in the kingdom of God?” (Acts 8 and Acts 10)**

Isa. 55:6 Prov. 1:24-33

Luke 14:25-35

True Christians must be ready, if need be, to give up everything for Christ’s sake. This is a lesson which is taught in very remarkable language. Our Lord says, “If any man comes to Me, and hates not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”

This expression must doubtless be interpreted with some qualification. We must never explain any text of Scripture in such a manner as to make it contradict another. Our Lord did not mean us to understand that it is the duty of Christians to hate their relatives. This would have been to contradict the fifth commandment. He only meant that those who follow Him must love Him with a deeper love even than their nearest and dearest connections, or their own lives. He did not mean that it is an essential part of Christianity to quarrel with our relatives and friends. But He did mean that if the claims of our relatives and the claims of Christ come into collision, the claims of relatives must give way. We must choose rather to displease those we love most upon earth, than to displease Him who died for us on the cross.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Jesus seems to make a distinction between *salvation* and *discipleship*. Salvation is open to all who will come by faith, while discipleship is for believers *willing to pay a price*. **What does it mean to “carry the cross”? Answer from phrases below:**

Being daily identified with Him in shame, suffering and surrender to God’s will.

Caring deeply about Jesus, but recognizing the limitations of the flesh.

Death to self and to our plans and ambitions.

Acknowledging Him as best we can in our own chosen path or career.

Willingness to serve Him as He directs (John 12:23-28)

We are to be His salt — to purify, make things clean, retard growth and decay, and also heal — these become our work in Christ also.

Salt also flavors things, but it causes thirst — so we are to be for our Lord.

Luke 15:1-10

We are represented in the parable as lost in the wilderness. It is a dangerous place, even with the fold around us and the Shepherd near; but without the Shepherd it is a dreadful place to be lost in. Fierce wolves, trackless wastes, wild tempests, impassable torrents, desolate mountains, and unsheltered wilds—these are the figures which portray the misery and perils of lost souls. The value of the lost one is strangely indicated by the contrast between one and 99. Only one was lost, but that one outweighed all the flock, for the moment of peril and need. Every individual soul is missed by the Shepherd, and is worth all His toil and love and suffering. But it is the picture of the Shepherd that stands out with most glorious vividness. The moment He discovers that one is lost, He immediately leaves the 99, and goes Himself to find it. He does not send but goes. He seeks the lost one. It tells of patient love. It tells of His long-suffering pains and toils. It tells of the 33 years of His earthly love and sorrow. It tells of the long journeys through Galilee and Judea, the weary summer days, the sleepless nights, the agony, and bloody sweat, the denial, the betrayal, the crucifixion, the hideous darkness of the cross, the hidden face of God, the fierce wolves that crept upon Him in His dying anguish from the dark wilderness of His sorrow, the strange horror of the burden of sin, the love that has still followed sinful men through all the years since then. The Shepherd seeks them now so patiently, and waits so long to be gracious, and follows until He finds. And then when He finds the lost sheep there is no upbraiding, no scourging. Gently He lifts it to His bosom. In its weakness, He carries it along. He does not even feel its heavy burden. He is so glad to find it that He carries it on His shoulders, rejoicing. And when He reaches home, He calls all heaven to rejoice because the lost is found. This is the picture of that matchless love, the seeking, saving, sacrificing, keeping, overcoming and everlasting love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(The Christ In the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Christ's love is an active, working love. Just as the shepherd did not sit still bewailing his lost sheep, and the woman did not sit still bewailing her lost money, so our blessed Lord did not sit still in heaven pitying sinners. He left the glory which He had with the Father, and humbled Himself to be made in the likeness of man. He came down into the world to seek and save that which was lost. He never rested until He had made atonement for our transgressions, brought in everlasting righteousness, provided eternal redemption and opened a door of life to all who are willing to be saved.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

The scribes and Pharisees were offended at these teachings of Jesus, in which He said that God actually searches for lost sinners! For there was no place in their legalistic theology for a God like that. **Had they forgotten that God had sought out _____ and _____ when they had sinned and hidden from God (Gen 3:8, 9)?**

Had they also forgotten that God was like a _____ who pitied His wayward children (Ps 103:8-14)?

Luke 15:11-24

We see in this parable *man following the natural bent of his own heart*. Our Lord shows us a "younger son" making haste to set up for himself, going far away from a kind father's house, and "wasting his substance in riotous living."

We have in these words a faithful portrait of the mind with which we are all born. This is our likeness. We are all naturally proud and self-willed. We have no pleasure in fellowship with God. We depart from Him and go afar off. We spend our time, and strength, and faculties, and affections on things that cannot profit. The covetous man does it in one fashion, the slave of lusts and passions in another, the lover of pleasure in another. In one point only all are agreed. Like sheep, we all naturally "go astray and turn everyone to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6). In the younger son's first conduct we see the natural heart.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Speak to the truth of Proverbs 13:15, "Good understanding gives favor, but the way of the transgressor is hard,"

in connection with the Prodigal Son's story.

The word "prodigal" means "*wasteful*." **Could the story also be called "The Parable of the Loving Father?" Was the father's role the most significant?**

Did this son ignore the principle that you can't enjoy things money can buy if you ignore the things money cannot buy?

Can you sum up the three parts of his story by using titles beginning with the letter "R"?

Looking at Rom 2:4, tell us if it is merely a man's badness that leads one to repentance. Then look up Acts 11:18 to see what will cause a sinner to obey God and put saving faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21).

The Prodigal

He was lost (v. 24)

He was ignorant (v. 17)

He was dead (v. 24)

Jesus Christ

"I am the way"

"I am the truth"

"I am the life"

Luke 15:25-32

How unkind and ill-natured are the feelings of self-righteous men toward sinners!

This is a lesson which our Lord conveys to us by describing the conduct of the "elder brother" of the prodigal son. He shows him to us "angry" and finding fault because of the rejoicings over his brother's return. He shows him complaining that his father treated the returning prodigal too well, and that he himself had not been treated as well as his merits deserved. He shows him utterly unable to share in the joy which prevailed when his younger brother came home, and giving way to ill-natured and envious thoughts. It is a painful picture, but a very instructive one.

For one thing, this elder brother is an exact picture of the Jews of our Lord's times. They could not bear the idea of their Gentile younger brother being made partaker of their privileges. They would rather have excluded him from God's favor. They steadily refused to see that the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs and partakers of Christ with themselves. In all this they were precisely acting the part of the "elder brother."

For another thing, the elder brother is an exact type of the Scribes and Pharisees of our Lord's times. They objected that our Lord received sinners and ate with them. They murmured because He opened the door of salvation to publicans and harlots. They would have been better pleased if our Lord had confined His ministry to them and their party, and had left the ignorant and sinful entirely alone. Our Lord saw this state of things clearly, and never did He paint it with such graphic power as in the picture of the "elder brother."

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

In your own words tell how the elder brother's sins were like those of the scribes and Pharisees. The following Scriptures should help:

Jonah 4 Matt. 5:21,26 Matt. 18:15-35 Matt. 23:23-28 Luke 10:25-27 Luke 18:9-14 2 Cor. 7:11 Gal. 6:1-5
Eph. 4:26,32 Eph. 6:6

Finally, could either the scribes, Pharisees or the elder brother have any joy?

Luke 16:1-12

The steward whom our Lord describes, is not set before us as a pattern of morality. He is distinctly called the "unjust steward." The Lord Jesus never meant to sanction dishonesty and unfair dealing between man and man. This steward cheated his master, and broke the eighth commandment. His master was struck with his cunning and forethought, when he heard of it, and "commended" him as a shrewd and far-seeing man. But there is no proof that his master was *pleased* with his conduct. Above all, there is not a word to show that the man was praised by Christ. In short, in his treatment of his master, the steward is a beacon to be avoided, and not a pattern to be followed.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Since a "steward" is someone who manages another's wealth, let us use this teaching to examine our own lives to see how faithful we have been as stewards of what God has given us, for one day we must answer to God for the way we have acquired it and used it. **Does Christian stewardship go beyond paying God a tithe of our income, and then using the remainder as we please? See Deut. 8:11-18. Are we also stewards of our time? Are we to "redeem the time?" See Eph. 5:15-17. And what about our gifts and abilities—what does God tell us to do regarding these? See 1 Pet. 4:10. And we are instructed more than once to be stewards of the Gospel. Is this a truth and a treasure that we must guard, knowing that the enemy wants to rob the church of this great privilege? See the**

following: 1 Thess. 2:4 2 Cor.4:7 1 Tim.6:20 2 Tim.2:2 Jude 3, 4 Finally, will we have to give an account of our stewardship one day? See Rom. 14:10-12 2 Cor. 5:10 If we have been faithful the Lord will give His commendation as a reward (Matt. 25:21; 1 Cor. 4:5). But if we have not been faithful we will lose those blessings, even though we will be saved and enter heaven (1 Cor. 3:13-15). **Where do you stand today in obedience to God's Word?**

Luke 16:13-18

These verses teach us *the uselessness of attempting to serve God with a divided heart*. Our Lord Jesus Christ says, "No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

The truth here propounded by our Lord appears, at first sight, too obvious to admit of being disputed. And yet the very attempt which is here declared to be useless is constantly being made by many in the matter of their souls. Thousands on every side are continually trying to do the thing which Christ pronounces impossible. They are endeavoring to be friends of the world and friends of God at the same time. Their consciences are so far enlightened, that they feel they must have *some* religion. But their affections are so chained down to earthly things that they never come up to the mark of being true Christians. And hence they live in a state of constant discomfort. They have too much religion to be happy in this world, and they have too much of the world in their hearts to be happy in their religion. In short, they waste their time in laboring to do that which cannot be done. They are striving to "serve God and mammon."

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

What is at stake or at risk when a person is a luke-warm or half-hearted Christian?

Rom. 15:13 Phil. 4:7 Jas. 1:6-8 Jas. 4:4 Rev. 3:14-16

Luke 16:19-31

We read that the rich man desired Lazarus might be sent to his five brethren who were yet alive, "lest they also should come to the place of torment." While he lived he had never done anything for their spiritual good. They had probably been his companions in worldliness, and, like him, had neglected their souls entirely. When he is dead he finds out too late the folly of which they had all been guilty, and desires that, if possible, they might be called to repentance.

The change that will come over the minds of unconverted men after death is one of the most fearful points in their future condition. They will see and know and understand a hundred things to which they were obstinately blind while they were alive. They will discover that, like Esau, they have bartered away eternal happiness for a mere mess of pottage. There is no infidelity or scepticism or unbelief after death. It is a wise saying of an old divine that "hell is nothing more than truth known too late."

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

This story marks a tremendous contrast in death. Prov. 22:2: "The rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all." Indeed, death is the great leveler! Death does take place when the spirit leaves the body (James 2:26). But death is not the end; it is the beginning of a whole new existence in another world. **For the Christian, death means to be _____.** Hallelujah! (2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:21).

For the unbeliever, death means to be away from God's _____ and in _____. (Luke 16:23, 24)

Luke 17:1-10

Do these precepts seem too difficult? Does a sevenfold forgiveness seem impossible?

Then learn the lesson of the mustard seed, which opens its tiny door to the inflow of nature's energy and is therefore enabled to produce what, to its unaided strength, would be impossible. Open our soul to God! His love through you will forgive and save to the uttermost.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

As Jesus made His way toward Jerusalem and the cross, He continued to teach the disciples and prepare them for what He would suffer there. But He was also preparing them for the time when He would no longer be with them and they would be ministering to others in His place. In this chapter Luke records that Jesus taught them about the following essentials: Forgiveness, faithfulness, thankfulness and preparedness.

In the following sentences, choose one of the two words given in order to fill in the blanks.

The mustard seed is very small, but it has _____ (life/energy) in it, and therefore, it can grow and produce _____ (seed/fruit) - Mark 4:30-32. If our faith is a _____ (strong/living) faith, it will grow and enable us to obey God's _____ (commands/ordinances) - James 2:14-26. Forgiveness is a _____ (trial/test) of both our faith and _____ (knowledge/love) – Ps. 37:5

“He who cannot forgive breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass.” (George Hoover)

Luke 17:11-19

Above all, let us pray for a deeper sense of our own sinfulness, guilt and undeserving. This, after all, is the true secret of a thankful spirit. It is the man who daily feels his debt to grace, and daily remembers that in reality he deserves nothing but hell—this is the man who will be daily blessing and praising God. Thankfulness is a flower, which will never bloom well excepting upon a root of deep humility.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Is it not strange that only one man was thankful enough (to be freed of the hideous disease of leprosy) that he chose to come back and praise our Lord?

And not a Jew at that, but a “hated” Samaritan! Permit us to show you some truths not easily recognized in these verses, and then please make your own comments on them.

In verse 14 Jesus told them to go show themselves to the priests, which was according to the Mosaic Law, and the verse continues by saying that as they went toward the temple in *obedience* they were healed (Ps. 51:15-17). The Samaritan, however, who also needed bodily healing, chose to return to the Lord with his sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15; Ps. 107:22). This pleased the Lord more than all the sacrifices the other men offered, though they were obeying the Law. By the Samaritan's coming to Jesus he received something *greater* than physical healing—he was also *saved from his sins*, for Jesus said, “Your faith has *saved you* (literal translation), which were the same words He spoke to the repentant woman who anointed His feet (Luke 7:50). The Samaritan's nine friends were declared *clean* by the priest, but he was declared *saved by the Son of God!*

Here give your comments regarding the above, as well as the importance of our thankfulness. Also, do you think that the others, who were Jews, felt that healing was their due since they were of the chosen race? Keep in mind that an unthankful heart is fertile soil for all kinds of sins (Rom. 1:21).

Luke 17:20-25

The kingdom of God is utterly unlike the kingdom of this world. The Lord Jesus tells the Pharisees that “the kingdom of God does not come with observation.” He meant by this that its approach and presence were not to be marked by outward signs of dignity. Those who expected to observe anything of this kind would be disappointed. They would wait and watch for such a kingdom in vain, while the real kingdom would be in the midst of them without their knowing it. “Behold,” He says, “the kingdom of God is within you.”

The expression which our Lord here uses describes exactly the beginning of His spiritual kingdom. It began in a manger at Bethlehem, without the knowledge of the great, the rich and the wise. It appeared suddenly in the temple of Jerusalem, and no one but Simeon and Anna recognized its King. It was received thirty years after by none but a few fishermen and publicans in Galilee. The rulers and Pharisees had no eyes to see it. The King came to His own, and His own received Him not. All this time the Jews professed to be waiting for the kingdom. But they were looking in the wrong direction. They were waiting for signs which they had no warrant for expecting. The kingdom of God was actually in the midst of them! Yet they could not see it!

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

The Pharisees were the ones who, in their curiosity, asked Jesus when the kingdom of God would come, for they were looking for dates and signs (Jesus told us they would). But here the King of that kingdom of God was in their midst, and they despised Him! He could not teach them for their hearts were unreceptive and cold; therefore He began to teach His disciples in order to prepare them when they would no longer have Him in their presence.

Choose the correct words in these sentences:

The Pharisee's view of the kingdom was _____ (political/spiritual). They also were thinking only in the realm of the _____ (Jews/universal). Jesus was saying to His listeners: “The kingdom of God is within you.” In other words, He said, “Don't look for the kingdom out there unless it is first in your own _____ (heart/understanding).” (Rom. 14:17) He also was saying, “How can you _____ (enter/come into) the kingdom

if you reject the King?" (Luke 19:38-40). The Pharisees were preoccupied with the great events of the _____ (Bible predictions/ future), but were ignoring the _____ (advantages/ opportunities) of the _____ (present/now).

Here, give us your understanding of what it means for the "Kingdom of God to be *within* you."

Luke 17:26-37

Let us take heed to ourselves and beware of the spirit of the world. It is not enough to do as others, and buy, and sell and plant, and build, and eat, and drink, and marry, as if we were born for nothing else. Exclusive attention to these things may ruin us as thoroughly as open sin. We must come out from the world and be separate. We must dare to be peculiar. We must escape for our lives like Lot. We must flee to the ark like Noah. This alone is safety. Then, and then only, we shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger, and avoid destruction when the Son of Man is revealed (Zeph. 2:3).

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

What is the importance of Christ's warning, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32)? What was the focus of her heart and mind? Also, speak to Luke 17:33.

Luke 18:1-8

The Lord Jesus declares that God will "avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him." "I tell you," He says, "that He will avenge them speedily." (Luke 18:7-8)

Election is one of the deepest truths of Scripture. It is clearly and beautifully stated in the 17th Article of the Church of England. It is "the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, He has decreed by His counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He has chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation." This testimony is true. This is "sound speech which cannot be condemned." (Titus 2:8).

Election is a truth which should call forth praise and thanksgiving from all true Christians. Except God had chosen and called them, they would never have chosen and called on Him. Except He had chosen them of His own good pleasure, without respect to any goodness of theirs, there would never have been anything in them to make them worthy of His choice. The worldly and the carnal-minded may abuse it, and "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness" (Jude 4), but the believer who knows his own heart will ever bless God for election. He will confess that without election there would be no salvation.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

What Scriptural evidence is given for a person to know if he is one of God's elect?

Matt. 26:40,41 Mark 13:20 Acts 9:11 Rom. 8:29,30 Eph. 1:4,5 Col. 3:12 Col. 4:2 1 Thess. 1:3,4
1 Thess. 5:17 2 Thess. 2:13 2 Pet 1:10

How will God avenge His elect?

Lev. 26:25 Luke 18:7,8 Rev. 19:2

Luke 18:9-17

The parable we have now read is closely connected with the one which immediately precedes it. The parable of the persevering widow teaches the values of importunity in prayer. The parable of the Pharisee and Publican teaches the spirit which should pervade our prayers. The first parable encourages us to pray and faint not. The second parable reminds us how and in what manner we ought to pray. Both should be often pondered by every true Christian.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Can you see in the Pharisee's attitude that he assumed his righteousness was a human achievement rather than a gift of God's grace? Name the sin that Jesus is warning against in vv. 9-14, and why it is so grievous in God's sight.

Ps. 10:4 Prov. 16:18 Prov. 26:12 Jer. 43:2 Jer. 49:16 Dan. 5:20

In the next teaching, in v. 17, Jesus compares the attitudes of the adult who would come to Him to the attitudes that little children have. **Using the following words, tell how those adults would benefit by exemplifying the little ones:**

Sense of wonder, trust, obedience, forgiveness.

Also, show how our hearts should be as theirs in a lack of guile and in simplicity and honesty. (Matt. 18:3-5; Matt. 19:14)

Luke 18:18-27

The truth which our Lord lays down in this place is one which we may see confirmed on every side. Our own eyes will tell us that grace and riches seldom go together. "Not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Cor. 1:26). It is plain matter of fact that comparatively few rich men are to be found in the way of life. For one thing, riches incline their possessors to pride, self-will, self-indulgence and love of the world. For another thing, the rich man is seldom dealt with faithfully about his soul. He is generally flattered and fawned upon. "The rich have many friends" (Prov. 14:20). Few persons have the courage to tell him the whole truth. His good points are glossed over, palliated and excused. The result is that while his heart is choked up with the things of the world, his eyes are blinded to his own real condition. What right have we to wonder if a rich man's salvation is a hard thing?

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Look up the following verses that show us that the Jews reserved the word "good" for "God." Ps. 25:8, 34:8, 86:5, 106:1. If the young man really meant that Jesus was "good"—then should he not also confess that Jesus was God? (Jesus was not denying His deity, but rather affirming it.) And if he knew that Jesus was God, would he have kept on arguing about the Law, boasting about his character, and refusing to obey the Word? Also, did he have the proper idea about sin? Did he not think that by keeping the Law, he was righteous? Jesus did not quote the last commandment, "Thou shalt not covet" to him, for He knew the young man's heart. Can you see that Jesus then asked him to do something that a covetous person would not do? Did the young man want salvation on his own terms? "And he went away sorrowful!" The rich young ruler is a warning to people who want a Christian faith that does not change their values or upset their lifestyle. As you close on this teaching, name one Old Testament saint who was wealthy, but who chose to obey God.

Luke 18:28-34

The love of our Lord Jesus Christ towards sinners is strikingly shown in His steady purpose of heart to die for them. All through His life He knew that He was about to be crucified.

There was nothing in His cross and passion which He did not foresee distinctly, even to the minutest particular, long before it came upon Him. He tasted all the well-known bitterness of anticipated suffering. Yet He never swerved from His path for a moment. He was straitened in spirit until He had finished the work He came to do (Luke 12:50). Such love passeth knowledge. It is unspeakable, unsearchable. We may rest on that love without fear. If Christ so loved us before we thought of Him, He will surely not cease to love us after we have believed.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

In Matt. 19:27 Peter makes a statement that follows on from Luke 18:28, and it is this, "What then will there be for us?" Jesus' heart must have deeply ached as he watched the disciples in their insensitiveness and lack of understanding regarding the real meaning of the Kingdom of God, even though they had walked intimately with Him for almost three years. Suffering and death for their Lord, and eventually for themselves, had not entered their vocabulary, let alone their understanding. **Write in your words how you view and feel about this potent scene. And we, ourselves, being on the "other side" of the cross—do we truly grasp all its personal and unbelievable sacrifice—for us?**

Isa.26:3 Acts 4:14-16 Rom. 5:3 2 Cor. 12:10 1 Pet. 1:8

Luke 18:35-43

Grateful love is the true spring of real obedience to Christ. Men will never take up the cross and confess Jesus before the world, and live to Him, until they feel that they are indebted to Him for pardon, peace and hope. The ungodly are what they are, because they have no sense of sin, and no consciousness of being under any special obligation to Christ. The godly are what they are, because they love Him who first loved them, and washed them from sin in His own blood. Christ has healed them, and therefore they follow Christ.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

This blind man demonstrated beyond doubt that he had great faith in Jesus to heal him. **Here we ask you to relate**

several ways in which this man was in direct opposition to the rich young ruler who also came to Jesus. Part of your answering this should include Luke 1:53.

Luke 19:1-10

John the Baptist had wielded great influence over Zaccheus' class and perhaps over himself. Zaccheus was a dissatisfied man. His dishonest acquisitions added to his wealth, but subtracted from his peace of mind. He knew that the least he could do would be to repay those whom he had robbed. But his soul required more, and longed for salvation such as only Jesus Christ could give.

The Lord knew this, and therefore halted beneath the tree and invited himself as a guest to the publican's home. The one man in all Jericho who most needed the Savior was discovered by Him and saved. The grace of God is ever in search of those who have gone as far as their light will carry them.

What a blessing it is that the Lord is willing to be our guest! See that He is welcomed to the guest room of your heart. Stand to serve Him. He brings salvation for you and yours.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Show how Zaccheus became a true "son of Abraham" (Luke 19:9).

Gen. 17:7 Isa. 1:18 Jer. 3:19 Luke 3:8 Rom. 4:16 2 Cor. 5:17 Gal. 3:7 Rev. 3:20

Luke 19:11-27

There is a day coming when the Lord Jesus Christ shall judge His people, and give to everyone according to His works. The course of this world shall not always go on as it does now.

Disorder, confusion, false profession and unpunished sin shall not always cover the face of the earth. The great white throne shall be set up. The Judge of all shall sit upon it. The dead shall be raised from their graves. The living shall all be summoned to the bar. The books shall be opened. High and low, rich and poor, gentle and simple, all shall at length give account to God, and all shall receive an eternal sentence.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Speak to each of the following three statements, by explaining these truths as they are given to us by our Lord. (Use Scripture verses if possible.)

1) The parable tells of the king's *trust*.

2) It tells us of the king's *reward*.

3) The parable concludes with one of the inexorable laws of life: *To him who has, it shall be given; but to him who has not, it shall be taken away.*

Finally, is there any such thing as *standing still in the Christian life*?

Luke 19:28-40

Let us mark in these verses *the perfect knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*. We see Him sending two of His disciples to a village and telling them what they would find at the entrance of it, "a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat." We see Him describing what they would see and hear with as much confidence as if the whole transaction had been previously arranged. In short, He speaks like one to whom all things were naked and open—like one whose eyes were in every place—like one who knew things unseen as well as things seen.

An attentive reader will observe the same thing in other parts of the Gospel. We are told in one place that "He knew the thoughts" of His enemies. We are told in another that "He knew what was in man." In yet another, that "He knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him." (Matt. 12:25; John 2:25; John 6:64) Knowledge like this is the peculiar attribute of God. Passages like these are meant to remind us that "the man Christ Jesus" is not only man. He is also "God blessed forever." (Rom. 9:5)

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Is this the only time recorded in Scripture that Jesus permitted a public demonstration in His behalf?

Was he fulfilling prophecy and presenting Himself as Israel's king? (Zech. 9:9)

Do you think the crowd of people fully understood who Jesus was, for they shouted and sang praises from a

messianic Psalm (118:25, 26)? (Recall that they sang over and over, “Hosanna!” which means “Save now!”) Was the cry of the people’s hearts a spiritual cry for God to have His way with them or was it a cry asking to be saved from the oppression of the ruling Roman government?

Also, are you aware that another reason for this public demonstration on the part of Jesus was to force the Jewish religious leaders to act? They had hoped to arrest Him *after* the Passover (Matt. 26:3-5), but God had ordained that His Son be slain *on* Passover as the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29; also see 1 Cor. 5:7). “As for God, His ways are perfect!”

From your studying of the above, write your comments.

Luke 19:41-44

Here we learn *how great is the tenderness and compassion of Christ toward sinners.*

We are told that when He came near Jerusalem for the last time “He beheld the city and wept over it.” He knew well the character of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Their cruelty, their self-righteousness, their stubbornness, their obstinate prejudice against this truth and their pride of heart were not hidden from Him. He knew well what they were going to do to Him within a very few days. His unjust judgment, His delivery to the Gentiles, His sufferings and His crucifixion were all spread out distinctly before His mind’s eye. And yet knowing all this, our Lord pitied Jerusalem! “He beheld the city and wept over it.”

We err greatly if we suppose that Christ cares for none but His own believing people. He cares for all. His heart is wide enough to take an interest in all mankind. His compassion extends to every man, woman and child on earth. He has a love of general pity for the man who is going on still in wickedness, as well as a love of special affection for the sheep who hear His voice and follow Him. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Hardened sinners are fond of making excuses for their conduct. But they will never be able to say that Christ was not merciful and was not ready to save.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Here read Jeremiah 4:19-22 to compare the heart of the Father with that of His Son’s as He also “wept” over Jerusalem and Israel. Comment from your heart.

Luke 19:45-48

We read that He cast the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and told them that they had made God’s house “a den of thieves.” He knew how formal and ignorant the ministers of the temple were. He knew how soon the temple and its sacrifices were to be destroyed, the veil to be rent, and the priesthood to be ended. But He would have us know that a reverence is due to every place where God is worshipped. The reverence He claimed for the temple, was not for the temple as the house of sacrifice, but as “the house of prayer.”

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Should we be looking at our place of worship the same way Jesus looked at His temple?

Luke 20:1-8

Probably sufficient stress has not been laid upon the supreme intellectual power of our Lord, which shone out so clearly in those conflicts with the Hebrew deceptive reasoner, and in which He always came off conqueror by the sheer force of His mind. “We have the mind of Christ!”

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

It was required that the Jews carefully examine the Passover lambs from the tenth day to the fourteenth day to make sure they had no blemishes (Ex. 12:1-6). Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God (John 1:29) was also watched and tested by His enemies during the final week, and these leaders were angry because He had just cleansed the temple. **But who was truly being examined in this passage? Had they hoped to trap Him in a statement of blasphemy? Would you say that Jesus impaled His opponents on the horns of a dilemma?**

Luke 20:9-19

The conduct of the wicked “husbandmen” is a vivid representation of man’s dealings with God. It is a faithful picture of the history of the Jewish church. In spite of privileges, such as no nation ever had, in the face of warnings such as no people ever received, the Jews rebelled against God’s lawful authority, refused to give Him His rightful dues, rejected the counsel of His prophets, and at length crucified His only begotten Son. It is a no less faithful picture of the history of all the Gentile churches. Called as they were out of heathen darkness by infinite mercy, they have done nothing worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called. On the contrary, they have allowed false doctrines and wicked practices to spring up rankly among them, and have crucified Christ afresh. It is a mournful fact that in hardness, unbelief, superstition and self-righteousness, the Christian churches, as a whole, are little better than the Jewish church of our Lord’s time. Both are described with painful correctness in the story of the wicked husbandman. In both we may point to countless privileges misused, and countless warnings despised.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

This parable pronounces even more severe judgment on Israel, which had not only maltreated God’s prophets through the ages, but was now conspiring to kill His Son. However, this rejection and death of Jesus were divinely ordained and will issue in triumph and exaltation as prophesied in Psalm 118:22, 23.

Here we ask that you read Matt. 21:43 where Jesus says that “the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruit of it.” Who is this “nation” that Jesus refers to? If it is both Jew and Gentile, are the statements above by J. C. Ryle concerning the Gentiles entirely correct?

Dan. 2:34, 35 Rom. 11:22 Heb. 12:28, 29

Luke 20:20-26

Notice here the *cloak of goodness under which some of our Lord’s enemies approached Him*. We read that they “sent forth spies, who pretended to be righteous.” We read further that they attempted to impose on Him by flattering words: “Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth.” Those words sounded well. An ignorant bystander would have said, “These are sincere inquirers after truth!” But all was hollow and unreal. It was the wolf putting on the sheep’s clothing, under the vain idea of deceiving the shepherd. Their words were “smoother than butter,” yet there was “war in their hearts.” (Psalm 55:21)

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

And in today’s world we still have the slick, smooth talkers ready to take us down. **What should be our attitude toward them according to the Word?**

Ps. 5:8, 9 Prov. 20:19 Prov. 26:23-26 Rom. 16:18 1 Thess. 2:5

Luke 20:27-40

The nature of what we call “heaven” is a subject which should often engage our thoughts.

Few subjects in religion are so calculated to show the utter folly of unconverted men and the awful danger in which they stand. A heaven where all the joy is spiritual would surely be no heaven to an unconverted soul! Few subjects are so likely to cheer and animate the mind of a true Christian. The holiness and spiritual mindedness which he follows after in this life will be the very atmosphere of his eternal abode. The cares of family relationship shall no longer distract his mind. The fear of death shall no longer bring him into bondage. Then let him press on and bear his cross patiently. Heaven will make amends for all.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

The Sadducees accepted as Scripture only the Five Books of Moses, and they did not believe in angels, spirits, or the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:8). They were also part of the temple priests, and this explained why they opposed the apostles’ preaching of the resurrection (Acts 4:1, 2), and why they wanted to kill Lazarus, who was raised from the dead (John 12:10, 11). **Is not God powerful enough to raise the dead and give them new bodies suited to their new environment (1 Cor. 15:35-44)? Were the Sadducees denying the very power of God? Do you see that Jesus went beyond their logic by pointing to the Word of God (Exodus 3) and showing these Sadducees that the ones they held in honor (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) were very much alive—and that God is indeed God of the living?**

Luke 20:41-47

What striking testimony to Christ's divinity the book of Psalms contains! We read that after patiently replying to the attacks of His enemies, our Lord in turn propounds a question to them. He asks them to explain an expression in the 110th Psalm, where David speaks of the Messiah as his Lord. To this question the scribes could find no answer. They did not see the mighty truth that Messiah was to be God as well as man, and that while as man He was to be David's son, as God He was to be David's Lord. Their ignorance of Scripture was thus exposed before all the people. Professing themselves to be instructors of others and possessors of the key of knowledge, they were proved unable to explain what their own Scriptures contained. We may well believe that of all the defeats which our Lord's malicious enemies met with, none galled them more than this. Nothing so mortifies the pride of man as to be publicly proved ignorant of that which he fancies is his own peculiar department of knowledge.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Did these Jews whom Jesus addressed know the Scriptures well (i.e. the Old Testament) in order to expect a coming Messiah? (2 Sam. 7:13,14; Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5). Were they certain that He should be of the family of David, and be born in David's city of Bethlehem? (Micah 5:2) Were they already familiar with Psalm 110?

In their trying to disprove Jesus as the Messiah, were they completely ruling out that Messiah must be both God and man? As eternal God, Messiah is David's Lord, but as man, He is David's son (see Rom. 1:3, 9:4,5, Acts 2:32-36 and Acts 13:22,23). And, finally, on Palm Sunday, when the multitudes acclaimed Jesus as the Son of David, did He in any way rebuke them? (Matt. 21:9; Mark 11:10)

Luke 21:1-4

Of all people on earth, none ought to be such liberal givers as Christians. All that they have they owe to the free gift of God. Christ, the Holy Ghost, the Gospel, the Bible, the means of grace, the hope of glory, all are undeserved, incomparable gifts, which millions of heathen never heard of. The possessors of such gifts ought surely to be "ready to distribute" and "willing to communicate." A giving Savior ought to have giving disciples. Freely we have received; freely we ought to give. (1 Tim. 6:18; Matt. 10:8)

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Our Lord Jesus today, being all-knowing and all-understanding of each person's personal situation, is still observing our hearts and our freedom of giving. **Are our hearts willing and thankful; are we able to please Him?**

Luke 21:5-24

These words were a striking prophecy. How strange and startling they must have sounded to Jewish ears, an English mind can hardly conceive. They were spoken of a building which every Israelite regarded with almost idolatrous veneration. They were spoken of a building which contained the ark, the holy of holies, and the symbolical furniture formed on a pattern given by God Himself. They were spoken of a building associated with most of the principal names in Jewish history—with David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Josiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezra and Nehemiah. They were spoken of a building towards which every devout Jew turned his face in every quarter of the world when he offered up his daily prayers. (1 Kings 8:44; Jonah 2:4; Dan. 6:10) But they were words spoken advisedly. They were spoken in order to teach us the mighty truth that the true glory of a place of worship does not consist in outward ornaments. "The Lord sees not as man sees" (1 Sam. 16:7). Man looks at the outward appearance of a building. The Lord looks for spiritual worship and the presence of the Holy Ghost. In the temple at Jerusalem these things were utterly wanting, and therefore Jesus Christ could take no pleasure in it.

He gives us a fearful picture of the miseries which were coming on Jerusalem. Forty years before the armies of Titus encompassed the city, the dreadful circumstances which would attend the siege are minutely described.

He does not prophecy smooth things, and promise them an uninterrupted course of temporal comfort. He says that they shall be "persecuted," put in "prison," "brought before kings and rulers," "betrayed," "put to death," and "hated of all men for his name sake."

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

This passage, along with Matthew 24 and Mark 13, is known by the name, "The Olivet Discourse," and Jesus gave it in response to the questions of His disciples. "What shall be the sign of the coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matt. 24:36) This message was given to Jews by a Jew about the future of the Jewish nation.

Please take note that the emphasis is on things Jewish—can you name three of them in this passage? Is there any reason to believe it had to do with the Lord's coming for His church? Do any signs need to precede this? (1

Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-58). Is the church looking for a Savior? (Phil. 3:20, 21) In v. 8 of our Scripture, Jesus says, “All these are the beginning of sorrows.” **Is this one of the numerous signs that the Jews need, for Paul told us that the Jews require a sign (1 Cor. 1:22)? Jesus speaks in Matt 24 of wars, tribulation, many betrayed, lawlessness, false prophets and false messiahs—do you believe this is the Tribulation period of seven years when God will pour out His wrath on the nations of the world? (Read the passages in Matthew and Mark named above, along with Dan. 9:24-27 to help you in your answers.)**

Throughout all the years of God’s firsthand dealing with the nation of Israel, first the Tabernacle and later the Temple always represented to the Jews that the very presence of God was with them. This caused them to regard the Temple with its Holy of Holies most sacred. **What does this tell you about the spiritual condition of Israel, if God allowed their sacred temple to be destroyed by unbelieving Gentiles (Romans)?**

Luke 21:25-33

The Day of the Lord is used by O.T. prophets to signify a time in the history of mankind when God directly intervenes to bring salvation to His people and punishment to the rebellious. By it God restores His righteous order in the earth. (See Obadiah 15-16).

(Timothy Mark Powell, Obadiah 15 note from Spirit Filled Life Bible)

Revelation 15-19 describes the frightening judgment signs that God will send on the earth during the last half of the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7). Nations will rise and fall like waves in a storm (Ps. 46:1-6; Rev. 17:15). It will be an awesome time, and the population of the earth will tremble with fear, but men will not repent of their sins and turn to God by faith (Rev. 9:20, 21; 16:9-11). Many other signs will be given as seen in Matt. 24:29-31; Isa. 13:10; 34:4; Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15; Rev. 1:7; Zech. 12:10-14; Mark 14:61, 62. Christ’s appearing will be sudden, glorious and with great power (v. 27). The angels promised that Jesus would return to earth in the same way He departed (Acts 1:9-11), and He will (Rev. 1:7). **Here we ask you as the learning student to give serious time and study to all the verses above, so you may better grasp the meaning of the “Day of the Lord.”**

Luke 21:34-38

Let us learn from these verses, the spiritual danger to which even the holiest believers are exposed in this world. Our Lord says to His disciples, “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.”

These words are exceedingly startling. They were not addressed to the carnal-minded Pharisees, or sceptical Sadducees, or worldly Herodians. They were addressed to Peter, James, and John, and the whole company of the Apostles. They were addressed to men who had given up everything for Christ’s sake, and had proved the reality of their faith by loving obedience and steady adherence to their Master. Yet even to them our Lord holds out the peril of surfeiting, and drunkenness, and worldliness! Even to them He says, “Take heed to yourselves.”

The exhortation before us should teach us the immense importance of humility. There is no sin so great but a great saint may fall into it. There is no saint so great but he may fall into a great sin. Noah escaped the pollutions of the world before the flood; and yet he was afterwards overtaken by drunkenness.—Abraham was the father of the faithful; and yet through unbelief he said falsely that Sarah was his sister.—Lot did not take part in the horrible wickedness of Sodom; and yet he afterwards fell into foul sin in the cave.—Moses was the meekest man on earth; and yet he so lost self-command that he spoke angrily and unadvisedly.—David was a man after God’s own heart; and yet he plunged into most heinous adultery.—These examples are all deeply instructive. They all show the wisdom of our Lord’s warning in the passage before us. They teach us to be “clothed with humility.” “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” (1Pet. 5:5 1Cor. 10:12)

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Why did those mentioned above fall into such sins?

How could we keep our guard up not to have a similar experience?

Luke 22:1-13

The world seemed in arms against the greatest Lover of souls that had ever trod earth’s soil. Satan entered the heart

of Judas, for it was his hour, and he gathered all his strength for one last prodigious effort to overthrow the Son of Man and thwart His sublime purpose of redemption. Judas, one of the inner circle, did not hesitate to choose thirty pieces of silver rather than love, purity, compassion as they were incarnate in the Son of Man. The religious leaders of the age also eagerly caught at their chance.

In the meanwhile the Lord girded Himself for the conflict by gathering to His heart the remainder of the apostolic band, though none of them really understood. The arrangement of the man with the waterpot was evidently to elude arrest during the supper, as Judas could not inform his accomplices beforehand of the selected supper room. Remember that Jesus asks each of us for the guest chamber of our heart! Ask Him, not to be as a wayfaring man who tarries for the night, but to abide always.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

The religious leaders were preparing for a crime, due to their hypocrisy, while Jesus was preparing for the Passover, and for His own life to be the greatest sacrifice ever given!

From the following verses given, please answer these serious, thought-provoking questions:

By whom was Judas motivated and energized? (John 13:2, 27)

Was he ever a true believer in Jesus Christ? Had his sins been cleansed by the Lord? (John 13:10, 11)

Had he ever believed and received eternal life? (John 6:64-71)

Did the other apostles have any suspicion that Judas was a traitor? (Matt. 26:17-25)

Remembering Judas' reason for betraying Jesus, do you think that when he understood Jesus would not establish the kingdom but would surrender to the authorities, he turned against Him in bitter retaliation? (1 Cor. 5:6-8)

By whom are unbelievers motivated and energized? (Matt. 13:38; 1 John 3:10; Acts 13:10; Eph. 2:1-3)

Although many people may have religious exuberance, what does it take to be a truly cleansed believer? (Rom. 3:21-31; Rom. 6:1-13; Rom. 8:14-17)

Luke 22:14-23

The human soul of Jesus needed this sweet fellowship with loyal friends to nerve it for its sorrows, and He desired to transmit it as a perpetual legacy for His Church. We may think of that Table being elongated until it reaches down the centuries to where we are seated. Look down the long vista and at the end, behold the Master Himself!

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

With the use of the following Scriptures, please explain the symbolic meaning of the bread, and also of the wine, as Jesus offered these to His disciples—and now we, as His Church share in the same holy worship and remembrance.

Matt. 26:26-29 John 6:53-56 Rom. 3:24, 25 Rom. 5:9 Eph. 1:22, 23 Eph. 2:13, 16 Col. 1:24 Heb. 10:29
Rev. 12:11

Luke 22:24-30

How firmly pride and love of preeminence can stick to the hearts of good men. We are told that "There was a strife among the disciples, which of them should be accounted the greatest." The strife was one which had been rebuked by our Lord on a former occasion. The ordinance which the disciples had just been receiving, and the circumstances under which they were assembled, made the strife peculiarly unseemly. And yet at this very season, the last quiet time they could spend with their Master before His death, this little flock begins a contention as to who should be the greatest! Such is the heart of man, ever weak, ever deceitful, ever ready, even at its best times, to turn aside to what is evil.

The sin before us is a very old one. Ambition, self-esteem and self-conceit lie deep at the bottom of all men's hearts, and often in the hearts where they are humble, who cannot bear to see an equal more honored and favored than themselves. Few indeed can be found who rejoice heartily in a neighbor's promotion over their own heads. The quantity of envy and jealousy in the world is a glaring proof of the prevalence of pride. Men would not envy a brother's advancement, if they had not a secret thought that their own merit was greater than his.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Pride is known as a conceited sense of one's superiority. **Please look up the following Scripture verses and list the six realms in which it originates.**

Ezek. 16:49, 56 Dan. 5:20-23 Mark 7:21, 22 Luke 18:11, 12 1 Tim. 3:6 1 John 2:16

Luke 22:31-38

What a fearful enemy the devil is to believers! We read that “the Lord said, Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat.” He was near Christ’s flock, though they saw him not. He was longing to compass their ruin, though they knew it not. The wolf does not crave the blood of the lamb more than the devil desires the destruction of souls.

The personality, activity and power of the devil are not sufficiently thought of by Christians. This is he who brought sin into the world at the beginning by tempting Eve. This is he who is described in the book of Job as “going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it.” This is he whom our Lord calls “the prince of this world,” a “murderer” and a “liar.” This is he whom Peter compares to a “roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” This is he whom John speaks of as “the accuser of the brethren.” This is he who is ever working evil in the churches of Christ, catching away good seed from the hearts of hearers, sowing tares amidst the wheat, stirring up persecutions, suggesting false doctrines, and fomenting divisions. The world is a snare to the believer. The flesh is a burden and a clog. But there is no enemy so dangerous as that restless, invisible, experienced enemy, the devil.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

What are some of Satan’s subtle tactics that he continually employs in his attempt to cause man to fall?

Job 2:4, 5 Mark 4:15 Luke 4:6-8 Luke 13:16 John 13:2, 27 2 Thess. 2:3, 4

Luke 22:39-46

Let us take care that we use our Master’s remedy, if we want comfort in affliction. Whatever other means of relief we use, let us pray. The first Friend we should turn to ought to be God. The first message we should send ought to be to the throne of grace. No depression of spirit must prevent us. No crushing weight of sorrow must make us dumb. It is a prime device of Satan to supply the afflicted man with false reasons for keeping silence before God. Let us beware of the temptation to brood sullenly over our wounds. If we can say nothing else, we can say, “I am oppressed; undertake for me” (Isa. 38:14).

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Almost every human will experience times of great sorrow and suffering under trial, yet each Christian heart will acknowledge that none can compare with the hellish agony that our Lord endured in Gethsemane. The salvation of the world hung in the balance as the Son of God literally sweated it out in that garden, and He won, and received His peace because He had talked with God, and surrendered His will. **Let us offer our hearts full of praise to Him as we consider His agony through these Scriptures.**

Isa. 53:6 2 Cor. 5:21 Gal. 3:13 Heb. 5:7 Heb. 10:5-10

Luke 22:47-53

The worst and most wicked acts may be done under a show of love to Christ. We read that when the traitor Judas brought the enemies of Christ to take Him, he betrayed Him “with a kiss.” He made a pretense of affection and respect at the very moment when he was about to deliver his Master into the hands of His deadliest enemies.

Conduct like this, unhappily, is not without its parallels. The pages of history record many an instance of enormous wickedness wrought out and perfected under the garb of religion. The name of God has too often been pressed into the service of persecution, treachery and crime. When Jezebel would have Naboth killed, she ordered a “fast to be proclaimed,” and false witnesses to accuse him of “blaspheming God and the king” (1 Kings 21:9, 10). When Count de Montfort led a crusade against the Albigeneses, he ordered them to be murdered and pillaged as an act of service to Christ’s Church. When the Spanish Inquisition tortured and burned suspected heretics, they justified their abominable dealings by a profession of zeal for God’s truth. The false apostle Judas Iscariot has never wanted successors and imitators. There have always been men ready to betray Christ with a kiss, and willing to deliver the Gospel to its enemies under a show of respect.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Here we ask the question, “Can we see acts of terror being done today under the pretense of doing a service or cleansing of evil for God?” How can hearts be so desperately hardened and evil?

Gen. 3:1-13 Matt. 15:18, 19 John 17:15 Rom. 5:12 Eph. 6:16 Jas. 1:14 1 John 2:13 1 John 5:19

Luke 22:54-62

We are told that when Peter denied Christ the third time, and the cock crew, “the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.” Those words are deeply touching! Surrounded by blood-thirsty and insulting enemies, in the full prospect of horrible outrages, an unjust trial, and a painful death, the Lord Jesus yet found time to think kindly of His poor erring disciple. Even then He would have Peter know He did not forget him. Sorrowfully no doubt, but not angrily, He “turned and looked upon Peter.” There was deep meaning in that look. It was a sermon which Peter never forgot.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Besides this account of Peter’s denial of our Lord, Matthew tells us that Peter’s speech betrayed him (Matt. 26:73), and John’s account tells us that a relative of the servant whom he had cut off his ear in Gethsemane also identified him (John 18:26), and now Jesus’ look of compassion pierced Peter’s heart! **What quality of character did Jesus manifest to Peter when He appeared to him before the other apostles following the resurrection? (Luke 24:34)**

Luke 22:63-71

We read that the men who held Him “mocked” Him, “smote” Him, “blindfolded” Him, and “struck Him on the face.” It was not enough to have taken prisoner a person of most blameless and charitable life. They must needs add insult to injury.

Conduct like this shows the desperate corruption of human nature. The excesses of savage malice to which unconverted men will sometimes go, and the fierce delight with which they will sometimes trample on the most holy and the most pure, almost justify the strong saying of an old divine, that “man left to himself is half beast and half devil.” He hates God and all who bear anything of God’s image about them. “The carnal mind is enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7). We have probably a very faint idea of what the world would become, if it were not for the constant restraint that God mercifully puts upon evil. It is not too much to say that if unconverted men had their own way entirely, the earth would soon be little better than a hell.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

It is indeed tragic that when Jesus asked for love, He did not even receive simple justice. He was treated in the most cruel and despicable ways. **Why did He endure all this humiliation, suffering and trial?**

Luke 23:1-12

False witness and slander are two favorite weapons of the devil. He was a liar from the beginning and is still the father of lies (John 8:44). When he finds that he cannot stop God’s work, his next device is to blacken the character of God’s servants, and to destroy the value of their testimony. With this weapon he assaulted David: “False witnesses,” he says, “did rise against me; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.” With this weapon he assaulted the prophets. Elijah was a “troubler of Israel!” Jeremiah was a man who “sought not the welfare of the people but the hurt!” (Psalm 35:11; 1 Kings 18:17; Jer 38:4) With this weapon he assaulted the apostles. They were “pestilent fellows,” and men who “turned the world upside down.” (Acts 24:5; 27:6) With this weapon he assaulted our Lord all through His ministry. He stirred up his agents to call Him a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a Samaritan and a devil (Luke 7:34; John 8:48). And here, in the verses before us, we find him plying his old weapon to the very last. Jesus is arraigned before Pilate upon charges which were utterly untrue.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

As Christians in today’s world of mixed values and ideas, is there a strong possibility that we too might be subject to false slandering?

Job 1:9-11 Prov. 11:9 Matt. 10:25 John 15:19 John 18:36 Titus 3:1, 2 1 Pet. 2:12 1 Pet. 3:16 3 John 9, 10

How does the Word of God teach us to react when wrongfully slandered?

Ps. 37:6, 7 Matt. 5:11,12 John 18:28-38 1 Tim. 6:13-16

Luke 23:13-25

We are told that Pilate said to the Jews, "Ye have brought this man unto me as one that perverts the people; and behold, I having examined Him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse Him; no, nor yet Herod." The Roman and the Galilean governors were both of one mind. Both agreed in pronouncing our Lord not guilty of the things laid to His charge.

There was a peculiar fitness in this public declaration of Christ's innocence. Our Lord, we must remember, was about to be offered up as a sacrifice for our sins. It was meet and right that those who examined Him should formally pronounce Him a guiltless and blameless person. It was meet and right that the Lamb of God should be found by those who slew Him "a Lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:19). The overruling hand of God so ordered the events of His trial, that even when His enemies were judges, they could find no fault and prove nothing against Him.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Do you agree that Pilate did not want to condemn Jesus, since he made no less than four attempts to avoid passing sentence of condemnation? Was it then, that the Jewish mob coerced this experienced Roman governor into sentencing Jesus to death? How could they do that? (Check John 19:12)

Do you agree also that Pilate sacrificed justice rather than lose his post? What are your overall thoughts about this man? And as for our Lord Jesus, who did no sin (1 Pet. 2:22, 23), was there any possibility that any of these leaders in this "kangaroo" court might find any guile in Him?

Luke 23:26-38

We ought to notice, in this passage, *our Lord's words of prophetic warning*. We read that He said to the women who followed Him, as He was being led away to Calvary, "Weep not for Me, but for yourselves. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck."

These words must have sounded peculiarly terrible in the ears of a Jewish woman. To her it was always a disgrace to be childless. The idea of a time coming when it would be a blessing to have no children must have been a new and tremendous thought to her mind. And yet within fifty years this prediction of Christ was literally fulfilled! The siege of Jerusalem by the Roman army, under Titus, brought on all the inhabitants of the city the most horrible sufferings from famine and pestilence that can be conceived. Women are reported to have actually eaten their own children during the siege for want of food. Upon none did the last judgments sent upon the Jewish nation fall so heavily as upon the wives, the mothers and the little children.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Jesus said in 23:31: "For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?" **Was He quoting a proverb? What did He mean?**

The name "Calvary" comes from a Latin word "calvaria;" what does that mean in English? Can you name an Old Testament psalm that attests to the sufferings of Christ on the cross?

Luke 23:39-43

The first notable step in the thief's repentance was his concern about his companion's wickedness in reviling Christ. "Dost thou not fear God," he said, "seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" The second step was a full acknowledgment of his own sin. "We indeed are justly in condemnation. We receive the due reward of our deeds." The third step was an open confession of Christ's innocence. "This Man hath done nothing amiss." The fourth step was faith in Jesus Christ's power and will to save him. He turned to a crucified Sufferer, and called Him "Lord," and declared his belief that He had a kingdom. The fifth step was prayer. He cried to Jesus when he was hanging on the cross, and asked Him even then to think upon his soul. The sixth and last step was humility. He begged to be "remembered" by our Lord. He mentions no great thing. Enough for him if he is remembered by Christ. These six points should always be remembered in connection with the penitent thief. His time was very short for giving proof of his conversion. But it was time well used. Few dying people have ever left behind them such good evidences as were left by this man.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

The penitent thief showed his fear of God, a sense of the justice behind his suffering, and also gave an earnest confession of his evil deeds. Then, looking at Christ, he saw His sinlessness and His punishment without just cause, and finally, he recognized Christ's ability to deliver him as no doubt One sent from God, for he addressed Him as Lord.

Apparently the other thief had no remorse or repentance in his heart. **Who would have hardened his spirit?**

Does this challenge us never to neglect praying for those close to death, even though only God knows their internal hearts? With regard to this, a poet wrote about a man who was killed as he was thrown from his galloping horse:

“Betwixt the stirrup and the ground,
Mercy I asked, mercy I found.”

Indeed, while there is life, there is hope. Let us remember to pray for them.

Luke 23:44-49

Let us observe in these verses *the miraculous signs which accompanied our Lord’s death on the cross*. We are told that there was “a darkness over all the earth” for three hours. “The sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.”

It was meet and right that the attention of all around Jerusalem should be arrested in a marked way, when the great sacrifice for sin was being offered and the Son of God was dying. There were signs and wonders wrought in the sight of all Israel, when the law was given on Sinai. There were signs and wonders in like manner when the atoning blood of Christ was shed on Calvary. There was a sign for an unbelieving world. The darkness at midday was a miracle which would compel men to think. There was a sign for the professing Church and the ministers of the temple. The rending of the veil which hung between the holy place and the Holy of Holies was a miracle which would strike awe into the heart of every priest and Levite in Jewry.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Please fill in the blanks below:

God’s very presence was pleased to dwell in the _____ of _____ in the temple. Now, with the tearing of the _____, God’s presence which before had been barred to _____, was thrown open to all. The birth, life and death of Jesus tore apart the _____ which had concealed _____ from man. On the cross, as never before and never again, men saw the _____ of God. Psalm 31:5 says, “Into thy hand I commit my _____.” Here in our passage, Jesus says the very same words, with one additional word added, _____. The people at the foot of the cross were deeply moved as Jesus died. His death did what even His _____ could not do—it broke the _____ hearts of men. Already Jesus’ saying was coming true: “I, when I am _____ up from the earth, will draw _____ _____ to Myself.” The magnet of the _____ had begun its work, even as _____ breathed His last.

Luke 23:50-56

If Christ did not really die, there would be an end of all the comfort of the Gospel. Nothing short of His death could have paid man’s debt to God. His incarnation, and sermons, and parables, and miracles, and sinless obedience to the law, would have availed nothing, if He had not died. The penalty threatened to the first Adam, was death eternal in hell. If the second Adam had not really and actually died in our stead, as well as taught us truth, the original penalty would have continued in full force against Adam and all his children. It was the life-blood of Christ which was to save our souls.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

It was the custom that the bodies of criminals were not buried at all—but left to the dogs and the vultures to dispose of! But God prepared the heart of a wealthy man, Joseph of Arimathaea, to save Jesus’ body and to place it in his own tomb which had never been used. Here, refer to Isaiah 53:9 where this very thing was predicted some 750 years before Christ! So we see that Joseph’s act was planned of God! Both this Joseph and Nicodemus were members of the Sanhedrin and had apparently become covert disciples of Christ. Yet there is no record that either of them spoke in His behalf at His judgment. **What is your thought on this—would it have made any difference—and is their coming reward any the less because they did not speak up?**

Luke 24:1-12

Notice the stress that the angels laid on Christ as “living.” They had doubtless overheard that sentence of His spoken in Galilee and recorded in Luke 9:22. Too many seek the living Christ amid the wrappings of ceremony and creed. He is not there. He has gone forth, and we must follow Him where Easter is breaking.

The women told the eleven apostles the electrifying news about Christ's resurrection, and that the angels said, "He is not here; He is risen!" This Scripture says that their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not (24:11).

What was lacking at this point in the disciples life?

Luke 18:8 Luke 24:49 Acts 1:8 Acts 2:1-4

Luke 24:13-35

We are told that our Lord began "at Moses and all the prophets, and expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

How shall we explain these words? In what way did our Lord show "things concerning Himself," in every part of the Old Testament field? The answer to these questions is short and simple. Christ was the substance of every Old Testament sacrifice, ordained in the law of Moses. Christ was the true Deliverer and King, of whom all the judges and deliverers in Jewish history were types. Christ was the coming Prophet greater than Moses, whose glorious advent filled the pages of prophets. Christ was the true seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head, the true seed in whom all nations were to be blessed, the true Shiloh to whom the people were to be gathered, the true scapegoat, the true brazen serpent, the true Lamb to which every daily offering pointed, the true High Priest of whom every descendant of Aaron was a figure. These things, or something like them, we need not doubt, were some of the things which our Lord expounded on the way to Emmaus.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." **Did these two disciples need a fresh understanding of God's Word? Did they, as did most of the Jews of that day, see their coming Messiah as a conquering Redeemer—and at the same time failed to see Him as a Suffering Servant? Would you agree with the following sentence: As they read the Old Testament, they saw the glory but not the suffering, and the crown but not the cross.**

Think on the following statements, and express your opinion as well: The more we receive the Word of God, the more we will want to fellowship with the God of the Word. Receiving Bible truth and walking with the Savior will lead to a burning heart. The best evidence that we have understood the Bible and met the living Christ is that we have something exciting to share with others.

Luke 24:36-43

Observe the singularly gracious words with which our Lord introduced Himself to His disciples after His resurrection. We read that He suddenly stood in the midst of them and said, "Peace be unto you."

This was a wonderful saying, when we consider the men to whom it was addressed. It was addressed to eleven disciples, who three days before had shamefully forsaken their Master and fled. They had broken their promises. They had forgotten their professions of readiness to die for their faith. They had been scattered, "every man to his own," and left their Master to die alone. One of them had even denied Him three times. All of them had proved backsliders and cowards.

And yet behold the return which their Master makes to His disciples! Not a word of rebuke is spoken. Not a single sharp saying falls from His lips. Calmly and quietly He appears in the midst of them, and begins by speaking of peace. "Peace be unto you!"

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

In order to try to understand the disciples' emotions, which included fear, recall how Jacob felt when he got the news that his son Joseph (whom he believed was dead) was alive! (Gen. 45:26-28). **Could the condition of their own hearts also (Mark 16:14) have something to do with the expression of their troubled fears?**

Would it appear that Jesus' first thought was to calm them and bless them? (John 20:19-21) Was there truly anything for them to fear now that Jesus was raised from the dead? (Heb. 13:20, 21)

Because of His sacrifice on the cross, men and women could now have *peace with God* (Rom. 5:1) and also enjoy the *peace of God* (Phil. 4:6-7). **Please comment on the difference between these two.**

Luke 24:44-48

Here observe *the gift which our Lord bestowed on His disciples immediately before He left the world.* We read that He “opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures.”

We must not misapprehend these words. We are not to suppose that the disciples knew nothing about the Old Testament up to this time, and that the Bible is a book which no ordinary person can expect to comprehend. We are simply to understand that Jesus showed His disciples the full meaning of many passages, which had hitherto been hid from their eyes. Above all, He showed the true interpretation of many prophetic passages concerning the Messiah.

We all need a like enlightenment of our understandings. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). Pride and prejudice and love of the world blind our intellects, and throw a veil over the eyes of our minds in the reading of the Scriptures. We see the words, but do not thoroughly understand them until we are taught from above.

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

From Acts 1:8, please answer the following:

What would be the Power that Jesus promised for each disciple, and through that Power would they preach about their own experiences as they went forth, or share the truths of the Word of God?

Did this knowledge give them the comfort and strength that they would need, as they realized they would not be depending upon their own human, natural selves, but rather depending upon that One living within whom Jesus was about to give them? (John 14:26; John 16:5-15)

Jesus not only enabled them to understand the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms, but He also reminded them of what He had taught them, and He explained how it all fit together. **Do you believe that finally now they began to understand the necessity for His suffering and death, and how the cross related to the promise of the kingdom (1 Peter 1:10-12)? What a glorious privilege it was for them to listen to Jesus expound the Word!**

Luke 24:50-53

Here note *the feelings of our Lord’s disciples when He finally left them and was carried up into heaven.* We read that “they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.”

How shall we account for these joyful feelings? How shall we explain the singular fact that this little company of weak disciples, left for the first time, like orphans, in the midst of an angry world, was not cast down, but was full of joy? The answer to these questions is short and simple. The disciples rejoiced because now for the first time they saw all things clearly about their Master. The veil was removed from their eyes. The darkness had at length passed away. The meaning of Christ’s humiliation and low estate; the meaning of His mysterious agony and cross and pardon; the meaning of His being Messiah and yet a sufferer; the meaning of His being crucified, and yet being Son of God—all, all was at length unraveled and made plain. They saw it all. They understood it all. Their doubts were removed. Their stumbling blocks were taken away. Now at last they possessed clear knowledge, and possessing clear knowledge, felt unmingled joy!

(Luke Volume Two, J. C. Ryle)

Often, in our churches today, our Lord’s ascension is not given the prominence that it deserves (compare vv. 50-52 with Mark 16:19, 20 and Acts 1:9-12).

Please check out the following statements, and comment at the end:

We are to think of what His ascension meant to Him to return to heaven and sit upon the throne of glory (John 17:5, 11).

His ascension is proof that He has conquered every enemy and that He reigns supremely “far above all” (Eph. 1:18-23).

In heaven today, our Lord ministers as our High Priest (Heb. 7:25; Heb. 4:14-16) and our Advocate (1 John 1:6-10; 1 John 2:1).

As the glorified Head of the church, Jesus Christ is equipping the people to live for Him and serve Him in this present world (Heb. 13:20, 21; Eph. 4:7-16). He is also preparing in heaven a home for His people (John 14:1-6) and one day He will return and take us to be with Him forever (1 Thess. 4:16-18). The last thing our Lord did was

to bless His people, and the first thing they did was to worship Him!

Dr. Luke opened his Gospel with a scene in the temple (1:8), and he closed his Gospel the same way (v. 53). But what a contrast between the unbelieving, silent priest and the trusting, joyful saints!