

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus: A Harmony (Part 2)

Lesson 1: The Later Judean Ministry (1)

Note: “This ministry is given only by John and Luke. John gives the Jerusalem ministry and Luke that in the country of Judea.” – A.T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels*, p. 114. (These final six months of Jesus’ life are especially difficult to piece together. I have relied upon McGarvey and Pendleton’s *The Fourfold Gospel* for the general course of events. jj)

1. Jesus’ Unbelieving Brothers

The Feast of Tabernacles, held in October, has now come. Threats against Jesus’ life have caused Him to avoid Judea and withdraw from Galilee. His actions puzzle His own brothers and strengthen their unbelief (Jn 7:2-9). “*If You do these things, show Yourself to the world,*” they chide Him. Jesus explains that they are free to travel without harm because they are not enemies of the world. He, on the other hand, must not unduly provoke the forces of evil until the proper time for His death.

1. Why do worldly forces hate Jesus?
2. What has not yet come for Jesus?

2. The Secret Journey to Jerusalem

//Texts: Lk 9:51-56; Jn 7:10. The journey of Jesus to Jerusalem is “secret” in that His route is through Samaria instead of around it east of the Jordan River. The reason most Jews avoided Samaria is clear from the reaction toward Jesus: “*they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem.*” The reaction of James and John toward this affront demonstrates their fleshly outlook upon the kingdom and warrants a stinging rebuke from Jesus.

3. What time had now come?
4. What nickname was given to James and John (Mk 3:17)?

3. Proposed Followers of Jesus

As Jesus travels through Samaria, Luke tells of three would-be followers of Jesus (Lk 9:57-62). The first approaches him with an apparently unconditional request, but Jesus rebuffs him with a description of His vagabond existence. The second is invited by Jesus but he hesitates out of concern for his father – either deceased or nearly so. The response of Jesus appears harsh and unreasonable, but we must remember that Jesus knows every heart and often makes the very demand which reveals true loyalty. What may look like a reason to us might be an excuse to the Lord. The third man merely asks to bid farewell to his family, but Jesus judges this remark to be looking back from the plow. We must also remember that Jesus has been besieged with multitudes of selfish, marginally interested people. He never encouraged people to follow Him without first making it clear that priorities must be kept in order and sacrifices must be made for His sake. Jesus has previously used harsh answers to test the commitment of those who ap-

proached Him; those easily put off do not fully understand what is at stake and lack the tenacity to endure the hardship and persecution which accompanies faith.

5. What do you think Jesus means by the “dead” burying their “dead”?

6. What kind of “looking back” makes one unfit for the kingdom?

4. Jesus: the Hot Topic at the Feast

Stories circulating about Jesus and His absence at the beginning of the Feast create great anticipation among the crowds in Jerusalem. John tells of swirling rumors, whispered conversations and great confusion among the masses who discuss Jesus clandestinely for fear of the Jewish leaders. Finally, Jesus makes an appearance at the temple during the middle of the eight-day celebration (Jn 7:11-52). Note the areas of controversy over Jesus: 1) His moral goodness (7:12); 2) His educational background (7:15); 3) His origin (7:27, 41-43, 52); 4) His miracle-working power (7:31); and 5) His teaching (7:34-36). In spite of the climate of fear and confusion, many believe (7:31, 40).

7. What does Jesus say about the One who sent Him (Jn 7:16, 28, 33)?

8. What “one work” does Jesus refer to in Jn 7:21 which upset the Jews so much?

9. How is Nazareth again a stumbling block for the Jews?

5. Confrontation in the Temple

Jesus openly confronts the Jews concerning their plot to assassinate Him and they re-pond with a new charge: “*You have a demon ...*”. They had previously suggested that He utilized the power of Satan but those charges were made ridiculous by the goodness which Jesus wrought. These new charges are likewise without merit as Jesus behaves nothing like a demon-possessed person. In spite of their denial, the intent of the Jewish authorities is well-known, for the people wonder why Jesus is allowed to speak without censure: “*Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ?*” (7:25-26). The frustra-tion of the scribes and Pharisees mounts as their arrest detail comes back empty-handed. Their only explanation: “*No man ever spoke like this Man!*”

10. Who feebly tries to defend Jesus (Jn 7:51)?

11. How did the Jewish rulers view the common citizens (Jn 7:47, 49)?

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus: A Harmony (Part 2)

Lesson 2: The Later Judean Ministry (2)

1. The Test of the Adulteress

After the days of conflict, it will become Jesus’ settled habit to spend His nights outside

of Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives, either in the solitude of the Garden of Gethsemane or the warmth of Mary, Martha and Lazarus' home (Jn 7:53; Lk 21:37; 22:39). Upon His return to the temple after the Feast of Tabernacles, the scribes and Pharisees present Him with a delicate situation: a woman caught in the act of adultery is brought for His judgment (Jn 8:2-12). This contrived situation is a travesty and a shame. Where is the man with whom she was caught? Why bring her before someone who is not a judicial officer? Why did these "experts" in the Law seek Jesus' counsel in an open and shut case? They were hoping, of course, for Jesus to respond in a self-incriminating way. Jesus, however, exposes their dishonesty and admonishes the woman to live more purely.

1. Why did Jesus come back to the temple?
2. Why did the woman's accusers not stone her?

2. "If You Do Not Believe That I Am He ..."

Jesus next enters into a discussion with the Pharisees which escalates into attempted murder (Jn 8:12-59). Throughout the discussion Jesus focuses upon His relationship with the Father in heaven. This is the same theme He had pursued when in Jerusalem previously (Jn 5). In the first part of the interchange (Jn 8:12-29) Jesus affirms, "*I am with the Father who sent Me ... the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me ... as My Father taught Me, I speak these things ... the Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him*" (8:16, 18, 28-29). He rebukes the Jews, "*You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also*" (8:19).

3. What did Jesus say which made the Jews think He would kill Himself?
4. What would cause the Jews to die in their sins?

3. "Before Abraham Was, I AM"

Even though Jesus' words were somewhat cryptic and veiled to the unbelieving Jews (Jn 8:27, 43), "*many believed in Him*" (8:30). But Jesus challenges their belief even further, for He knows it does not rest on a solid foundation (Jn 8:31-36). He urges them to seek true freedom by abiding in His word (see 8:31, 37, 43, 51-52) but has a difficult time getting them to see past their ancestry (Jn 8:33, 37-47). Like men in every age, the Jews try to substitute for true spirituality. They had a high regard for their genetic connection to Abraham but made no attempt to duplicate his character: "*If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.*" Jesus declares that His works and character identify Him with God; the Jews' murderous intent identifies them with the devil (Jn 8:44). Nearly maddened by these powerful rebukes of the Lord, the Jews resort to racial slurs, charges of demon-possession and attempted stoning to silence Him (Jn 8:48, 52, 59). Jesus ends the discussion with the implication that He not only is in close fellowship with the Father but shares His divine nature (Jn 8:58).

5. What makes one a true disciple of Jesus (Jn 8:31)?
6. What kind of freedom did the Jews think Jesus was talking about?

7. List the additional things Jesus says about His relationship with the Father.

4. The Healing of the Blind Man

The healing episode in Jn 9 documents the extreme obstinacy of the Jews. In spite of the undeniable evidence before them, the Pharisees refuse to even acknowledge Jesus as a prophet (Jn 9:17-18, 24). The only thing that matters to them is the supposed violation of the Sabbath (9:14-16); they can see nothing else. Again, this is a carbon copy of the earlier healing of the lame man (Jn 5:9-12) and undoubtedly explains why Jesus had avoided Judea for most of His ministry. Everything He does is discounted and denied by the scrupulous Jews. Note the public fear of excommunication (Jn 9:22).

8. What concept did Jesus' disciples have of misfortune and affliction (Jn 9:2)?

9. What does the healed man believe about Jesus (Jn 9:17)?

5. The Excommunication of the Healed Man

Finally freed from the shackles of his blindness, the man is now plunged into the dark-ness of excommunication by the Jewish high court (Jn 9:24-34). They attack the poor man on every count: denying his story (9:18), threatening his parents (9:19-23), accus-ing him of withholding glory from God (9:24), looking for loopholes in his story (9:26), personal attacks (9:28, 34) and general intimidation. However, the man is rock solid in his convictions and draws the proper conclusion from the events which had befallen him: *"If this man were not from God, He could do nothing"* (9:33). His simple, clear and logical reasoning condemns and enrages the Pharisees. Men on a frenzied crusade often do the very things that will destroy them in the end. So it is with the Pharisees. They will only spread the flames of faith by threatening and punishing those who believe in Jesus.

10. What is the flaw in the Jews' reasoning in Jn 9:29? What were Moses' credentials?

11. What did the man conclude about Jesus' origin from the miracle (Jn 9:30-31)?

12. How did the healed man react toward Jesus after his excommunication (Jn 9:38)?

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus: A Harmony (Part 2)

Lesson 3: The Later Judean Ministry (3)

1. The Good Shepherd

Jesus contrasts the despicable, self-serving behavior of the Pharisees with His genuine in-terest in the sheep: *"I am the good shepherd"* (Jn 10:11). By implication, the Pharisees are thieves and robbers who kill and destroy (Jn 10:1, 8, 10), hirelings who flee from the wolf because they do not care about the sheep (Jn 10:12-13). Jesus, however, foreshad-owing His death, says, *"I lay down My life for the sheep"* (Jn 10:15). While this teaching is not as offensive as the language in Jn 6, the people still fail to understand it and pro-claim *"He has a demon and is*

mad” (Jn 10:6, 19-20). In the interest of gathering His lost sheep, Jesus sends seventy of His disciples throughout Judea (Lk 10:1-24). It is through efforts such as this that God chose to declare the kingdom and exhibit the defeat of Sa-tan (Lk 10:9-11, 18). Those who were “babes” would appreciate the message as pre-sented but, those with a worldly outlook would not understand (10:21). So it is today.

1. What advantage did the disciples have over prophets and kings of old (Lk 10:23-24)?
2. What power does Jesus have regarding His life (Jn 10:17-18)?

2. The Good Samaritan

Luke now inserts a story wherein Jesus is challenged by a lawyer on the subject of eternal life (Lk 10:25-37). The question is posed as a provocative test. Jesus, however, turns the situation around and puts the lawyer on the defensive. The parable of the good Samaritan illustrates how Judaism had been reduced to a few legalistic formalities to the neglect of true compassion and mercy. The lawyer would undoubtedly have taken as an insult Jesus’ admonition to “*go and do likewise*” as the Samaritan had done. Luke then gives insight into a visit in the home of Mary and Martha of Bethany (Lk 10:38-42). It is not recorded when Jesus first met these sisters but He did become quite close to them and their brother, Lazarus. On this occasion, Mary and Martha have a domestic spat which Jesus settles in favor of Mary “*who has chosen that good part*”; i.e., her concerns were focused on spiritual things rather than physical.

3. How did the lawyer summarize the Law? Did Jesus agree with his assessment?
4. What caused Martha to be agitated? What could not be taken from Mary?

3. Teaching on Prayer

Jesus, at the request of the disciples, gives a lesson on prayer (Lk 11:1-13). Since the prophet John had instructed his disciples and Jesus has taught both by example and word, we would correctly conclude that communication with God is a matter worthy of our study and meditation. Jesus teaches both on the text of prayer (Lk 11:1-4) and the persistence in which it is to be engaged (Lk 11:5-13). Jesus includes a parable (11:5-8) and an analogy from human life (11:9-13) to illustrate His point.

5. What was Jesus doing when the disciples requested teaching on prayer?
6. What is the point of the parable? Does God have to be nagged before He responds?

[Special Note: Some include Lk 11:14-13:9 as part of Luke’s Judean account despite its resemblance to events occurring earlier in Galilee. A.T. Robertson comments, “We now have to deal with the most perplexing question in harmonistic study, the proper disposal of the mass of material furnished by Luke in 9:51-18:14” (*A Harmony of the Gospels*, p. 276). Robertson argues for inclusion in the Judean Ministry while McGarvey and Pendleton argue for the Galilean Ministry.]

4. Another Sabbath Healing

Yet another Sabbath controversy arises when Jesus heals a woman bent double by some sort of spinal ailment (Lk 13:10-17). Great offense is taken by the ruler of the syna-gogue who again completely ignores the demonstration of miraculous power and its compassionate effect over a Sabbath technicality. These displays of Jesus were direct challenges to the Jews' Sabbath traditions, yet they never caused the Jews to ask, "Could it be that I am wrong?". Only extreme arrogance could cause men to ignore an unques-tionable miracle in favor of an erroneous conclusion.

7. What was Jesus doing in the synagogue?

8. Who was thought more highly of by the Jews: a donkey or a daughter of Abraham?

9. What impact did Jesus' rebuke have upon those who opposed Him?

5. The Feast of Dedication; Withdrawal to Perea

John places Jesus back in Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication (Jn 10:22-42), a Decem-ber feast which commemorated the renovation of the temple in 164 B.C. after its dese-cration by Antiochus Epiphanes. Thus Jesus has spent the better part of two months since the Feast of Tabernacles teaching throughout Judea. The Jews surround Him in the temple and question His identity yet again (see Jn 8:25, 53; 10:24). Jesus' claims concerning His relationship with the Father riles the Jews into picking up stones but this time – for the first time – they openly admit their intent (Jn 10:33). Jesus affirms that His works bear witness that His claims are true (Jn 10:25, 32, 37-38). If He has misrep-resented Himself, heaven's power would not be available to Him. Things now come full circle: the hostility against Jesus in Judea causes His withdrawal to Perea where John baptized at the beginning.

10. What would have been proper grounds for the Jews to disbelieve Jesus (Jn 10:37)?

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus: A Harmony (Part 2)

Lesson 4: The Perea Ministry (1)

1. On the Way to Jerusalem

Note: The Perea Ministry refers to the period between the Feast of Dedication in De-cember and the final week of Jesus' life, a span of 3 to 3½ months. There is some ambi-guity in the references to Jesus' travels during this period.

For the second time, Luke mentions Jesus journeying toward Jerusalem (Lk 13:22; see also Lk 9:51 and 17:11). Luke may have omitted the first part of Jesus' stay in Perea and now picks up his narrative with Jesus heading back to Jerusalem in anticipation of Laza-rus' death. In answer to a question concerning the number of the saved, Jesus again teaches on the "narrow gate" (Lk 13:23-30; cf. Mt 7:13-14). Even as Jesus speaks of the anguish and regret which many will experience by rejecting Him, some Pharisees try to intimidate Him into leaving their area (Lk 13:31-33). Jesus knows, however, that His death will take place in Jerusalem rather than Perea,

and He laments the disaster which will befall His beloved city on account of its rebellion (Lk 13:34-35).

1. What will some people plead after their exclusion from the kingdom (Lk 13:26)?
2. What was the supposed threat presented by the Pharisees to Jesus?
3. What had Jerusalem done to most of the prophets which God had sent?

2. Another Meal in the Home of a Pharisee

As Jesus again heals on the Sabbath (Lk 14:1-6), one gets the impression that He has deliberately chosen this battleground on which to attack the Pharisees' hypocrisy and traditionalism. He also rebukes the Pharisees at the dinner for arrogantly vying for the honorable seats and admonishes His host to invite into his home those who cannot repay his hospitality (Lk 14:7-14). Jesus is not the guest one would want in his home if He had been invited for less than honorable motives. Jesus fires a final shot at the proud and stubborn Pharisees via the parable of the spurned invitation (Lk 14:15-24).

4. What question did the Pharisees and lawyers refuse to answer?
5. When will the good that one has done be ultimately repaid?

3. The Cost of Discipleship

Even now in Perea Jesus is followed by great multitudes, but He knows the support is more wide than deep. Therefore He teaches in no uncertain terms the requirements of discipleship; rather, He explains who *cannot* be His disciple (Lk 14:25-35). Those who put others – even family – above Jesus cannot be His disciples, for many will be forced to choose between Jesus and their loved ones. Those who will not bear the cross of hard-ship and responsibility in following Jesus cannot be His disciples. In summary, “*whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple*” (14:33).

6. What are Christians like who are not fully committed to Christ (Lk 14:34)?
7. What does Jesus urge the multitudes to consider before following Him?

4. Three Parables of God's Love for the Lost

Another repeated criticism of Jesus by the Pharisees was the type of people who were attracted to Him; viz. tax collectors and sinners (Lk 15:1-2). Jesus responds to this lack of compassion and concern with three parables which illustrate the value of all mankind to God. The parables are progressive: the sheep is a 1% loss of property (Lk 15:1-7), and the lost coin is 10% of the woman's assets (Lk 15:8-10). While these material things are relatively insignificant, they cause great joy when found. How much more so lost humanity? This is stressed in the third parable: the “prodigal” (rashly or wastefully extra-vagant) son (Lk 15:11-32). This last parable also highlights the jealous and heartless attitude of the Pharisees as God welcomes back penitent sinners.

8. What do we like to do when we have found a valuable lost item (Lk 15:6, 9)?
9. What effect in heaven does the repentance of just one sinner have?
10. Why was it right to rejoice over the son who had returned from his wasteful life?

5. Three Parables on Stewardship

Jesus returns to the theme of materialism and responsible stewardship in Lk 16:1-17:10. His first parable stresses shrewdness and wisdom in handling material goods. Rather than being a slave to worldly things, Jesus urges His disciples to use them as tools for spiritual benefit (Lk 16:1-13). The Pharisees, “*who were lovers of money,*” scoffed at such teaching whereupon Jesus skewers them for their waywardness (Lk 16:14-18). He then gives another parable of two men, one rich and one poor, who died and reversed roles in the afterlife (Lk 16:19-31). Through the parable Jesus urges the Pharisees to listen to Moses and the prophets while they yet have the chance. Jesus proceeds to give a brief review of earlier teaching (Lk 17:1-4) followed by a third parable which defines one’s obligation to God (Lk 17:5-10).

11. By what standard did the Pharisees measure themselves (Lk 16:15)?
12. How is the rich man mistaken on the repentance of his brothers (Lk 16:30-31)?
How might people today make a similar mistake?
13. How does Lk 17:10 contrast with the Pharisees’ attitude?

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus: A Harmony (Part 2)

Lesson 5: The Perean Ministry (2)

1. The Death of Lazarus

Jesus has seen the suffering and death of many strangers in His short ministry, but there now arises a different situation: a dear friend falls deathly ill (Jn 11:1-37). Jesus is in-formed of Lazarus’ sickness but He delays His return to Bethany until Lazarus dies, knowing that this will present an occasion for God to be glorified (Jn 11:4, 6). When Jesus finally arrives, Martha laments, “*Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.*” This leads to an exchange with Jesus on the subject of resurrection and spiritual life. Martha believes in the general resurrection at the end of time (11:24) but seems to hope that Jesus will do for Lazarus what He had done for others (11:22). Mary also comes to Jesus with the same lamentation as Martha; Jesus is deeply moved by her grief (11:33-37).

1. How did the disciples react when Jesus said, “*Let’s go to Judea again*”?
2. What does Martha confess about Jesus’ identity?
3. What were skeptics saying about Jesus regarding the death of Lazarus (Jn 11:37)?

2. The Resurrection of Lazarus

Jesus now performs the work that elicits so much joy from His friends and associates and so much hatred from His enemies: Lazarus is raised (Jn 11:45-57). The Pharisees are blinded to the significance of the miracle by their concern for national security (11:47-50). They fail to consider that God had historically given victory to His people over larger and more powerful kingdoms. If Jesus' power demonstrates His Messiahship, then the Jews have nothing to fear from the Romans. Unfortunately, the Pharisees follow in the footsteps of their faithless forebears and resolve to murder Jesus (11:53, 57).

4. Why does Jesus pray aloud to the Father before calling Lazarus forth?
5. What do the Jews now fear in spite of their claim in Jn 8:33?
6. What does Jesus do in response to the plots of the Jews against Him?
7. What does John understand about the death of Jesus as he writes his gospel (11:52)?

3. The Final Trip to Jerusalem Begins

Luke makes mention of a third and apparently final trip to Jerusalem by Jesus (Lk 17:11; see also Lk 9:51; 13:22). It appears that from Ephraim Jesus went north to the border of Samaria and Galilee and crossed the Jordan River back into Perea. Now heading south, He encounters a group of lepers who beg for some act of mercy (Lk 17:12-19). In the case of leprosy, the physical affliction was partnered with social ostracism; those afflicted with the disease were unclean under the Law. This makes it all the harder to understand how nine of the cleansed, liberated lepers could go their way without bothering to utter even a simple "thank you" to the Lord.

8. T/F Only one Jew returned to thank Jesus for healing his leprosy.
9. Why might people neglect to thank others for their acts of kindness?

4. The Coming of the Kingdom and the Son of Man

Jesus had taught from the first that the kingdom was "at hand." This created great anxiety among the Pharisees who expected a Davidic kingdom to be established, for their leadership positions would be jeopardized. Questioned by a Pharisee as to when the kingdom would come, Jesus responds not with *when* but *what* (Lk 17:20-21). The people desperately needed to change their thinking about the nature of His kingdom. It would not "*come with observation*," i.e., with armies, chariots, palaces, thrones, gold and silver and other earthly accoutrements. The essence of the kingdom of Christ is the personal enthronement of the Lord in the hearts of His followers. There will be no visible confirmation that the Messiah's rule is in effect. However, Jesus does relate to the disciples one future catastrophic event that will follow His coronation: the city He loved so much but which had rejected Him would be destroyed (Lk 17:22-37). We will discuss this more fully when Jesus later elaborates upon it (Mt 24).

10. What must happen before Jesus comes in judgment upon Jerusalem (Lk 17:25)?

11. What three Old Testament characters are referred to regarding the destruction?

5. Two Parables on Prayer

The trials of the future will demand great faith and perseverance among the disciples; therefore, Jesus stresses by parable two aspects of prayer: persistence (Lk 18:1-8) and humility (Lk 18:9-14). “*Men always ought to pray and not lose heart*” (18:1) is divine advice for all who are burdened and discouraged. Jesus assures His disciples that God will hear and defend His people though it may seem at times that He is not answering (18:7). The opposite extreme of weak resolve is self-righteous overconfidence which congratulates itself before God. This attitude is typified by the Pharisees; they were thankful to God that they were superior to others (18:11-12). The tax-collector, on the other hand, felt keenly his unworthiness before God (18:13). This is the attitude that secures true justification, justification which comes from God.

12. What does Jesus wonder about the state of the world when He comes in the future?

13. What did the Pharisee ask of God? What does a humble man request?

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus: A Harmony (Part 2)

Lesson 6: The Perean Ministry (3)

1. Jesus’ Teaching on Divorce and Remarriage

//Texts: Mt 19:1-15; Mk 10:1-16; Lk 18:15-17. (Note that Matthew and Mark have skipped the Later Judean and Early Perean ministries). Jesus now enters the region of Judea east of the Jordan River. Again ignoring the masses of people being healed by Jesus, the Pharisees prod Him with a question about divorce. Jesus’ response rests upon His own authority and implies that He will replace the Law of Moses with His own. He acknowledges the allowance of divorce under the Law but notes “*from the beginning it was not so*” (Mt 19:8). Jesus reasserts the original design for marriage – one man for one woman for life – and forbids separating “*what God has joined together*” (19:6). The pro-vision of remarriage for the commission of adultery is of little consolation to the disciples who have been spoiled by Mosaic liberty. They conclude from such marital strictness that “*it is better not to marry*” (Mt 19:10). Such hard-edged teaching is complemented by the tender affection with which Jesus receives the infants and children brought to Him. It is for their sakes, as well as the emotional stability of the marital partners, that Jesus calls for permanency in marriage.

1. What factor persuaded God to allow divorce under the Law of Moses?

2. What results from divorce and remarriage in the absence of sexual unfaithfulness?

2. The Rich Young Ruler

//Texts: Mt 19:16-20:16; Mk 10:17-31; Lk 18:18-30. Jesus often challenged the faith of men and women by exposing their weaknesses. Under such heat the faith of some blossomed. In others it wilted. The young man now kneeling before Jesus wilts under His demands (Mt 19:22).

Jesus used his example to teach further on wealth's interference with spirituality (19:23-24). Again, this runs counter to the disciples' value systems, for they had been taught that the rich were superior to the poor in every respect. Jesus continues to speak of the inequities which will exist among believers (Mt 20:1-16); some will be materially blessed, others will not. Some will work harder and longer than others. Eternal life will not be determined upon the basis of privilege or human effort but by the attitude of heart that secures divine redemption.

3. What did Jesus offer the young man in exchange for his worldly possessions?
4. What concerns Peter regarding the sacrifice he and the others have made for Jesus?
5. What attitude can arise when inequities exist among Christians (Mt 20:12)?
6. What teaching does Jesus now begin to stress (Lk 13:30; 14:11; Mt 19:30; 20:16)?

3. The Request of James and John

//Texts: Mt 20:17-28; **Mk 10:32-45**; Lk 18:31-34. As Jesus resolutely marches toward Jerusalem – and His enemies – the disciples are amazed and frightened. Once again Jesus prepares them for what is about to happen, but Luke notes “*they understood none of these things ...*” (Lk 18:34). This is evidenced by the request of James and John, supported by their mother, to be given prominent places in the kingdom. Perhaps they are thinking of what Jesus had earlier said (Mt 19:28). At any rate, they do not yet understand that exaltation in the kingdom comes only after suffering, sacrifice and service. Note again the stress on being last in order to be first (Mk 10:44).

7. When the brothers say they can drink of Jesus' cup, what do they not yet understand?
8. How do the other ten apostles react to this? Discuss how ambition leads to strife.

4. The Healing of Bartimaeus and His Friend

//Texts: Mt 20:29-34; **Mk 10:46-52**; Lk 18:35-43. Jesus has now crossed the Jordan and comes to the city of Jericho. Jericho is about seventeen miles from Jerusalem but 4000 feet below it (Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 593). Before making His final ascent to the capital city, two brief stories are told. In the first Jesus heals two blind men outside of Jericho. These men, Bartimaeus figuring more prominently, will not be shushed by the crowds who consider their insistent cries to Jesus a nuisance. Jesus honors their persistence even as He promised concerning prayer (Lk 18:1).

9. In what way did Bartimaeus' faith make him well?

5. In the Home of Zacchaeus

Luke includes a second story from Jericho, this one having to do with spiritual rather than physical healing (Lk 19:1-10). Zacchaeus, despised by others for his occupation, finds favor with Jesus because of his changed disposition of heart. This is what truly makes him “*a son of Abraham*” (Lk 19:9), not genetic relation. To the assembled crowd Jesus now tells another

parable of the kingdom designed to soothe their disappointment when He is rejected at Jerusalem (Lk 19:11-27). The parable stresses that the kingdom is not to visibly appear soon but that He will go to “*a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and return*” (19:12). It also teaches responsibility and diligent service during the absence of the “nobleman.” Jesus expects all of His servants to be good stewards of what has been entrusted to them. Those who invest their assets in the Lord’s work will be blessed; those who neglect to do so will be deprived of what they have. And those who oppose His rule will be destroyed upon His return.

10. What caused Jesus to tell this particular parable at this time?

11. What will be the attitude of some toward Jesus during His absence (19:14)?

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus: A Harmony (Part 2)

Lesson 7: The Final Week (1)

1. Jesus Returns to Bethany

[**Note:** There is some disagreement among Bible students on the chain of events during this last week. The following sketch is the one with which I am the most comfortable.]

Friday: Jesus returns to Bethany (Jn 11:55-12:1). This is the third Passover specifically mentioned by John (2:13; 6:4). There is no definite identification of the feast in Jn 5:1. The atmosphere is filled with anticipation and tension; the people sense that a confrontation is brewing.

1. What instructions have been given concerning knowledge of Jesus’ whereabouts?

2. In the Home of Simon the Leper

Saturday: //Texts: Mt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9; **Jn 12:2-11.** Exactly when this meal occurs is difficult to determine. Enough time must elapse after Jesus’ arrival for the food to be prepared and for crowds to gather (Jn 12:9). If the meal was on Friday, it would place the triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the Sabbath which is not likely. Both Matthew and Mark *relate* the story later in the week, two days before Passover (Tuesday), probably because of the connection between Jesus’ rebuke of Judas during the meal and Judas’ offer of betrayal. The meal best fits Saturday evening after the Sabbath has ended and the events to follow will be based on this construction.

Mary is criticized sharply by Judas for her honor shown to Jesus. Jesus defends Mary suggesting that she is merely anointing Him for His burial. This incident indicates that those doing the Lord’s work will often be criticized by others who have their own private agenda. However, the criticism of man does not necessarily imply God’s displeasure.

2. What does Judas *say* should have been done with the oil? What did he really think?

3. What threat is hanging over Lazarus’ head? Why?

4. In what way does our study of Mary’s actions fulfill Jesus’ words (Mt 26:13)?

3. The Triumphal Entry

Sunday: //Texts: Mt 21:1-11; Mk 11:1-11; **Lk 19:29-44; Jn 12:12-19.** On the day after the meal at Simon's Jesus enters Jerusalem among great rejoicing and celebration by the multitudes. Jesus has been trying to prepare His disciples for this moment so that the euphoria might not deceive them; Jesus **will** soon die in spite of the grand reception now given to Him. Mark notes that "*the hour was already late*" as Jesus enters the temple; therefore, He retires for the evening to Bethany (Mk 11:11).

5. How was the colt upon which Jesus rode into Jerusalem found?

6. Why do the Pharisees ask Jesus to rebuke the disciples? What did He answer?

7. What had Jesus done that excited the crowds (Jn 12:17-18)?

4. The Second Cleansing of the Temple

Monday: //Texts: Mt 21:12-19; Mk 11:12-19; Lk 19:45-48. The next morning Jesus sets out for Jerusalem. On the way, He sees a fig tree that has blossomed early, raising His hopes of finding unseasonable fruit. Finding none He curses the tree and continues to the temple. (Note that Matthew includes this episode out of sequence.) There Jesus finds the same corrupt state of affairs as at His first cleansing some three-plus years earlier (by our reckoning). Jesus again whirls through like a tornado overturning tables, scattering coins and barring entry to those intending to sell. He then spends the day in the temple teaching and healing, thus honoring its spiritual purpose. The reaction of the Pharisees to this commotion is predictable: "*they were indignant*" and fearful of His popularity. While they sorely wished to apprehend Him, they dared not "*for all the people were very attentive to hear Him*" (Lk 19:48). Jesus again leaves Jerusalem for the night.

8. What were the children saying that infuriated the Pharisees? What did Jesus answer?

9. Where did Jesus spend Monday night?

5. The Withering of the Fig Tree

Tuesday: //Texts: Mt 21:20-22; Mk 11:20-26. On their way back to Jerusalem the next morning, the disciples notice that the fig tree, green and leafy the day before, is now "*dried up from the roots.*" Jesus turns this into another lesson on faith and prayer. This is a common theme during the last months of Jesus' ministry as He tries to prepare the disciples for what lies ahead. The disciples must proceed through upcoming tribulations with utmost confidence in God's power to accomplish His will. There will be many times when it seems that their fragile human efforts will be overpowered by forces of evil. They will be discouraged and tempted to draw inward, avoid confrontations or quit altogether. Jesus constantly reinforces the need for strength, perseverance, assurance and reliance upon higher powers: "*Have faith in God*" He urges them (Mk 11:22).

10. What element ruins effective prayer (Mk 11:23; see Jas 1:5-8)?

11. Discuss the difference between doubt and uncertainty concerning the will of God.
12. Who inquires about the fig tree? How will his confidence be shaken in two short days?

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus: A Harmony (Part 2)

Lesson 8: The Final Week (2)

1. Jesus' Authority Challenged; Three Parables

Tuesday (continued): //Texts: Mt 21:23-22:14; Mk 11:27-12:12; Lk 20:1-19. [Note: Many events of this day are recorded in the gospels. Unfortunately, our survey format will not allow us the time we may wish to fully discuss these activities.] Jesus is interrupted while teaching and challenged by the Pharisees concerning His authority, but He turns the tables on them with a counter question about John's authority. Their equivocation exposes their dishonesty. Jesus then tells three parables which are stinging re-bukes of their self-righteous rejection of God's messengers: the two sons, the wicked vine-dressers, and the scorned wedding feast. In these thinly veiled stories the Jewish rulers "*perceived that He was speaking of them.*"

1. How did Jesus hang the Pharisees on the horn of a dilemma (Mt 21:25-27)?
2. Compare Mt 21:44 with Dan 2:35, 44-45. Why is the kingdom taken from the Jews?

2. Controversial Questions and a Scathing Rebuke

Now thoroughly humiliated and incensed, the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians launch an all-out attack against Jesus' credibility. First, Jesus is questioned by Pharisees and Herodians, "*spies who pretended to be righteous*" (Lk 20:20), on the subject of Roman taxation (**//Texts: Mt 22:15-22; Mk 12:13-17; Lk 20:20-26**). Then the Sadducees pose a hypothetical question of resurrection (**//Texts: Mt 22:23-33; Mk 12:18-27; Lk 20:27-39**), but they, too, meet their match: "*after that they dared not question Him any-more*" (Lk 20:40). Seeing the utter failure of the Sadducees, the Pharisees try to stir controversy over His view of the greatest commandment (**//Texts: Mt 22:34-40; Mk 12: 8-34**). But their lawyer is forced into to humble agreement with His answer.

Now it is Jesus' turn to quiz the Pharisees. He wants to know from these supposed experts in the Law how it is that David calls his own descendant "Lord" (**//Texts: Mt 22:41-46; Mk 12:35-37; Lk 20:41-44**). His question illuminates the divine nature of the Messiah which the Pharisees refused to admit. Not only did His enemies fail to make Jesus incriminate Himself, they were shamed into silence by His return questions: "*And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore*" (Mt 22:46). These dishonest, conniving, hateful rebels are through with Jesus, but He is not yet through with them.

Jesus now utters His last **public** discourse; its heat melts the Pharisees like wax, sealing His fate (**//Texts: Mt 23:1-39; Mk 12:38-40; Lk 20:45-47**). In righteous indignation Jesus pronounces "woes" upon these "*scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*" He publicly and forcefully denounces

their pride, estrangement from the kingdom, fraud, empty zeal, false oaths, neglect of the Law's great principles, inward corruption, murderous rebel-lion, culminating in this outburst: "*Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?*" Though His fate is now assured and death is near, Jesus does not overlook the generosity of the poor widow (Mk 12:41-44).

3. Why was the Sadducees question about marriage in the resurrection hypocritical?
4. What was the lawyer near who questioned Jesus on the greatest commandment?
5. To whom did the Pharisees appear righteous? But what did Jesus see within them?

3. "The Hour Has Come ..."

At the request of some Greek proselytes for an interview, Jesus addresses His rapidly approaching death (Jn 12:20-50). For the first time, Jesus says "*the hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified*" (20:23). Three "nows" then follow: "*Now My soul is troubled ... Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out*" (12:27, 31). Jesus is torn between His personal suffering and the fruit it will produce.

6. What misconception did the people have of the Messiah (Jn 12:34)?
7. Why did many Jewish rulers who believed not confess Jesus (Jn 12:42-43)?

4. Doom for Jerusalem

//Texts: Mt 24:1-25:46; Mk 13:1-37; Lk 21:5-36. Upon His departure from the temple, Jesus elaborates on His earlier prophecy that Jerusalem will eventually suffer cataclysmic annihilation. This passage poses some questions not easily resolved. It is my view that Jesus first speaks of Jerusalem's AD 70 destruction in Mt 24:1-35, then subtly shifts the discussion to universal judgment in Mt 24:36-25:46 (note the references to "this generation" in 23:36 and 24:34). Jesus will punish Jerusalem in the lifetime of His hearers; His final judgment upon all mankind will come at an unspecified future date (24:36, 42-44; 25:13). Thus Jerusalem's demise is an type of final judgment.

8. What prophet spoke of the "abomination of desolation"? Where?
9. How does one render service to the King (Mt 25:35-45)?

Day 5: Judas' Offer of Betrayal

//Texts: Mt 26:1-5, 14-16; Mk 14:1-2, 10-11; Lk 21:37-38; 22:1-6. It is inconceivable that Jesus' death could be so near in the midst of wild adoration. But Judas holds the key; he now strikes his bargain to facilitate Jesus' arrest in the absence of the adoring crowds. No other motive than greed is ascribed to Judas. Thus ends a long day of confrontation; Jesus won the war of truth but will lose the battle for His life.

10. In what way did Satan enter Judas (Lk 22:3)?

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus: A Harmony (Part 2)

Lesson 9: The Final Week (3)

1. The Passover Meal

Thursday: (If our sequence is correct, *Wednesday's* activities are skipped in the gos-pels, possibly being a day spent quietly with the disciples out of the public arena.) Pre-paration for the meal is made by Peter and John (*//Texts:* Mt 26:17-19; Mk 14:12-16; **Lk 22:7-13**). This day is called "*the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb*" (Mk). Thus Jesus did not eat the Passover early in anticipation of His death as some propose. The meal was eaten after sunset on Thursday (early Friday by Jewish reckoning) and Jesus died on Friday afternoon.

Friday: It is now about twelve hours before Jesus' crucifixion. During the meal another flare-up over supremacy prompts Jesus to wash His disciples' feet as an object lesson in humility (*//Texts:* Mt 26:20; Mk 14:17; **Lk 22:14-18, 24-30; Jn 13:1-20**). Jesus then foretells Judas' betrayal (*//Texts:* Mt 26:21-25; Mk 14:18-21; Lk 22:21-23; **Jn 13:21-30**). Judas is identified in several ways: "*He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish*" (Mt); "*the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table*" (Lk); "*he to whom I shall give a piece of bread*" (Jn); "*Is it I? ... You have said it*" (Mt). The disciples, however, do not understand the significance of Jesus' words. Peter's denial is then predicted (*//Texts:* Mt 26:31-35; Mk 14:27-31; **Lk 22:31-38; Jn 13:31-38**). Safe in the comforting presence of Jesus, Peter can neither envision His death nor can he imagine a situation where-in he would disavow the Lord. Yet both events are just hours away.

1. What hour has now come (Jn 13:1, 3)?
2. What is Jesus bestowing upon His disciples (Lk 22:29)?

2. The Institution of the Memorial Supper

//Texts: **Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:19-20; Jn 13:27-30**. The specific order of events is a bit unclear, but Luke's account along with 1 Cor 11:23-26 indicates that Jesus gave the bread as a memorial during supper and the cup after the meal. In so doing Jesus institutes a living memorial, an active proclamation of His death by His believers until His return.

3. What would the shedding of Jesus' blood accomplish?
4. When would Jesus next drink the fruit of the vine with His disciples?

3. Preparation for the Endowment of the Holy Spirit

John 14-17 is the last discourse of Jesus to His disciples before His arrest and crucifixion. Many things are said to inspire courage and hope during the difficult days ahead. Jesus promises not to abandon the disciples; He will send the Holy Spirit to guide and comfort them during His absence (Jn 14:16-18, 25-26; 15:26; 16:7, 13-15). He again emphasizes prayer (14:13-14; 15:7, 16; 16:23-24) as they discharge the tasks assigned to them as His representatives (15:27; 17:18-20). He speaks to them of hope: "*I go to prepare a place for you ... I will come again and*

receive you to Myself” (14:2-3); He exhorts them to be fruitful (15:1-8); He urges them to be obedient in love (14:21-24; 15:9-15). The disciples are still not fully aware of the import of Jesus’ words but the general drift makes them sorrowful (16:6, 17-18, 22). Jesus tries to comfort them with words of peace and joy (14:27; 15:11; 16:33), for although He will suffer a horrible death, that death will result in the salvation of the world and the establishment of God’s kingdom.

5. Why would Jesus “no longer talk much” with the disciples (Jn 14:30)?
6. T/F Jesus’ words in the gospels are all we need to know to be faithful (Jn 16:12).
7. When one has seen Jesus, who has he also seen (Jn 14:9)? What does this mean?

4. In the Garden of Gethsemane

//Texts: Mt 26:36-46; Mk 14:32-42; Lk 22:39-46; Jn 18:1. Gethsemane means “oil press,” a fitting name for a garden on the Mount of Olives. And it is Jesus who is now being pressed by sorrow and dread. Jesus, accompanied by His favorite three friends, spends His final moments before His arrest in fervent prayer, both stating His deepest requests to God and expressing submission to the Father’s will.

8. What does Jesus ask of His friends (Mt 26:38)? Why did they sleep (Lk 22:45)?
9. What was the essence of Jesus’ prayer? How many times did He pray it?

5. The Betrayal and Arrest

//Texts: Mt 26:47-56; Mk 14:43-52; Lk 22:47-53; Jn 18:2-12 (all the gospels must be read for a complete account of what transpires). Mark says that Judas wanted Jesus led away safely (14:44) but Jesus confronts him with the true nature of his act: “*Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?*” (Lk 22:48). A brief skirmish erupts as the disciples attempt to prevent Jesus’ arrest, but Jesus quells it and secures the re-release of His companions. The first phase of the plot is successful: Jesus is apprehended in the night while His adoring crowds sleep in their beds – and they have Judas to thank for helping them pull it off.

10. What shows the nervousness and fright of the detail sent to arrest Jesus (Jn 18:6)?
11. Who was Malchus? What should have made him think twice about arresting Jesus?
12. Why did Jesus not deliver Himself via angelic power (Mt 26:54; Jn 18:11)?

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus: A Harmony (Part 2)

Lesson 10: The Final Week (4)

1. The Jewish Trial: Stages 1 & 2

Friday (continued): John notes that Jesus is first brought before Annas, who had served as high priest from AD 7-15 (Jn 18:12-14, 19-23). While Annas still retains the honorary title, his son-in-law, Caiaphas, holds the office from AD 18-36 (see Lk 3:2). Jesus receives His first physical abuse while standing bound before this Jewish magistrate, merely the beginning of the mockery of justice to unfold over the next few hours. In the second stage of the Jewish trial, a parade of false witnesses fails to make a sensible charge against Him (**//Texts: Mt 26:57, 59-68; Mk 14:53, 55-65; Lk 22:54, 63-65; Jn 18:24**). Jesus remains silent but is finally asked the question He can neither ignore or deny: *“I adjure You by the living God that You tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God.”* His affirmative answer opens the floodgate of blasphemy and abuse.

1. For what reason was Jesus slapped before Annas? How did He respond?
2. What could the false witnesses not do (Mk 14:59)?
3. What other abuse does Jesus suffer before Caiaphas?

2. Peter’s Denial

//Texts: Mt 26:58, 69-75; Mk 14:54, 66-72; Lk 22:54-62; Jn 18:15-18, 25-27. Peter had fled with the others at Jesus’ arrest but managed to gain entry to the court of the high priest. But his courage in following so closely is guarded by anonymity; as this is gradually stripped away, Peter then hides behind denial. As the pressure mounts, Peter’s denials become more vehement until, finally, he bolsters his claim with cursing and swearing. It is Luke who records these chilling words: *“And the Lord turned and looked at Peter”* (Lk 22:61). Surely Peter would not have survived such failure if the Lord had not told him of it beforehand and had not prayed for him: *“Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail”* (Lk 22:31-32).

4. How did Peter gain access to the place of Jesus’ trial?
5. Who accused Peter of being in the Garden of Gethsemane with Jesus (Jn 18:26)?

3. The Third Stage of the Jewish Trial; Judas’ Suicide

The Jewish court reconvenes after daylight on Friday morning to formalize the decision already made and draw up charges to present to Pilate (**//Texts: Mt 27:1-2; Mk 15:1; Lk 22:66-23:1; Jn 18:28**). When it finally becomes clear that Jesus is to die, Judas is overcome by grief and takes his own life (Mt 27:3-10; cf. Ac 1:18-19).

6. What position will Jesus occupy after these events?
7. How does Judas assess his actions (Mt 27:4)? What does he say of Jesus?
8. What does the priest’s reasoning in Mt 27:6 reveal about them?

4. The Roman Trial – Stage 1

//Texts: Mt 27:11-14; Mk 15:2-5; Lk 23:2-5; Jn 18:28-38. The Jews present Jesus to Pilate with an array of flimsy accusations including sedition among the Jews, tax-evasion and rebellion

to Rome. This leads to an exchange between Pilate and Jesus on the nature of His kingdom. Jesus confesses Himself for the third time but explains to Pilate that His kingdom is not a threat to Roman authority. When Pilate balks at judgment against Jesus, the Jews note that He is a Galilean (Lk 23:5). This appears to be an attempt to incite Pilate against Jesus in view of his recent slaughter of some Galileans in the temple (Lk 13:1). This backfires, however, when Pilate uses the Galilean reference to transfer the case to Herod Antipas.

9. Why did the Jews need Pilate's help (Jn 18:31)?
10. What does Jesus say about the nature and origin of His kingdom?
11. Who will hearken to the words of Jesus?

5. The Roman Trial – Stages 2 & 3

Herod's only interest in Jesus is a morbid curiosity stemming from his murder of John and a desire to see a miracle (Lk 23:6-12; Mk 6:16). Jesus refuses to indulge the King knowing that justice will not be forthcoming from one so unprincipled. Jesus' silence only provokes more ridicule and abuse. Herod sends Jesus back to Pilate for the third and final stage of the Roman trial (*//Texts: Mt 27:15-30; Mk 15:6-19; Lk 23:13-25; Jn 18:39-19:16*). Pilate is now desperate to extricate himself from the situation. He is troubled by his wife's dreams concerning Jesus, his own sense of Jesus' innocence, and the ulterior motives with which Jesus has been delivered to him by the Jewish leaders. However, Pilate is a moral coward enslaved to power. He is willing to sacrifice an innocent man to maintain his position in the Roman hierarchy. Outmaneuvered at every turn by the Jews, Pilate finally capitulates and delivers Jesus unto crucifixion.

12. What power does Pilate admit having in Jn 19:10? Why doesn't he release Jesus?
13. What things did Pilate do in his attempt to release Jesus?
14. Why was Barabbas released?
15. How does Mark define "the Preparation Day" (Jn 19:14; Mk 15:42)?

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus: A Harmony (Part 2)

Lesson 11: The Final Week (5)

1. To the Cross

Friday (continued): //Texts: Mt 27:31-34; Mk 15:20-23; Lk 23:26-32; Jn 19:17. Even though Jesus passes through weeping, adoring crowds on His way to Golgotha, the presence of the Roman soldiers and the fear of their own leaders keep them from intervening. Though already suffering extreme physical and emotional distress, Jesus is thinking of the future consequences of these proceedings upon Jerusalem (Lk 23:29-30).

1. Who does Jesus tell the women they should be weeping for?

2. What do you think Lk 23:31 means?
3. What does Golgotha mean (Jn 19:17)? Research the meaning of “Calvary.”

2. The Crucifixion: The First Three Hours

//Texts: Mt 27:35-44; Mk 15:24-32; **Lk 23:33-43; Jn 19:18-27.** At 9:00 a.m. Jesus is crucified, His garments are divided among the soldiers, and a sign is affixed to the cross identifying Him as “King of the Jews.” Jesus endures a barrage of blasphemy from passersby, the chief priests, the soldiers and the criminals hanging beside Him: *“If You are the Son of God ...”* they all question. This is a taunt Jesus has heard before. In the beginning of His ministry and now in His final moments of life, Satan is intent on creating doubt in Jesus’ mind about His identity. If successful, this might persuade Him to act selfishly and abandon His plan to die for all mankind. Jesus, however remains sure of Himself and continues to consider the needs of others.

4. What was the first saying of Jesus from the cross (Lk 23:34)?
5. What was the second saying of Jesus from the cross (Lk 23:43)?
6. What was the third saying of Jesus from the cross (Jn 19:26-27)?

3. Jesus’ Last Three Hours

//Texts: **Mt 27:45-56; Mk 15:33-41; Lk 23:44-49; Jn 19:28-30.** Symbolic of the terrible events which are being played out upon the earth, darkness covers the land from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Finally, Jesus expires. Upon His death the veil in the temple is torn from top to bottom, the earth quakes, a number of godly people are raised from their tombs. On beholding these physical phenomena and considering the claims and character of Jesus, the Roman executioners acknowledge Jesus to be both righteous (Lk 23:47) and the Son of God (Mt 27:54). In response to a request from the Jews, the executioners confirm the death of Jesus (Jn 19:31-37).

7. What was the fourth saying of Jesus from the cross (Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34)?
8. What was the fifth saying of Jesus from the cross (Jn 19:28)?
9. What was the sixth saying of Jesus from the cross (Jn 19:30)?
10. What was the seventh saying of Jesus from the cross (Lk 23:46)?
11. Why did the executioners not break Jesus’ legs? What did this fulfill?

4. The Burial

//Texts: Mt 27:57-61; **Mk 15:42-47; Lk 23:50-56; Jn 19:38-42.** So many events which fulfill prophecy in connection with Jesus’ death are beyond His control. Especially is this true in regard to His burial. He could not engineer any of these things in order to become some artificial Messiah. Joseph of Arimathea, *“being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews,”* manages to work up the courage to request permission from Pilate to bury Jesus. He and

Nicodemus, a fellow council member, anoints the body and hurriedly places it in Joseph's new tomb as the Sabbath approaches.

12. How does Mt 27:57, 60 fulfill Is 53:9?

13. What had Joseph been waiting for (Mk 15:43)?

14. What surprised Pilate about Jesus' death? How did he verify it?

5. The Sealing of the Tomb

Saturday: Not satisfied with Jesus' death, the Pharisees and chief priests appeal to Pilate on the next day to secure the tomb and make it tamper-proof (Mt 27:62-66). In presenting their case to Pilate the rulers admit that they understood Jesus' teaching that He would rise from the dead on the third day. Fearing that some of His disciples will steal the body and concoct a resurrection story, the Pharisees are granted guards to watch the tomb. All their efforts to defeat the influence of Jesus, however, only serve to make the upcoming events more certain and credible. The stage is now set: Jesus' body is in the tomb guarded by Roman soldiers; His disciples are demoralized and in hiding; His enemies hold sway over the multitudes; and the adoring crowds are undoubtedly in shock over the turn of events. What happens next either makes or breaks Christianity.

15. What is the "next day," the day after Preparation Day?

16. How long was the guard requested for the tomb? Why this long?

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus: A Harmony (Part 2)

Lesson 12: Resurrection and Ascension

1. The Women at the Tomb

Sunday: Interestingly, *the* pivotal event in all of human history is not described in the Scriptures. *Testimony* of the resurrection of Jesus is given by angels (*//Texts:* Mt 28:6; Mk 16:6; Lk 24:6), and the *opening of the tomb* is described (Mt 28:2-4), but the actual raising of Jesus and its accompanying phenomena is not recorded. Incidentally, the earthquake, the removal of the stone and the flight of the guards are not necessarily connected to the resurrection but aid the inspection of the empty tomb by the disciples. The first group to arrive at the tomb are the women who intend to properly anoint the corpse of Jesus: Mary Magdalene, Jesus' mother Mary, Salome, Joanna and possibly others (*//Texts:* Mt 28:1, 5-8; Mk 16:1-8; Lk 24:1-8; Jn 20:1). The exact sequence of events is difficult to piece together. Apparently, Mary Magdalene leaves the tomb upon seeing the stone removed and the grave empty **before** seeing the angels. This explains why her report to the apostles omits any mention of the angels or a resurrection (note Luke's comment: "*And they remembered His words*" – Lk 24:7-8).

1. What concern did the women have while on their way to the tomb?
2. Where were the women when they saw the angels?

2. Peter and John at the Tomb

John focuses on Mary Magdalene and says nothing of the other women (Jn 20:2-10). Mary reports that Jesus' body is gone and its whereabouts unknown; no mention is made of the angels, suggesting that she had not yet seen them. John outruns Peter to the tomb but Peter enters first. Both disciples see the burial cloths which have been left behind and then depart from the tomb. John apparently gains the first insight into the fact that Jesus has been raised. The rest of the apostles will take longer to accept the truth.

3. What was unusual about the position of the burial cloths?

3. Jesus' First and Second Appearances

Mary Magdalene, who has followed Peter and John back to the tomb, is the first to see Jesus (Mk 16:9-11; **Jn 20:11-18**). Overcome by grief and confusion, Mary does not re-cognize Jesus at first; only when He calls her name does the reality sink in. She reports to the disciples what she has seen but, as Mark notes, she is not believed. Jesus then ap-pears to the rest of the women who had come to the tomb (Mt 28:9-10). Jesus repeats the message of the angels spoken earlier to them: *"tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."* In the midst of this excitement, another scene is being played out among the Jewish rulers. The soldiers, having fled their post at the risk of their lives (for such was the Roman penalty for dereliction of duty), tell the Jewish authorities what has happened (Mt 28:11-15). These soldiers have everything to lose and nothing to gain by the story they tell, yet the Jewish leaders once again harden their hearts against the ob-vious truth. The arrangement made with the guards is ludicrous: they admit incompe-tence and declare what happened *while they slept*. If asleep, how would they have known that the disciples stole the body? How could they sleep undisturbed by the roll-ing of a giant stone, the rustle of grave-robbers, the unwrapping of the corpse and its removal from the tomb, etc.! Money first bought betrayal; money now buys silence.

4. What was Mary to say to the disciples?
5. How did the disciples react to the message of the women (Lk 24:11)?

4. The Third Appearance: On the Road to Emmaus

//Texts: Mk 16:12-13; **Lk 24:13-35**. In the afternoon on Sunday, two of the disciples are traveling to Emmaus, a town seven miles to the west of Jerusalem. As they discuss the recent events Jesus joins them on their walk, *"but their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him."* In this condition, they were able to focus without distraction upon the instruction which Jesus now gives them. It is not until Jesus prays over supper that they are allowed to recognize His true identity. Though their arrival in Emmaus was *"toward evening,"* and the day was *"far spent,"* the disciples immediately return to Jerusalem with their good news.

6. How had the events of the weekend affected the disciples?

7. How does Jesus chastise the disciples? What should they have known by now?
8. What effect did the discussion of the Scriptures with Jesus have upon the disciples?

5. Jesus' Fourth and Fifth Appearances

At some point during the day Jesus appears to Peter (Lk 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5). Mark notes that the disciples from Emmaus were not believed (Mk 16:13) but Luke says Peter had seen Jesus. Is this contradictory? No, for doubts and disbelief will continue even while stories of Jesus' appearances continue to accumulate. Thomas, for instance, disbelieves until he sees Jesus with his own eyes. Then, late on the first day of the week, Jesus pre-sents Himself to the ten (*//Texts: Lk 24:36-43; Jn 20:19-25*). Their reaction: ter-rified, frightened, troubled, doubting, glad, unbelieving, hard-hearted, still did not be-lieve for joy, marveled. The disciples are riding an emotional roller-coaster; their emo-tions are interfering with their rational conclusions of what they are seeing and hearing.

9. How did Jesus convince the disciples of His true identity?
10. What does He say to them about the future?

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus: A Harmony (Part 2)

Lesson 13: Resurrection and Ascension

1. The Appearance to Thomas

One week after the resurrection: Thomas had not been present when Jesus ap-peared a week earlier to the other ten apostles (Jn 20:24-25). Some commend Thomas' skepticism as reasonable restraint; others fault him as obstinate and irrational in de-manding his own proof. Whatever the case, Jesus gently responds to Thomas' conditions (Jn 20:26-29). At once the skepticism gives way: "*My Lord and my God!*" Note that eight days after the resurrection the disciples still have not departed for Galilee. Grant-ing that they may have stayed in Jerusalem until the feast was over, it appears that the disciples are reluctant to act. It takes this sixth appearance to get them moving north where Jesus can spend a few days with them out of the public eye.

1. What do **you** think about Thomas' doubt? Was it reasonable?
2. What does Jesus say will be required of future believers in Him and His resurrection?

2. The Appearance at the Sea of Galilee

After their return to Galilee the apostles are still unsure of what they should be doing, so Peter does what comes naturally to him: he goes fishing (Jn 21:1-14). Jesus appears to them and prepares a breakfast for them on the shore. After the meal, Jesus questions Peter "... *do you love me more than these?*" (Jn 21:15-17). Not very long before Peter had boasted, "*Even if all are*

made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble” (Mt 26:33). Shortly thereafter, he denied three times even knowing Jesus. Now Jesus gives him three opportunities to affirm his love. Peter’s declarations seem subdued and humble; he uses the word *phileo* all three times rather than the higher, nobler *agape*. Jesus indicates to Peter that, in spite of his earlier failure, his elderly years will find him suffering for his faithful service to the Lord (Jn 21:18-19). Peter then turns his curiosity toward John: “What is in store for him?” he wonders (Jn 21:20-25). Jesus’ answer is curt: “Mind your own business,” He says in effect. Peter’s responsibility – and ours – is to discharge our own duties to the Lord and let others do the same.

3. Who is present on this occasion? Which appearance was this to a group of disciples?
4. What does Jesus tell Peter to do after Peter’s three affirmations of love?
5. What can we learn from this story about the start and spread of rumors?

3. The Meeting on the Mountain

//Texts: Mt 28:16-20; Mk 16:15-18 (possibly). The eleven gather to Jesus on an un-specified mountain in Galilee, and even at this late date some were not entirely sure of what was taking place before their eyes. Nevertheless, Jesus commissions them to “*go and make disciples of all the nations.*” All of Jesus’ teaching, all of His works, all of His preparation of these few humble, unsophisticated and relatively uneducated men is now put to the test. It is time for them to put the boats and nets aside once and for all and fish in the sea of humanity.

6. How were disciples to be made by the apostles?
7. What was to be the scope of their preaching?
8. What should these newly-made disciples learn?

4. Other Mentioned Appearances

We must now supplement our study of the gospel accounts with Paul’s mention of resurrection appearances in 1 Cor 15:6-7. Some twenty years after the fact, Paul states that Jesus was seen by over five hundred brethren at one time. When and where this took place is not specified though many commentators without warrant try to connect it with the appearance on the mountain just mentioned. The other special appearance was to James. While James was the first apostle to die a martyr, there is no indication that this was the reason for Jesus’ appearance to him.

9. What does Paul say about the majority of the 500 brethren twenty years later?
10. Discussion: Why do you think Jesus did **not appear** to the Jewish Sanhedrin?

5. Jesus’ Last Appearance and His Ascension

//Texts: Mk 16:19; Lk 24:44-53; Ac 1:4-12. Jesus now completes His forty days of post-resurrection teaching and appearances and with it His earthly ministry. The foundation is now laid upon which the apostles and others will build. This appearance is near Bethany on the east

side of the Mount of Olives, the same hill where Jesus had been taken from them by force just over a month previously. He will now leave them again, not to ascend a cross but into heaven itself at the right hand of God. The disciples are instructed to remain in the city until “*the Promise of the Father*” comes upon them; i.e., “*you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now*” (Ac 1:4-5). With great joy and wonder the apostles watch their Lord rise and disappear into the clouds. Truly these men were privileged to see and hear such wonders. But the privilege only prepares them for the staggering task which lies ahead.

11. Where would the apostles be witnesses of the Lord?

12. What would they receive when the Holy Spirit comes upon them?

13. What did the angels say to the apostles as their gaze into the skies lingered?

Appendix: How long was Jesus in the tomb?

Jesus says in Mt 12:40, “*For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be **three days and three nights** in the heart of the earth.*” But it is evident from other references that three complete day/night cycles totaling 72 hours is not meant:

1) Jesus had said, “*Destroy this temple, and **in three days** I will raise it up*” (Jn 2:19).

2) He also said, “*... and be raised again **the third day***” (Mt 16:21; Mk 9:31).

3) He further taught that He must “***after three days** rise again*” (Mk 8:31).

4) The two disciples on the way to Emmaus said to Jesus, “***today is the third day** since these things happened*” (Lk 24:21).

5) When the Jews tried to foil these prophecies, they said to Pilate, “*the deceiver said, ‘**after three days** I will rise.’ Therefore, command that the tomb be made secure **until the third day***” (Mt 27:63-64).

It is evident that the Jews counted days differently than we do, considering parts of a day to be a whole day-unit. Compare these similar OT references: Ex 19:10-11; Lv 7:16-17; 1 Sam 20:5, 12. From the Jewish point of view, today is the **first** day, tomorrow the **second** day, and the day after that the **third** day.

Further, three complete days and nights does not reconcile with the amount of time Jesus spent in the tomb. As Jesus died late in the afternoon, the first full unit of time in the grave would be:

Night/day (Day 1).

The second unit would be ... night/day (Day 2).

The third unit would be ... night/day (Day 3).

However, *another night* must now follow since Jesus was raised in the early morning (Mk 16:9). Thus a literal method of counting makes **four nights** and **three days**.

A further problem with this reckoning is that the phrases “after three days” and “until the third day” would be in conflict.

The evidence best supports the conclusion that Jesus died and was buried on Preparation Day (Friday), that He was in the tomb the entire Sabbath (Saturday), and was raised on Sunday morning. The Jewish mode of reckoning time allows for a full day and portions of two other days to satisfy the phrase “*three days and three nights.*”