

Daily Journeys Through the New
Testament

Daily Journeys Through the New Testament

*Arranged for an Easy Journey through
the New Testament in 73 Days or 5
Times in One Year*

KENSEWELL

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Dedication

This arrangement is dedicated to my wife who through 63 years of marriage made me a better man and a dedicated student of God's Word, especially the New Testament. Although she is no longer with me, she has won her crown and enjoys being with Christ, the Holy Spirit and God. I strive to join her one day.

I also want to dedicate this book to all who seek to know the truth about Christianity and Christ. It is my fervent desire that this book can assist those who want to find Christ, our savior. I am convinced that the more we know of Christ and His ministry, the more dedicated servants we will be.

Challenge

This work is arranged so a person can read through the New Testament in just 73 days and if he or she will continue reading, will read the New Testament through five times in one year. Every time I read it, I find a new thought (and I have many friends who will testify that they do also). If you commit to this challenge and read it through five times in one year, you will have new insights into the will of God, I promise.

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1.

Overview of Bible History

This brief overview is provided to set the context of the New Testament books in their time and history because there are many references to Old Testament events. An effort has been made to refer to a few of the more well-known characters and events; however, the reader is encouraged to read the entire Bible text in order to access all of the pertinent facts. (An excellent source for reading the Bible in chronological order is *The Daily Bible* arranged by F. LaGard Smith published through Harvest House.

This arrangement is different for the New Testament.) This overview will concentrate on summarizing the story as told in the Bible. No matter what one may think about the Bible, it is one of the great classics of world literature and impacts our lives daily through its teaching. Therefore, it is worthy of our investigation. Ronald Reagan once said, "Of the many influences that have shaped the United States into a distinctive nation and people, none may be said to be more fundamental and enduring than the Bible." In the following, each section has been given a title with an approximate time frame provided inside parenthesis. It is extremely difficult to determine the time frame exactly, particularly for the most ancient times. Time frames become more accurate as time approaches 1 AD.

The Beginning (? – 2000 BC): Genesis 1 – 11

The Bible begins with the simple statement, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."^[1] It does not state how God did that; just that he did. Genesis and many other references credit him with creating life in the world, both plant and animal.

When it comes to man's creation, the Bible differentiates

human life from animal life by quoting God, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." (Genesis 1:26).

During the creation process, two entities are mentioned, God and the Spirit. The New Testament identifies a third, the Son as the Word of God.

God created humans with "free will" and gave them the power to obey or disobey him as evidenced in the second chapter. There it tells how disobedience, often termed sin, came into being. God told Adam and Eve they could eat of any tree in the Garden of Eden except one tree. Eve could not resist Satan's taunts and when she saw the fruit looked good and pleasant and she thought that it would make her wise, she ate it. She then gave Adam some and he ate too. Their disobedience brought sin into the world. They ate the forbidden fruit because they despised God's word, not because they were hungry. The rest of the Bible is dedicated to reconciling mankind with God. As Genesis continues, we learn that men became so sinful that God destroyed them by sending a flood. Instead of destroying everyone, God saved eight righteous people by having them build a boat (ark) to ride out the flood.

Descendants from these eight people spread throughout the world. Different languages came into effect because they disrespected God and he scattered them by confusing their languages.

**Focus on Abraham and His Descendants (2000 – 460 B.C):
Genesis 12 through remainder of Old Testament – Early
Events (2000 -1640 BC): Genesis 12 – 50**

After briefly discussing the spread of humanity through the earth, the Bible focuses on one man and his descendants throughout the remainder of the Old Testament. The people of the Old Testament are popularly called Jews although the

more usual term within the Bible is Israelites or children of Israel.

Abraham (formerly Abram) lived in the area we now call Iraq. God called him and told him to gather his wife and belongings and go to another land, one we now call Israel. When he left the city of Haran, God made two promises which are key for understanding the Bible. God promised Abraham:

- I will make you into a great nation with numerous descendants, and
- All peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

These very important promises form the basis for the rest of the Bible. Careful reading will show that God's actions are designed to fulfill these two promises.

Because Abraham believed God, he left his home. God led him throughout the land then called Canaan and Egypt, promising that his descendants would inherit land. The Bible focuses on one of his children, Isaac. Isaac was not Abraham's only son, but he was the one from which the promised nation would derive. In fact, the descendants of Abraham's other sons occupied most of the region and became enemies with Isaac's descendants. More will be discussed about this later.

Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Jacob's family was selected by God to receive the same promise as his grandfather, Abraham. God changed Jacob's name to Israel, hence the naming of the nation. Israel had twelve sons who became the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Joseph, one of Israel's sons, maintained his faith in God although his brothers sold him as a slave into Egypt. After a trying set of circumstances which illustrated his faith in God and God's care for him, he eventually became the second most powerful person in Egypt. He was in charge of storing food for the predicted famine. When famine gripped Egypt and Canaan, it drove Israel and his sons to seek food in Egypt.

Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers and how Israel moved to Egypt as welcome guests makes one of the most compelling stories of several compelling events in Genesis.

Slavery and Deliverance (1575 -1455 BC): Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

After Joseph died, a new Pharaoh came to power and enslaved the Israelites because they had become numerous and he was afraid of them. Slavery did not prevent the Israelites from continuing to have children. Their continued growth drove Pharaoh to demand that all Israelite boys be killed when born. One mother hid her son as long as she could, then built a little boat from a basket and placed him in the Nile River near where Pharaoh's daughter bathed. She found the infant and took him home with her after contracting the baby's mother to nurse him. So, Moses was raised in Pharaoh's house by his own mother.

When Moses was forty years old, he decided to free his people by his own power; however, he was unsuccessful and was forced to flee for his life to Midian. He lived there for forty years before being called by God to deliver the Israelites.

After God demonstrated his power to Pharaoh through ten destructive plagues, Moses and the Israelites left Egypt and headed toward the Promised Land. Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his army in pursuit; however, God opened the Red Sea for the Israelites and closed it onto the Egyptian army eliminating them as a threat.

God guided Moses and the people to Mount Sinai where God gave him a law for the people to live by. This law is usually termed the Law of Moses; however, the Bible is clear that it came from God through Moses. Most of us may be familiar with the picture of Moses holding two tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments inscribed on them. However, the law contained much more than the Ten Commandments. Actually, it contained over six hundred commandments ranging from how to worship God to how to relate to one's fellow human

beings. Jesus summed up the law as. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with your entire mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it; love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-39)

After receiving the law, Moses led the estimated million or so people from Mount Sinai to Canaan where he sent twelve men to look over the land. When they returned, ten said they could not take the land while two said they could with God’s help. The crowd accepted the view of the ten and refused to go into the land. God punished them with forty years of wandering in the desert and promised that no adult male over twenty would enter the Promised Land. Most of the history of this time covers the events of the forty-year period.

The Promised Land (1455 – 1100 B.C): Joshua, Judges, First Samuel 1 – 7

Before the Israelites entered Canaan, Moses died. Joshua, Moses’ assistant and one of two men who said they could conquer the land with God’s help, became the leader. The book that bears his name tells of the battles fought, and how with God’s help, they were able to overthrow great walled cities and defeat the inhabitants of the land. In his last speech, Joshua warned that if the people did not follow God and instead worshipped idols, they would be thrown out of the land. The people promised to follow God, accepting his covenant. (Note that the Old Testament could be termed the Old Covenant. The same is true with the New Testament as it is the New Covenant.)

After Joshua died, no new leader was appointed. The people had promised to follow God, but unfortunately, the people forgot their promise and began to worship the same idols that the previous inhabitants had worshipped. The previous inhabitants were driven out because they were exceedingly evil, even burning their children in worship of the idols.

Because of the Israelites' disobedience, God allowed the neighboring nations to oppress parts of Israel. When the people would turn back to God, he would send a judge to free his people. This was the time of such judges as Samson, Gideon, Deborah, Ehud, Samuel and others.

Building the Israelite Kingdom (1100 – 980 BC): First Samuel 9-31, Second Samuel, First Kings 1-10, First Chronicles, Second Chronicles 1 -9, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon

The Israelites became dissatisfied with God's plan and wanted a king like the rest of nations around them. God warned them about how the king would rule them. "He (the king) will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to work his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. He will take your best fields, and your best vineyards, and your best olive orchards, and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officer and to his servants. He will take your menservants, and your maidservants, your best young men, and your best donkeys and use them for his work. He will take a tenth of your sheep: and you shall be his servants. You shall cry out in that day because of your king whom you chose; and the LORD will not hear you in that day." (First Samuel 8:11-17)

The people wanted a king, so God selected Saul, a tall, handsome young man. At first, Saul followed God, but in his later years he turned away and worshipped idols. During Saul's reign, a young man named David appears on the scene. After he battled the giant Goliath and killed him with a stone from a slingshot, David became a great hero and leader for Saul's

army. Because he was faithful, God favored David and in due time, he became the most famous of Israel's kings. He wrote many of the psalms contained in the book of Psalms. Although David was proclaimed to be a man after God's own heart, he committed serious sins. His willingness to humble himself after sinning and ask for forgiveness allowed him to remain in God's favor. David never worshipped any idol. God promised that David would have an heir on the throne forever, and the Jews expected the Messiah God was to send later to be a "son of David."

Solomon, David's son, became the next king. He began by asking God for wisdom to lead his people, and God made him one of the wisest men of all time. His fame spread throughout the world, bringing recognition to him and Israel from rulers far and near. He built the magnificent temple in Jerusalem. Unfortunately, Solomon did not stay within God's commands, but built places to worship idols throughout the land. He married seven hundred royal wives and took three hundred concubines, and they turned his head from God to idols. Solomon wrote several psalms, the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

During Solomon's reign, the Kingdom of Israel experienced its greatest power and controlled the most land it ever would. Perhaps the first promise God made to Abraham about making his numerous descendants into a great nation had been fulfilled, but the second one to bless all people of the earth through his descendant had not.

[1] Bible texts are italicized.

2.

The Overview Continues

The Kingdom Divided (980 – 588 B.C): First Kings 12 – 22, Second Kings, Second Chronicles 10 – 36, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah

Rehoboam became king when Solomon died. Ten of the twelve tribes selected Jeroboam to ask Rehoboam to lower their taxes. When Rehoboam refused, the ten tribes separated from the other two, installed Jeroboam as their king and called their new nation Israel. The two southern tribes became known as Judah with Rehoboam as their king. In this summary, we will follow the lead of the Bible and reserve the term Israelites for the northern kingdom and Judeans, or Jews for the southern one. However, we should realize that the prophets sometimes used the name Israel to refer to both kingdoms.

God required that all of his followers assemble at the temple on certain feast days to worship. Jeroboam was afraid of losing control if his people went back to Jerusalem to worship, so he established worship sites in Israel. This was the beginning of the end for Israel as they continued to digress further and further from worshipping God as he ordained.

After more than two hundred years, and after sending prophets^[1] to warn the kings, God sent the Assyrians to conquer and destroy Israel. The Assyrians took most, if not all, of the people to other lands, and imported others into Israel. The land became known as Samaria. Because the Assyrians brought back some of Israel's priests, their worship was a mixture of Israel's and pagan practices.

Some of Judah's kings followed God and some did not. Sometimes, it seemed they alternated. If a king followed God, his son didn't, but his grandson did. God grew frustrated with

Judah and sent many prophets to warn them to abandon idols and return to him. The prophets warned, when Babylonia was a small, weak city, that if Judah did not serve God, the Babylonians would conquer them and carry them away. The prophets also spoke of better days and a servant of God who would come to deliver them.

Over Judah's approximately four-hundred-year history, the country progressively departed from God's ways, and finally, the Babylonians came. Under King Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonians carried away some of the most promising young men, set up a puppet king, and finally destroyed the temple and Jerusalem, taking more captives to Babylon. Some of the captives carried the prophets' words in their hearts that God would bring them back after seventy years.

To Babylon and Back (588 -460 BC): Second Kings 25, Second Chronicles 36, Ezekiel, Daniel, Ester, Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah, Ezra, and Malachi

Was this the end of God's first promise to Abraham? Before the Babylonians came, God sent word through his prophets that he would bring back a remnant to Jerusalem after a seventy-year exile. Why would he do this? It is because the promise to bless all nations through Abraham's descendant was not yet fulfilled.

God never abandoned his people during the exile. He sent prophets to encourage them by reminding them that this was a temporary time and they would return to their homeland. Some of the Jews became very influential in Babylon. One of the most influential was Daniel who interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's dream of an unusual statue which troubled him. Daniel remained faithful to God during his lifetime and continued his position as the King's advisor when Nebuchadnezzar's son succeeded him. Daniel was the one who interpreted the writing on the wall that foretold that the Medes and Persians were at the gates of Babylon and would overthrow the city.

After the Persians took control, a young Jewish woman named Ester married King Xerxes. When some people plotted to kill all of the Jews, she was able to save her people.

King Cyrus became acquainted with Jeremiah's prophecy that he Cyrus would return the Judeans and determined to build a new temple in Jerusalem. Ezra led a contingent of Jews back to Jerusalem for this purpose. They were later followed by Nehemiah who rebuilt the city's walls.

The last book of the Old Testament ends with a promise of victory for those who revere God over evil and predicted the coming of God's servant. One promise to Abraham had been fulfilled, the other was to come. Abraham's descendants once made up one of the most powerful kingdoms on earth, but because they did not honor God by worshipping him as he desired, they lost that power. They remained a nation after Babylon but were never an independent force again. The Bible's focus was on an earthly kingdom up to this point.

When the Old Testament ends, God's promise to make Abraham's descendant a blessing to the entire world had not been fulfilled.

In Between the Old and the New (460 BC to 4 BC):

For over four hundred years, the tiny nation of Judah retained its identity but not its independence. No king sat on its throne. When the Old Testament closes, Judah is a possession of the Persian Empire. Later, the forces of Alexander the Great and afterwards, those of the Roman Empire conquer the land. There are a few uprisings of the Jews, where a shaky freedom is obtained for a few years, but no real independence results. The Jews long for the time when the promised servant, the messiah the son of David, will come.

The Life of Jesus the Christ (4 BC to 29 BC): Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

One may ask why the life of Christ does not begin in 1 AD. Isn't that the definition of Anno Domini, the year of the Lord? When the Julian calendar was adopted, an uncertainty as to

earlier dates was introduced therein. Most scholars think there is a four-year discrepancy, and I have honored their opinion.

The first four books of the New Testament cover the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. They openly proclaim him as the son of God and indicate through his life by his actions that this is a valid claim. Jesus is depicted as a wise and powerful teacher who has compassion on the people. He performed many miracles such as making the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the blind to see, as well as healing many other diseases. He also brought people back to life after they had died. Other miracles he performed demonstrated his power over animals, plants, weather, inanimate objects, and his ability to read minds. He promised to build his church that would last forever.

Jesus became so popular with the people, that the Jewish leaders became concerned that his followers would rebel against Rome. They thought that if Jesus started a new kingdom, the Romans would take away their power and position, so, they plotted to kill Jesus. Through the betrayal by one of his followers, they arrested him, tried him and turned him over to Roman control demanding that he be killed. The Romans complied by crucifying him.

While Jesus stood before the Roman magistrate, Pilate asked him if he was king of the Jews. Jesus answered in the affirmative and then added, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but my kingdom is not from here." (John 18:36). The New Testament focuses on this spiritual kingdom, not an earthly one. This is the kingdom that will bless all people in all nations and so fulfill God's second promise to Abraham.

After Jesus died, he was buried, but rose on the third day and appeared to his followers. Not only did he appear to his apostles, but to over five hundred at one time. Jesus spent about forty days after being resurrected before ascending to

his father in heaven while the disciples watched. Before leaving them, he instructed them to

- Go to all the world,
- Teach and make disciples, and
- Baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This was the beginning of the fulfillment of the second promise to Abraham, and the building of a spiritual kingdom, Jesus' church.

The Spread of Jesus the Christ's Church throughout the World (29 AD – 64 AD): Acts

After Jesus' ascension into Heaven, his apostles began to follow his instructions and taught that Jesus was indeed the son of God who had died to provide humans a way to obtain forgiveness of their sins if they will believe on Jesus, turn to follow him, and be baptized to begin a new life. In other words, they taught what Jesus told them. They began first in Jerusalem and the church grew rapidly with over three thousand converts the first Sunday. People continued to accept Christ and soon there were about five thousand men, not counting women and children.

Once again, the Jewish leaders became concerned and began to persecute the Christians. They beat the apostles and imprisoned them; however, the church continued to grow. Many left Jerusalem to escape the persecution and carried the message with them spreading the church throughout the world.

One man, a leader in the Jewish persecution of Christians, made an abrupt change and became a Christian. Jesus appointed this man, Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles. Everyone not a Jew was considered a Gentile. He went throughout eastern Asia and Europe teaching about Jesus. The book of Acts details many of his experiences and hardships

encountered along the way as the church spread throughout what is now known as Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Letters to Christians and Churches (54 AD – 95 A. D.):Romans, First & Second Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, First & Second Thessalonians, First & Second Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, First & Second Peter, First, Second & Third John, and Jude

These letters were written to Christians scattered through the Roman Empire and contain encouragement and instructions on how to live and worship God acceptably. Most of the letters were written by apostles. Paul wrote twelve or thirteen, Peter two, and John three short ones. Two were written by Jesus' brothers, James and Jude, who were unbelievers until after the resurrection. All nations are being blessed through Abraham's descendant, and indeed, Paul identifies Jesus as that descendant in Galatians 3:16.

Revelation (~ 95 A. D.):

This book was dictated to John by Jesus. It has a simple theme although it is filled with scenes exceedingly hard to understand. The theme is that there is and will continue for a time a great struggle between good and evil. Sometimes, it will seem like evil is prevailing, but in the end, God will be triumphant, and his followers will receive their reward. In short, good triumphs over evil. God's promise to bless all nations through Abraham's descendant (Jesus) will be kept.

[\[1\]](#) The most prominent prophets are named in the books heading this section after Second Chronicles.

3.

The Good News: Jesus is Here!

The Beginning of Christianity

Several people have asked me when Christianity began, and it's a fair question. Some thought it began long before Jesus was born. One author entitled his book *Christianity, the First Three Thousand Years*, but his arguments for a thousand-year head start were not convincing. When we examine the situation closely, using the most reliable ancient manuscripts, we will find that Christianity didn't begin until after Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, or almost two thousand years ago. That's when Jesus became Christ and his followers were first called Christians.

When we study history, we want to use the most reliable data available. After all, garbage in = garbage out applies to all research. For history, we must turn to manuscripts and we want the manuscripts which are the most dependable and preferably written by people who lived through the historical period. So, where do we find the most reliable ancient manuscripts concerning the beginning of Christianity? Hardly anyone contests the accuracy of the great Greek playwright Sophocles who lived a little more than 400 years before Christ. Yet, there are only 7 complete manuscripts of his 120 plays available and the earliest manuscript dates to about 1400 years after his death. That pales in comparison to the 24,000 New Testament manuscripts with the most ancient ones dating to the first and second centuries.^[1] The New Testament is the most validated of all writings of that time. Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts were all written within a few years of Jesus' death and resurrection, certainly in the lifetime of many of those who witnessed the facts and could have disputed any errors. The

fact that no one effectively disputed their writing speaks volumes as to their accuracy.

Although Christianity wouldn't come into being for about 1500 years after the first Old Testament books were written, they contained promises and hints about Jesus' life. Jesus is worshiped as the Son of the God that Abraham and his descendants had been worshipping for well over 2000 years before Jesus' remarkable birth.

The story of Jesus' life actually begins in Genesis, the first book of the Bible, where promises that someone will come who would:

- bruise Satan's head,
- be a descendant of Abraham and
- be a blessing and a light to every nation are given.

In later Bible books, the promises are extended to include his being:

- a prophet like Moses,
- a king and ruler from King David's family, and
- a savior for all people.

Many more promises, more numerous than I will mention here, were made about this servant of God who was to come, suffer for his people, and save them from their many mistakes and disobedience to God. Fortunately, the four accounts of Jesus' life often point out how his deeds fulfilled the prophecies.

Also, in Genesis, we can read how God gave Abraham two promises. One was to make his descendants into a great nation. The remainder of the Old Testament focuses on this family and details how God brought them from two people, Abraham and Sarah, to be a large nation of slaves in Egypt and from that situation to forming the powerful nation of Israel. It also tells us how Israel's kings stopped following God and

how as a result the nation declined until it was destroyed and captured by Babylonia. Yet, Israel continued because God had made two promises. He had already kept one and he was determined to keep the second one, and so he sustained Israel through their captivity in Babylon and their being ruled by Persia, the Greeks, and finally the Romans.

The second promise God made to Abraham was to bless every nation through one of his descendants. When the last Old Testament book was written that descendant had not yet been born. Therefore, the last Old Testament book, Malachi, ends with a promise to send this savior and also to send someone to prepare the people for him. The four books detailing Jesus the Christ's life along with the book of Acts tell us how this promise was and is being fulfilled.

When Jesus was born, the Jews lived under Roman rule. The Romans respected the Jewish religion and allowed them the freedom to exercise their theocratic control as long as they paid taxes and did not contradict Roman laws. The Romans had appointed King Herod to rule over that part of the world and so the Jews answered not only to a Roman governor, they also answered to King Herod. They inwardly seethed at these external controls and eagerly anticipated the coming of the Messiah, or anointed one, because of the promises contained in the Old Testament books. (The New Testament was written in Koine Greek and the Hebrew term Messiah becomes Christ which also means anointed one.) They knew he was to be a descendant of King David and expected him to come as a triumphal king who would vanquish the Romans and make them a free and prosperous nation. They seemed to forget Isaiah's description of a suffering servant who would die for everyone's sins. Unfortunately, with their minds focused on an earthly kingdom, they did not anticipate the spiritual kingdom that would spread throughout the world. As we progress through the story of the beginning of Christianity, we will find that Jesus perfectly fulfills all of the Old Testament prophecies

and indeed establishes a kingdom that permits its citizens to be free no matter whether their lot in life is king, prince, serf, or slave. It's a wonderful story.

This narrative interweaves the four New Testament books, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John together to form one unified account. The books were written by four different men for different audiences, yet they are remarkably consistent. Luke's chronology is used, although it would make very little difference if the author had selected another one. Using another would cause some events to happen in a slightly different order but would otherwise have no significant impact to the story they tell. They meld together so well, that there is no difficulty in combining their narratives into one. For the convenience of the reader, I have included subheadings containing the scriptures combined in that section.

The following are a few comments about the organization of this book.

The text is translated into modern English from the old English of the Authorized King James Bible 1601 text. The Authorized King James Bible is well known for its accurate translation from the original Greek language in which the New Testament was written. It is still under copyright protection in the United Kingdom although it may be published freely throughout the rest of the world.

If the reader has doubts about the veracity of the Bible, he is referred to the author's book, *The Bible, Truth or Lies* available from Amazon. That book uses Old Testament and New Testament accounts to demonstrate that the only logical conclusion to their consistency is that the forty or so writers who wrote over a 1500-year time period were divinely guided.

When we try to put a date on the exact start of Christianity, we encounter some difficulty. The history of our modern calendar is quite interesting, but much too long to cover here. Interested readers may want to examine the history and a good place to start is at <http://www.webexhibits.org/calendars/year->

history.html#anchor-dionysius-date. We currently recognize a division in time which is based on when Jesus was thought to be born. In recent years, an effort has arisen to designate the times as Common Era (CE) and Before Common Era (BCE), but the division of these time periods is still based on when Jesus was born. I prefer the older designations of Before Christ (BC) and After Christ (AD for Anno Domini). Modern research indicates that our current calendar missed Jesus' birth by about four years, i.e. he was born in about 4 BC instead of 1 AD. That's the dating I will use, although there are some doubts about its accuracy.

[1] Christian and Apologetics Ministry, <http://carm.org/manuscript-evidence>.

4.

How It All Began John's Introduction: John 1:1-5

In the beginning [1] was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Everything was made through him, and without him nothing was made. Life was in him, and the life was the light of men. The light shined in the darkness, and the darkness did not understand it.

Luke tells us Why He Wrote His Account: Luke 1:1-4

Many have worked to declare the things which we surely believe without changing the message that was delivered to us by eyewitnesses and ministers of the word. I thought it was a good idea, since I completely understand everything from the beginning, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Man of God, so you can know with certainty the things you have already been taught.

Gabriel Announces the Birth of John the Baptist: Luke 1:5-25

Zechariah lived during the reign of King Herod the Great of Judea. He was a priest of the course of Abia and his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. They were both righteous before God and walked blamelessly in all of the Lord's commandments and ordinances. They didn't have a child because Elizabeth could not conceive, and now they had grown older.

One day, as he served his priestly duties before God, and as was the priests' custom, he was chosen by lot to burn incense in the temple of the Lord. A large crowd of people prayed outside at the time of incense burning. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord stood on the right side of the altar of incense, and when Zechariah saw him, he was confused and afraid. Then the angel spoke to him, "Don't be afraid Zechariah, your prayer is

heard, your wife Elizabeth shall bear you a son, and you shall name him John. You will be full of joy and happiness and many shall rejoice at his birth, because he shall be great in the sight of the Lord. He shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even while in his mother's womb. He shall turn many of the Israelites to the Lord their God. He shall go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous. He will prepare the people for the Lord."

Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I know this will happen? I and my wife are old."

"I am Gabriel," the angel answered, "and I stand in the presence of God. I am sent to speak to you and give you this good news. But because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will be silent and not able to speak until the day that these things happen."

The people wondered why Zechariah stayed in the temple such a long time. When he finally came out, he couldn't speak to them. They understood he had seen a vision in the temple when he gestured to them but remained speechless. When his time of ministry was finished, he left and returned to his home.

After his wife Elizabeth conceived, she hid herself five months saying, "The Lord has done this for me. He showed his mercy to take away my reproach among men."

The Birth of Jesus Announced: Luke 1:26-38

During Elizabeth's sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to the city of Nazareth in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. The angel came to her and said, "Greetings to you who are highly favored, the Lord is with you and you are blessed among women."

When she saw him and heard his words, she was anxious and wondered what he meant. Then the angel said, "Mary, don't be

afraid for you have found favor with God. You shall conceive a child and bear a son and shall name him Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give him the throne of his father David. He shall reign over Israel forever, and his kingdom shall never end." [2]

Then Mary asked the angel, "How can this happen, since I am a virgin?"

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you, therefore your holy son shall be called the Son of God. Also, your cousin Elizabeth, who has no children, has conceived a son in her old age, and is now in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible for God."

Mary replied, "I am the Lord's servant; let it happen according to your words." And the angel left her.

Mary Visits Elizabeth: Luke 1:39-56

Mary hurried and went to the hill country to the city of Juttah. As she entered Zechariah's house, she greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke loudly saying,

"You are blessed among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

"Why am I so honored that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For as soon as my ears heard the sound of your voice, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

"You are blessed because you have believed that what the Lord told you shall happen."

Then Mary said,

"My soul praises the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, because he regarded his lowly servant, and from now on all generations will call me blessed.

"The Mighty One has done great things to me; his name is holy. His mercy is on those who honor him from generation to generation.

“He has showed strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has subdued the mighty from their high seats, and he has exalted the humble.

“He has filled the hungry with good things; the rich he has sent away empty.

“He has helped his servant Israel and remembered his promise of mercy that he made to our father Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Mary stayed with her about three months, and then returned to her own house.

John the Baptist is Born: Luke 1:57-80

When Elizabeth’s pregnancy reached full term, a son was born. Her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. When the baby was eight days old, they came to circumcise the child and were going to name him Zachariah for his father. But his mother answered and said, “No! He will be named John.”

“None of your relatives are called by that name,” they protested. Then they made signs to his father, asking what his name should be. He asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, “His name is John.” They were astonished.

Then Zachariah could speak, and he praised God. All the neighbors were filled with awe and fear and the story spread all over the hill country of Judea. Everyone who heard about these events stored them in their hearts and asked, “What kind of child shall this be! The Lord’s hand is with John.”

His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and he prophesied saying,

“Praise the Lord God of Israel for he has visited and redeemed his people.

“He has raised a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David just like he has said through the mouths of his holy prophets since the world began. So, we shall be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us. We will receive the mercy he promised to our fathers, and he will

remember his holy covenant he made with an oath to our father Abraham.^[3] He will grant us deliverance from the hand of our enemies so we may serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness for all of our life.

“And you child, shall be called the prophet of the Highest for you shall go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways, to tell his people about salvation through the remission of their sins. Through the tender mercy of our God, the rising sun from on high has visited us to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

And the child grew and became strong in spirit. He lived in the desert until the day he appeared in public to Israel. Joseph is Visited by an Angel: Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus Christ happened this way. His mother Mary was engaged to be married to Joseph, however before they came together, she was pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband, was a just man and did not want to make her a public example. He wanted to divorce her privately. While he thought about these things, suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying, “Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife, since the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She shall bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.”

All of this happened to fulfill the Lord’s words spoken by the prophet who said, “Look, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel,” which means God is with us.^[4] When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord instructed and remained engaged to Mary, however, he had no sexual union with her until after she bore her firstborn son whom he named Jesus.

^[1] Both the Old Testament and the New Testament book of John begin with these three words, “In the beginning.”

[2] As Jeremiah said, “Behold, the Lord says that the day will come when he will raise to David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” This is only one reference among many that Christ would be of the tribe of David (or Judah) and not the tribe of Levi. Levites were given the responsibility of the priesthood, Exodus 29:9. The Israelites understood these prophecies and often referred to Jesus as the Son of David.

[3] In Genesis 12, God told Abram that if he would leave his home, he would make his descendants into a great nation, would bless him and make his name great, and in him all families of the earth would be blessed. Paul confirms that the second part referred to Christ when he said in Galatians 3:16 *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He didn't say, to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to your seed, which is Christ.* Abram's name was later changed to Abraham. His grandson Jacob whose name was changed to Israel, had twelve sons. Their descendants were known as the twelve tribes of Israel. When he was dying, Israel told Judah that the sign of leadership would remain in his tribe, and King David was of Judah's tribe.

[4] Isaiah 7:14 was written about 800 years BC.

5.

Jesus is Born: Luke 2:1-20

During the days when Caesar Augustus ruled the Roman Empire, he decreed that a census of the entire Roman world be made. (This taxing was first made when Quirinius^[1] was governor of Syria.) Everyone went to be enrolled in his own city. Joseph went from Nazareth of Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea, the city of David because he was a descendant of King David. Mary also went because she was his fiancée. She was in her late pregnancy, and while they were there, her pregnancy came to term. She bore her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

That night, shepherds were living in the field outside the city protecting their sheep. Suddenly, the angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord lit the area, causing them to become afraid. Then, the angel said, “Don’t be afraid for I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. This day a child is born in the city of David, a Savior, Christ the Lord. This is a sign to you; you shall find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly, along with the angel, there appeared a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and good will toward men.” When the angels went back into heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go right now into Bethlehem, and see this thing which the Lord told us about.”

They hurried and found Mary, Joseph, and, lying in a manger, the baby. After they saw him, they told others what they had seen and heard and about the baby. Everyone who heard the shepherds were amazed and filled with wonder. Mary treasured all these things in her heart.

The shepherds returned to their flocks, glorifying and praising God because everything they had heard and seen were just as they had been told.

Jesus is Circumcised: Luke 2:21-38

When Jesus was eight days old, he was circumcised and named Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. Then, when the days of Mary's purification according to the Law of Moses were finished, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, and to offer a sacrifice; a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons according to the law of the Lord. The law of the Lord says that every first born male shall be called holy to the Lord.^[2]

There was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, a just and devout man who waited for the Christ. The Holy Spirit was upon him, and the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he should not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. The Spirit guided him to the temple, and when the parents brought in Jesus as the law stated, he took the child in his arms, praised God, and then said, "Lord, now let your servant depart in peace according to your word, for I have seen your salvation which you prepared for all people. He will be a light to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel."

His words amazed Joseph and Mary. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary, Jesus' mother, "Listen, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel. He will be a sign which shall be spoken against so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. Surely, a sword shall also pierce you own soul."

Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher was also in the temple. She was a widow, having lived with her husband seven years, and was now eighty four years old. She never left the temple, but served God, fasting and praying night and day. Coming up to them at that time, she gave thanks to the Lord and spoke about the child to everyone who longed for redemption in Jerusalem.

So, they performed everything the law of the Lord required.

The Wise Men Visit: Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea during the reign of King Herod the Great, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the one born King of the Jews? We have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him."

These things troubled King Herod and everyone in Jerusalem. Herod called the chief priests and all of the scribes together and demanded they tell him where Christ should be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for it is written by the prophet, 'Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, you are not the least among the princes of Judea, for out of you shall come a leader who shall rule my people Israel.'" [3]

Herod privately called the wise men to ask when the star first appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the young child and when you find him, come tell me so I may also go and worship him."

After hearing the king, the wise men left and followed the star which they had seen in the east until it was over the young child. When they saw the star, they were filled with great joy. When they entered into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother. They fell down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented their gifts to him; gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod, so they left for their own country by another way.

Jesus' Escape and the Slaughter of the Children: Luke 2:39-40; Matthew 2:13-23

After the wise men left, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the young child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you otherwise, because Herod will try to destroy the young child."

Joseph got up immediately and during the night took the young child and his mother and left for Egypt. They stayed

there until Herod died. This happened to fulfill the words the Lord spoke through the prophet who said, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."[\[4\]](#)

When Herod saw that the wise men did not come back, he became very angry. He ordered his army to kill every boy in Bethlehem and the surrounding countryside who was two years old or less, according to the time he had learned from the wise men. This also fulfilled the words of the prophet Jeremiah when he said, "In Rama, a voice was heard, lamentations, and weeping, and great mourning. Rachel weeps for her children and could not be comforted because they are no more."[\[5\]](#)

After Herod the Great died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother back to the land of Israel. Those who wanted to kill the child are dead."

So, he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and returned to the land of Israel. He was warned by God through a dream that Archelaus reigned in Judea in place of his father Herod. He was afraid to go there so he turned toward Galilee and lived in the city of Nazareth. This fulfilled the prophet's words which said he shall be called a Nazarene.[\[6\]](#)

The child grew, becoming strong in spirit and in wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

Jesus Visits the Temple: Luke 2:41-52

Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover, so, when he was twelve years old, they all went to Jerusalem. After the feast was over, they left for home, but the child Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without Joseph and his mother's knowledge. They thought he was in their traveling group, and after a day's journey, they looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances. When they didn't find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After searching for three days, they found him in the temple, sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was astonished at

his understanding and answers. When Joseph and Mary saw him, they were amazed. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been worried and have searched everywhere for you."

He replied, "***Why were you searching? Didn't you know that I must tend to my father's business?***"

They didn't understand what he meant. Then he went with them to Nazareth and was obedient to them, but his mother kept all these things in her heart. Jesus grew in wisdom, stature and favor with God and man.

The Good News Begins to Spread John the Baptist: Luke 3:1-18, Matthew 3:1-12, Mark 1:1-8, John 1:6-28

God sent a man named John to witness about the Light so that all men through him might believe. John was not that Light, but he was sent to bear witness about that Light who was the true Light, who will enlighten every man who comes into the world. The Light was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world did not recognize him. He came to his own people, and his own did not receive him. But he gives the power to become the sons of God to whoever receives him; all who believe on his name. These were born, not of blood, nor of natural means, nor of the will of man, but of God. The Word was made flesh, and lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the only begotten son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, [7] Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee, with his brother Philip being tetrarch of Ituraea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene. Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests when the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. Therefore, he went into all the country around the Jordan River, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. This fulfilled the words the prophet Isaiah said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord and

make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low. The crooked shall be made straight and the rough ways smoothed. All people shall see the salvation of God.”[8]

This was the beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. John preached, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

John wore clothing made from camel’s hair with a leather belt around his hips.[9] He ate locusts and wild honey. Many people came to him from Jerusalem, Judea, and the entire region round about the Jordan, and were baptized by him in the Jordan confessing their sins.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “O generation of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Bring forth fruits as evidence of repentance, and don’t think within yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you, God is able to raise children unto Abraham from these stones. The axe is already laid against the root of the trees; every tree which does not produce good fruit is hewn down and thrown into the fire.”

The people asked him, “What shall we do?”

He answered, “If you have two coats, share with those who have none, and if you have food, likewise share.”

When tax collectors came to be baptized, and asked what they should do, he told them, “Don’t collect more than is required.”

Soldiers also asked, “What shall we do?”

He replied, “Don’t use violence to exhort anyone and don’t accuse any falsely. Be content with your wages.”

The people waited expectedly and everyone mused in their hearts whether John was the Christ. John told them, “I do baptize you with water, but one mightier than me is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the laces of his shoes. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His fan is in his hand; he will thoroughly purge his threshing floor, and will gather

the wheat into his barns, but he will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him who he was, John replied, “I am not the Christ.” John bore witness of Christ, preaching and saying, “This is he of whom I spoke. He who comes after me is preferred before me, for he was before me. From his fullness we have all received grace for grace. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” And then he stated, “No man has seen God at any time, except his only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father who has declared him.”

So they asked, “Who are you then? Are you Elijah?”

And he said, “I am not.”

“Are you the prophet?”

“I am not.”

Then they said, “Who are you? Tell us so we may answer those who sent us.”

John then said, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness to make straight the way of the Lord, as the prophet Isaiah said.”

Those who had been sent by the Pharisees asked him, “Why do you baptize then, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?”

John answered them, “I baptize with water, but there stands one among you, whom you do not know. He, although coming after me, is preferred before me. I am not worthy to loosen the ties of his sandals.”

These things were done in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing and preaching. He did many other things as he exhorted the people.

[1] Quirinius ruled from about 12 to 1 BC.

[2] In Leviticus 12, the Law given to Moses instructs that a woman would need to purify herself for forty one days after bearing a son. Then she was to take a young lamb and a young

pigeon, or a dove, for a sin offering to the priest at the tabernacle. If she could not bring a lamb, then she was to bring two doves.

[3] Micah, who lived about 700 BC, predicted his birth in Bethlehem in Micah 5:2.

[4] Hosea wrote this about 800 BC.

[5] Matthew applied the quote from Jeremiah 31:15 to the event of King Herod's slaughter of the children two years and younger who might have been the one that the visitors from the east sought.

[6] Isaiah foretold of a time when those living in Galilee, where Nazareth was, would see a great light, Isaiah 9:1ff.

[7] He ruled from 14 AD to 37 AD.

[8] Isaiah 40:3

[9] The prophet Elijah wore similar clothing and it was prophesied in the last sentence of the Old Testament (Malachi 4:5) that God would send Elijah before Christ.

6.

Jesus is Baptized: Luke 3:21-22, Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11

Then Jesus went from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized of John. But John forbade him, saying, "I need to be baptized of you, and you come to me?"

Jesus answered him, "Accept it for now, for we should fulfill all righteousness."

So, John baptized him. As Jesus came up out of the water praying, the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit came down and landed on him like a dove. A voice from heaven said, "You are my beloved Son, and in you, I am well pleased."

Jesus' Genealogy through Mary: Luke 3:23-38^[1]

Jesus began to preach when he was about thirty years old. Everyone thought he was the son of Joseph, who was the son of Heli, who was the son of Matthat, who was the son of Levi, who was the son of Melchi, who was the son of Janna, who was the son of Joseph, who was the son of Mattathias, who was the son of Amos, who was the son of Naum, who was the son of Esli, who was the son of Nagge, who was the son of Maath, who was the son of Mattathias, who was the son of Semei, who was the son of Joseph, who was the son of Judah, who was the son of Joanna, who was the son of Rhesa, who was the son of Zorobabel, who was the son of Salathiel, who was the son of Neri, who was the son of Melchi, who was the son of Addi, who was the son of Cosam, who was the son of Elmodam, who was the son of Er, who was the son of Jose, who was the son of Eliezer, who was the son of Jorim, who was the son of Matthat, who was the son of Levi, who was the son of Simeon, who was the son of Judah, who was the son of Joseph, who was the son of Jonan, who was the son of Eliakim, who was the son of Melea, who was the son of Menan, who was the son of Mattatha, who was the son of Nathan, who was the son of King

David, who was the son of Jesse, who was the son of Obed, who was the son of Boaz, who was the son of Salmon, who was the son of Naasson, who was the son of Aminadab, who was the son of Aram, who was the son of Esrom, who was the son of Phares, who was the son of Judah, who was the son of Jacob, who was the son of Isaac, who was the son of Abraham, who was the son of Thara, who was the son of Nachor, who was the son of Saruch, who was the son of Ragau, who was the son of Phalec, who was the son of Heber, who was the son of Sala, who was the son of Caiman, who was the son of Arphaxad, who was the son of Shem, who was the son of Noah, who was the son of Lamech, who was the son of Mathusala, who was the son of Enoch, who was the son of Jared, who was the son of Maleleel, who was the son of Caiman, who was the son of Enos, who was the son of Seth, who was the son of Adam, who was the son of God.

Jesus' Genealogy through Joseph: Matthew 1:1-17

These are the generations of Jesus Christ, the son of David, and the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife, Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa, Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram, Jehoram the father of Uzziah, Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father

of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

After the exile to Babylon:

Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, Abiud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim, Akim the father of Eliud, Eliud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

So there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, and fourteen from David until the carrying away into Babylon, and fourteen more from the carrying away into Babylon until Christ.

Jesus is Tempted: Luke 4:1-13, Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13

Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit as he left the Jordan, and the Spirit immediately led him into the wilderness where wild animals lived. After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The devil came and said, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to be made into bread."

Jesus answered him, "It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." [2]

The devil took him to the top of a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. Then the devil said to him, "I will give you all their power and all their glory for they belong to me, and I can give it to whomever I want. If you will fall down and worship me, all of this will be yours."

Jesus answered him, "Get behind me, Satan, for it is written, 'you shall worship the Lord thy God, and him only shall you serve.'" [3]

Satan brought him to Jerusalem, set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, jump down from here, for it is written, 'He shall give his angels charge over

you, to keep you, and in their hands they shall lift you up, to prevent you from dashing your foot against a stone.” [4]

Jesus answered him, “It is also written ‘Do not test the Lord your God.’” [5]

Then the devil left him until a more opportune time, and angels came and ministered to him.

Jesus Meets His First Disciples: John 1:29-51

The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. [6] This is the one of whom I said, ‘a man comes after me who is preferred before me, because he was before me.’ I didn’t know him, but since he should be made known to Israel, I came baptizing with water.” John continued saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it landed on him. I didn’t know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘the one upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ I saw, and bear record that this is the Son of God.”

Again the next day, John stood with two of his disciples, and when he saw Jesus walking by, he said, “Look, there is the Lamb of God!”

When the two disciples heard him, they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following, and asked them, “What are you seeking?”

They replied, “Master, where do you live?”

He answered, “Come and see.”

They went with him, saw where he lived, and stayed with him that day, since it was about four in the afternoon. One of the two, who heard John speak and followed Jesus, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said unto him, “We have found the Messiah (which is Hebrew for Christ).”

He brought him to Jesus, and when Jesus saw him, he said, “You are Simon the son of John, and you shall be called Cephas (which is Hebrew for Peter).”

The next day, Jesus went to Galilee, met Philip, and said, **“Follow me.”**

Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip went to Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses and the prophets wrote about. He is Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

Nathanael responded, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

Philip said, “Come and see.”

Jesus saw Nathanael approaching and said to him, **“Here is indeed an Israelite without deceit!”**

Nathanael asked him, “How do you know me?”

Jesus answered, **“I saw you sitting under the fig tree before Philip called you.”**

Nathanael said to him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”

Jesus replied, **“Because I said I saw you under the fig tree, you believe? You shall see greater things than these. Truly I tell you, afterwards, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man.”**

Jesus Performs His First Miracle: John 2:1-12

Three days later, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Both Jesus and his disciples went to the wedding. When the wine was all gone, his mother said to him, “They have no wine.”

Jesus replied, **“Mother, it’s not time for me. I have no part in this.”**

His mother told the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

Six stone water pots that the Jews use for purifying sat nearby. Each pot would hold twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, **“Fill the water pots with water.”** They filled them up to the brim. And then he told them, **“Draw from the pots, and take it to the ruler of the feast.”**

They carried it to the ruler of the feast, and when he had tasted the water that was made wine (he didn’t know where

it came from, but the servants who drew the water knew), the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and said to him, "Every man serves good wine at the beginning of the feast and after men have drunk much, then they serve worse wine, but you kept the good wine until now."

This first miracle Jesus did in Cana of Galilee manifested his glory, and his disciples believed on him. Afterwards, he went with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples to the town of Capernaum, where they stayed for a few days.

[1] The list of ancestors demonstrates that Jesus was a descendant of Abraham and of King David.

[2] It is written in Deuteronomy 8:3.

[3] Deuteronomy 6:13

[4] Psalm 91:11,12.

[5] Deuteronomy 6:16.

[6] Isaiah 53, a prophecy concerning Christ and his sacrifice refers to him as being led as a lamb to slaughter.

7.

Jesus Begins His Public Teaching Jesus Attends the Passover Feast: John 2:13-25

When it was time, Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover.^[1] Inside the temple, merchants were selling oxen, sheep and doves, and some changed money. He made a whip of small cords and drove them all out of the temple along with their sheep and oxen. He poured out the changers' money, turned over their tables, and told those selling doves, "Take these things outside and do not turn my Father's house into a market."

His disciples remembered that it is written, "The passion of your house has eaten me up."^[2]

Then the Jews came and asked him, "What sign will you show us to explain why you are doing these things?"

Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days, I will raise it up."

"It took forty-six years to build this temple, and you will rebuild it in three days?" the Jews replied.

But he spoke of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; they believed the scripture and the words Jesus had said.

While he was in Jerusalem on the feast day of the Passover, many believed in his name when they saw the miracles he did. But Jesus did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all men, and did not need anyone to testify about any man, because he knew what was in man.

Nicodemus Visits Jesus: John 3:1-12

A Pharisee named Nicodemus, who was a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus during the night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no man can do the miracles that you do, except God be with him."

Jesus answered, "I tell you a person cannot see the kingdom of God unless he or she is born again."

Nicodemus asked, "How can a person be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

Jesus answered, "It is the truth! Unless a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Don't wonder why I told you, you must be born again. The wind blows where it will and you hear its noise, but you cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Nicodemus asked, "How can these things be?"

Jesus answered, "Are you a master of Israel, and don't know these things? Truly, I tell you, we speak what we know, and testify of what we have seen, and you don't receive our testimony. I have told you earthly things, and you don't believe, how then, shall you believe, if I tell you about heavenly things? No man has ascended to heaven, except he who came down from heaven, even the son of man. Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,^[3] even so must the son of man be lifted up so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten son. Whoever believes in him should have everlasting life and not perish. God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes on him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. The condemnation is that light came into the world, and because their deeds were evil, men loved darkness rather than light. Everyone who does evil hates the light and avoids the light to keep his deeds hidden. Whoever lives by truth comes to the light, so others can see that his deeds are done through God."

John the Baptist Tells His Disciples about Jesus: John 3:22-36

Later, Jesus and his disciples went to Judea where he stayed with them and baptized. John was also baptizing in Aenon near Salim because there was a lot of water. Many people came and were baptized. John had not yet been thrown into prison.

A question arose between John's disciples and the Jews about purifying, so they came to John, and told him, "Rabbi, the man who was with you beyond the Jordan, the one about whom you testified, is baptizing, and everyone goes to him."

John answered, "A person can't receive anything except it's given from heaven. You yourselves bear witness that I said I am not the Christ, but I am sent before him. It's the bridegroom who has the bride, but yet his friend stands, hears him and is very happy because of his voice. This fulfills my joy. He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all, and he testifies about what he has seen and heard, although few accept his testimony. Whoever accepts his testimony certifies that God is true. He who God sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give him a limited amount of the Spirit. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. He who believes on the Son has everlasting life, and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

John the Baptist is Arrested and Imprisoned: Luke 3:19-20

John reproved Herod the tetrarch for taking Herodias as his wife, since she had been the wife of his brother Philip. Herod had also done many other evil things, and he did more evil by putting John in prison.

Jesus in Samaria: John 4:1-42

When the Lord heard that the Pharisees knew he made and baptized more disciples than John and that John had been put in prison, he left Judea. Jesus himself did not baptize, but his

disciples did. As he went towards Galilee along the road that ran through Samaria, he came to a city of Samaria called Sychar which was near to some land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and since Jesus was weary from the journey, he sat by it. At about noon, a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus asked her for a drink. His disciples had gone into the city to buy food, so he was alone.

The woman replied, "Why do you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink since the Jews don't associate with Samaritans?"

Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God, and the one who asks you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

The woman replied, "Sir, you don't have anything to draw water with and the well is deep. Where did you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us this well, and drank from it himself along with his children and his cattle?"

"Whoever drinks of this water shall thirst again,' Jesus answered, "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him won't ever be thirsty. Instead the water that I shall give him will be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The woman said, "Sir, give me this water, so that I don't get thirsty, then I won't have to come here to draw water."

Jesus said, "Go, call your husband and come back."

She answered, "I don't have a husband."

Jesus said, "You are right to say you have no husband. You have had five husbands, and the one you now live with is not your husband. You spoke the truth."

She said, "Sir, I think you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and yet you say that men ought to worship in Jerusalem."

Jesus replied, "Woman, believe me, the time is coming when you won't worship the Father in this mountain nor at Jerusalem. You Samaritans don't know what you worship, but

we know what we worship for salvation is from the Jews. But the time will come, and indeed now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. That is who the Father seeks to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

She said, “I know that Messiah, who is called Christ, will come, and when he comes, he will tell us all things.”

Jesus said, **“I who speak to you am he.”**

Then his disciples arrived and wondered why he talked with the woman, yet no one asked what he wanted or why he was talking with her.

The woman left her water pot, went into the city, and said to the men, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Isn’t he the Christ?”

Then the people left the city and went to him. In the meantime, his disciples petitioned him saying, “Master, eat.”

But he replied, **“I have food to eat that you don’t know about.”**

The disciples said to each other, “Has some man brought him something to eat?”

Jesus said, **“My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don’t say there are yet four months before the harvest. I tell you to lift your eyes and look on the fields for they are already white and ready for the harvest. Whoever reaps will receive wages and gather fruit for eternal life, so both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. And this saying is true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that on which you did not work, but for which other men worked, and you are benefiting from their work.”**

Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him because of what the woman who testified said, “He told me all the things that I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they pleaded for him to stay with them and he stayed two days.

Many others believed because of Jesus’ teachings and they

told the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, but because we heard him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

Jesus Returns to Galilee: Luke 4:14-15; Matthew 4:12; Mark 1:14-15; John 4:43-45

After two days he left Samaria and went to Galilee. Jesus had said that a prophet has no honor in his own country. When he came to Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast, for they also had gone to the feast. So Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and his fame spread through the entire neighboring region. He taught in their synagogues and everyone glorified him.

Jesus Heals a Nobleman's Son: John 4:46-54

So, Jesus returned to Cana of Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. There was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick in Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had returned from Judea to Galilee, he went to him, and begged him to come down and heal his son, because he was nearly dead. Then Jesus said to him, "***Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe.***"

The nobleman replied, "Sir, come down before my child dies."

Jesus told him, "***Go home, your son lives.***"

The man believed what Jesus told him, and he left for home. Before he reached his house, his servants met him and told him that his son was well and alive. He asked what time the child began to recover, and they replied, "The fever left him yesterday at one o'clock."

The father knew that was the same time that Jesus told him, "Your son lives," and he believed along with his whole house.

This was the second miracle that Jesus did after coming to Galilee from Judea.

[1] Once a year, the Jews celebrated the Passover to commemorate their deliverance from Egyptian slavery. They

would offer sacrifices to God and hold a feast of a lamb, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread. The Passover is in the spring near the time of Easter.

[2] Psalm 69:9

[3] Refers to an event in Numbers 21 where Moses was instructed to make a bronze snake, put it on a pole and then lift it up so any of the Israelites who had been bitten by a poisonous snake could look at it and be made well.

8.

Then he went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. As was his custom, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. They handed him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the scroll, found the place, and read what was written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, to give sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”^[1] Then he closed the scroll and returned it to the minister and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were on him. He began to teach and told them, “This day, this scripture is fulfilled in your ears.” They heard him and wondered at the gracious words which came from his mouth.”

Then they said, “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?”

He told them, “You will surely tell me this proverb, ‘Physician, heal yourself. Do those things we have heard that you did in Capernaum here in your country.’” Then he said, “I tell you; no prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you a fact; many widows were in Israel during the days of Elijah when it did not rain for three years and six months. There was a great famine throughout all the land, but Elijah wasn’t sent to any of them. Instead, he was sent to a widow in the city of Zarephath, in Sidon. Also, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet, and not one of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.”

When everyone in the synagogue heard these words, they were filled with anger. They rose up and led him out of the city to the brow of the hill on which their city was built. They intended to throw him off headfirst, but he passed through them and left.

Jesus Moves to Capernaum: Luke 4:31-44; Matthew 4:13-17, 8:14-18; Mark 1:23-39

Jesus left Nazareth and lived in Capernaum, which lies on the edge of the Sea of Galilee on the borders of Zebulon and Naphtali. This fulfilled the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The people who lived in darkness in the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, by the way to the sea beside Jordan; Galilee of the Gentiles saw great light. This light has dawned on those who live in the region and in the shadow of death."^[2] Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

He taught on Sabbath days, and his message astonished those who heard because his message was filled with power. One day, a man in the synagogue who had an evil spirit cried out loudly, "Leave us alone; what do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God."

Jesus rebuked him, "*Be quiet and come out of him.*"

The devil threw the man into the midst of the people and then he came out without hurting him. Everyone was amazed, and spoke among themselves, "What is this message! What new teaching is this? He commands the unclean spirits with authority and power, and they obey him." His fame immediately spread throughout the entire region around Galilee.

Leaving the synagogue, he, James, and John went into Simon and Andrew's house. Simon's mother-in-law was sick with a high fever, and they sought his help. He stood over her, took her by the hand, lifted her up, and rebuked the fever. Immediately, the fever was gone and she ministered to them.

When the sun was setting, everyone brought to him those sick with various diseases. He laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. Devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, "You are the Christ the Son of God." He rebuked

them and did not permit them to speak because they knew that he was Christ. The whole city had gathered by the door.

Very early the next morning, he left with Simon and the disciples to go into a deserted area where he prayed. Still, the people sought him out and came and stayed so they would be near to him. He told them, **“Let’s go to the next towns, because I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also. That’s why I am sent.”** He preached in the synagogues throughout Galilee and cast out demons.

Jesus Calls Four Disciples: Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-22

One day, as the people pressed around him to hear the word of God, he walked down to the Sea of Galilee. As he stood there, he saw two ships near the shore which the fishermen had left to wash their nets. He stepped into a boat owned by Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew and asked them to go out a little way from the shore. Then, he sat down and taught the people from the ship. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, **“Launch out into the deep water and let down your nets for the fish.”**

Simon answered him, “Master, we have toiled all night and have caught nothing, nevertheless at your word I will let down the nets.”

When they lowered the nets, they enclosed such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. They motioned to their partners, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were in the other ship to come and help them. They came and filled both ships so much that they began to sink. Then Simon Peter fell down at Jesus’ knees and said, “Lord, leave me for I am a sinful man.” He said this because he was astonished at the huge number of fish they had caught. James and John, the sons of Zebedee and Simon’s partners, were also amazed.

Jesus said to Simon, Andrew, James, and John, **“Don’t be afraid, follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”**

When they had brought their ships to land, they left everything and followed him.

They went into Capernaum, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue and taught. The people were astonished at his doctrine because he taught as one who had authority instead of the way the scribes taught.

A Leper is Healed: Luke 5:12-16; Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45

One day, when he was in a certain city, a man sick with leprosy saw Jesus, came and fell face down worshiping him. He begged him, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."

Jesus reached out and touched him with his hand. "I will. Be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. He charged him saying, "Don't tell anyone, but go and show yourself to the priest and make the offering for your cleansing as Moses commanded. This will be your testimony to them."

But he went out and began to tell everyone around the area. Jesus' fame spread and large crowds came to hear and to be healed by him. The crowds were so large that Jesus could not openly enter into the city, so he went into the wilderness and prayed.

The Healing of a Paralyzed Man: Luke 5:17-26; Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12

Several days later, he entered a ship and sailed over the lake to his own city, Capernaum. The news that he was in the house spread and immediately so many gathered together that there wasn't any room for them to get in. They crowded around the door, and he preached the word to them. There were Pharisees and doctors of the law there along with those who had come from every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. The power of the Lord was present to heal them. Some men brought a paralyzed man in a bed, but when they sought a way to bring him before him, the large crowd prevented them. So, they took the man onto the housetop, broke open the roof, and let him, still in his bed, down through the hole into the crowd before

Jesus. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, **“Man, your sins are forgiven.”**

The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason quietly and say, “Who is this man speaking blasphemies? Only God can forgive sins.”

Jesus perceived their thoughts and said to them, **“Why are you reasoning in your hearts? Is it easier, to say, ‘your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘rise and walk?’ But so you may know that the son of man has power upon earth to forgive sins, I say to you who are paralyzed, rise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”**

Immediately, the man got up, picked up his bed, and left to go to his own house, glorifying God. Everyone was amazed and glorified God. They were filled with fear and said, “We have seen strange things today.” They marveled and glorified God who had given such power unto men.

Calling of Levi (Matthew): Luke 5:27-32; Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17

Later, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector, named Levi (also called Matthew), the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax booth. He said to him, **“Follow me.”** He got up, left everything, and followed him.

Levi gave Jesus a large feast in his own house where many tax collectors and others sat down with them. Some scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples and said, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

Jesus answered them, **“They who are healthy don’t need a physician, but rather those who are sick. You go and learn what it means when it says I will have mercy and not sacrifice,^[3] for I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”**

John’s Disciples Question Jesus: Luke 5:33-39; Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22

Then came some of John’s disciples and asked him, “Why do John’s disciples often fast and pray, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink?”

He replied, "Can you make the children of the wedding fast while the bridegroom is with them? The days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast."

Then, he told them a parable, "No one rips a piece from a new garment to sew onto an old, for then the new would tear the old, and both pieces would be ruined.

"No one puts new wine into old wineskins, or else the new wine will burst the old wineskins, be spilled, and the wineskins shall be ruined. New wine must be put into new wineskins, and then both will be preserved. No one who has drunk old wine immediately desires new, because he says the old is better."

Jesus Has Opposition Because of Healing on the Sabbath: John 5:1-47

When it was time for the feast of the Jews, Jesus went to Jerusalem. In the city, there was a pool beside the sheep market named Bethesda which had five porches. During this time, a large number of disabled people, including blind, lame, and paralyzed lay there. They were waiting for the water to move because they thought an angel sometimes went down into the pool and stirred the water. Then the first person to step into the water would be cured of his disease. A certain man who had had an illness for thirty-eight years was there. When Jesus saw him and knew he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Will you be cured?"

The lame man answered, "Sir, I have no man to put me in the pool when the water is troubled so while I am still coming to the pool, another steps down before me."

Jesus said to him, "Get up, pick up your bed and then walk."

Immediately the man was cured, and he picked up his bed and walked away. Since this happened on the Sabbath, some Jews told the man who had been cured, "This is the Sabbath. It is unlawful for you to carry your bed."

He answered them, "He who cured me, told me to pick up my bed and walk."

They asked, "Who told you to pick up your bed and walk?"

The man who was healed didn't know who healed him because Jesus had walked into the large crowd of people there. Later, Jesus found him in the temple and told him, "Look, you are cured; don't sin any more or something worse may happen to you."

The man left and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had cured him. Therefore, the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill him because he had done these things on the Sabbath.

Jesus answered them, "My Father works on this day, and I also work."

Therefore, the Jews sought even more to kill him, because they thought he had not only broken the Sabbath, but had also said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

Jesus said to them, "I tell you a truth. The son can do nothing by himself, but only what he sees the Father do, for whatever the Father does, the Son also does. For the Father loves the son, and shows him everything that he himself does. He will show him even greater works than these so you may marvel. Just as the Father raises the dead, and makes them alive; so the son gives life to whomever he will. The Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son, so that all men should honor the son, just as they honor the Father. The one who does not honor the son does not honor the Father who sent him. I tell you a truth, he who hears my word, and believes on him who sent me has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation; he is passed from death to life. I tell you a truth, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who hear shall live. Just as the Father has life in himself, so he has given to the son to have life in himself. And he has also given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the son of man. Don't marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves

shall hear his voice and come forth. They who have done good to the resurrection of life, and they who have done evil to the resurrection of damnation. I can do nothing by my own self. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father who sent me.

“If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not proven. There is another who bears witness of me, and I know that His witness is true. You went to John, and he bore witness to the truth. I don’t receive testimony from man, but these things I say so that you might be saved. John was a burning and shining light, and you were willing for a short time to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than John, for the works which the Father has given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness that the Father has sent me. And the Father himself, who sent me, has borne witness of me. You have neither heard his voice at any time nor seen his shape. You don’t have his word living in you, for you do not believe the one he has sent.

“Search the scriptures. You think you have eternal life through them, and yet they testify of me. You will not come to me so that you might have life. I don’t receive honor from men. I know you, that you don’t have the love of God in you. I am come in my Father’s name, and you don’t receive me. You will receive someone coming in his own name. How can you believe, you who receive honor from each other, and don’t seek the honor that comes only from God? Don’t think I will accuse you to the Father; there is already one who accuses you, Moses, in whom you trust. If you had believed Moses, you would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if you don’t believe his writings, how shall you believe my words?”

Two More Sabbath Day Events: Luke 6:1-11; Matthew 12:1-21; Mark 2:23-3:6

Two weeks later on a Sabbath, he walked through the grain fields. His disciples plucked some heads of grain, rubbed them in their hands, and ate the grains. Some of the Pharisees said to them, “Why do you do what is unlawful on the Sabbath?”

Jesus answered them, "Haven't you read what David and those with him did when they were hungry on the Sabbath? When Abiathar was the high priest, he went into the house of God and took and ate the showbread, and gave some also to those with him, although it is not lawful for anyone to eat other than the priests?[4] Haven't you read in the law, how on the Sabbath days, the priests in the temple work on the Sabbath, and yet are blameless? But I tell you, that here in this place is one greater than the temple. If you had known the meaning of this, 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,'[5] you would not have condemned the guiltless." Then he told them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. The son of man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

On another Sabbath, when he entered the synagogue and taught, there was a man there who had a withered right hand. The scribes and Pharisees watched him to see if he would heal on the Sabbath so they could accuse him. He knew their thoughts and said to the man with the withered hand, "Rise and stand in the middle."

The man stood as told. Then Jesus said, "I will ask you one question. On the Sabbath, is it lawful to do good or to do evil; to save a life or to destroy it? Is there any among you, who has one sheep and if that sheep falls into a pit on the Sabbath day will not grab it and lift it out? How much better then is a man than a sheep? Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." He looked around at all of them before saying to the man, "Hold out your hand."

The man did so and his hand became as healthy as his other. The scribes and Pharisees were furious and discussed among themselves what they could do to Jesus. They left and took counsel with the Herodians[6] about how they could destroy him.

Jesus knew their plans, so he withdrew from there. Large crowds followed him, and he healed them all. Yet he warned them to not make him known, so what Isaiah the prophet said

might be fulfilled, "See my Servant whom I have chosen, my Beloved in whom my soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon him, and he will declare justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and smoking flax he will not quench, until he sends forth justice to victory and in his name, Gentiles will trust." [7]

Jesus Selects Twelve to be Apostles: Luke 6:12-19; Mark 3:13-19

Later, he went out to a mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God. When it was day, he called his disciples and chose twelve, whom also he named apostles. He ordained these twelve to be with him, so that he might send them forth to preach, with power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils. They were Simon (whom he also named Peter), Andrew his brother, James and John (the sons of Zebedee who he surnamed Boanerges which means the sons of thunder), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Canaanite called Zelotes, Judas (also called Thaddaeus) the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who also was the traitor who betrayed him.

He came down with them, stood in the plain with his disciples, and a great crowd came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. They came from all of Judea and Jerusalem and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon. Some came who were troubled by unclean spirits and they were healed. The whole multitude sought to touch him because power was coming from him and healing all of them.

[1] Isaiah 61:1,2.

[2] Isaiah 9:1,2.

[3] Hosea 6:6

[4] This is related in 1 Samuel 21.

[5] Hosea 6:6.

[6] Herodians were a political group who believed it was better to adapt God's laws to fit those of King Herod. They were usually political enemies of the Pharisees.

[7] Isaiah 42:1-4.

9.

The Beatitudes

'Many Follow Jesus: Matthew 4:23-25; Mark 3:7-12

Jesus went throughout all of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and disease among the people. His fame spread throughout all Syria and they brought people sick with various diseases to him; those tormented with devils, those who were insane, and the paralyzed and he healed them. A large number of people from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond Jordan followed him.

Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, but large groups of people from Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumaea and from beyond Jordan, as well as those from Tyre and Sidon followed him. They had come to him when they heard what great things he had done. He asked his disciples to get a small ship so the people could not crowd so near him. He had healed many and those who had diseases pressed near to touch him. Those who had unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." He immediately ordered them to be quiet so others would not hear.

The Beatitudes: Luke 6:20-26; Matthew 5:1-12

Because of the multitudes, he went up the mountain and found a place to sit. His disciples came to him, and he looked at them and began to teach them with these words,

"Blessed are you who are poor in spirit, for yours is the kingdom of God.

"Blessed are you who mourn, for you shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are you who hunger and thirst after righteousness now, for you shall be filled.

"Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

“Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the son of man’s sake.

“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven, because their fathers treated the prophets the same way.

“Woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

“Woe to you who are full, for you shall hunger.

“Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

“Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers spoke that way about the false prophets.

Love Your Enemies: Luke 6:27-36; Matthew 5:43-48

“You have heard that it was said love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you to love your enemies and bless those who curse you. Do good to those who hate you and pray for those who use you spitefully and persecute you. Do this so you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, for he makes his sun to rise on the evil as well as on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. If you only love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you do good only to those who do good to you, do you do any more than others? Don’t even the evildoers do that? Be perfect, just like your Father who is in heaven is perfect.

“To him who hits you on one cheek, offer the other, and to whoever takes your cloak away, don’t stop him from taking your coat. Give to every man who asks you, and to the one who

takes away your goods, don't ask for them again. Whatever you want men to do to you, do the same to them.

"If you only lend to those you think can repay you, what credit do you have? Sinners also lend to sinners expecting to be repaid. But love your enemies, do good and lend without hoping for repayment and your reward shall be great, and you will be the children of the Highest, because he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil. Therefore, be merciful as your Father is merciful.

Be Careful How You Judge: Luke 6:37-45; Matthew 7:1-6

"Don't judge and you won't be judged. Don't condemn and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together and running over shall men give to you. For with the same measure that you use, it shall be measured to you again."

Then he told them some parables. "Can the blind lead the blind? Won't they both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master, but everyone who is perfect shall be as his master.

"Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but don't perceive the log that is in your eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me pull out the speck in your eye,' when you yourself don't perceive the log in your own eye? You hypocrite first get the log from your own eye, and then you can see clearly to pull out the speck from your brother's eye.

"Don't give holy things to the dogs, and don't throw your pearls before swine, unless they trample them under their feet and then turn again and attack you.

"A good tree doesn't bear corrupt fruit, and neither does a corrupt tree bear good fruit. Every tree is known by its own fruit. Men don't gather figs from thorn bushes, and a man does not gather grapes from bramble bushes. A good man brings good from the good treasure of his heart, and an evil

man brings evil from the evil treasure of his heart, because his mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart.

The Salt and Light of the World: Matthew 5:13-16

“You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its flavor, how can it become salty again? It is then good for nothing except to be thrown out and trodden under men’s feet.

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a basket. They put it on a candlestick, so it gives light to everyone in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Jesus Came to Fulfill the Law: Matthew 5:17-20

“Don’t think that I have come to destroy the law nor the prophets. I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill. Truly, I tell you, not one jot or one tittle shall disappear from the law until everything shall be fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least commandments and teaches men to do so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever shall do them and teach them, that one shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Obedience to Moral Law Starts in the Heart: Matthew 5:21-42

“You have heard that it was said by those of old times, you shalt not murder, and whoever murders shall be in danger of the judgment. But I tell you, whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. I tell you that whoever speaks to his brother with contempt shall be in danger of the Sanhedrin, but whoever says, you fool shall be in danger of hell’s fire.

“Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and then remember that your brother has something against you, leave

your gift there and go to be reconciled with your brother. Then come back to offer your gift.

“Agree with your adversary while he is taking you to court, unless your adversary delivers you to the judge, and the judge delivers you to the officer, and you are thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you won’t get out until you have paid it all.

“You have heard that it was said long ago that one shall not commit adultery, but I tell you that whoever looks on a woman and lusts after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

“If your right eye causes you to sin, pull it out and throw it away, for it is better that one of your members perish than for your whole body be thrown into hell. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off, and throw it away, for it is better that one of your members perish instead of your whole body being thrown into hell.

“It has been said that whoever puts away his wife should give her a divorce, but I tell you that whoever puts away his wife for reasons other than fornication causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

“Also, you have heard that long ago it was said that if you make an oath, then you must perform the oath to the Lord. But I tell you, don’t make any oath, neither by heaven for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth for it is his footstool. And not by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Don’t swear by your head, because you can’t make one hair white or black. Rather, let your communication be, yes, yes, or no, no for anything more comes from evil.

“You have also heard it was said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I tell you to not resist an evil person. If anyone hits you on your right cheek, turn the other to him. If any man sues you at law and takes away your coat, then give him your cloak also. If anyone compels you to go a mile, then go with him two. Give to the one who asks you, and don’t turn away anyone who wants to borrow from you.

Don't Act Religious Just for Appearance's Sake: Matthew 6:1-18

"Be careful not to give your gifts so that men may see and praise you, otherwise you will not have a reward from your Father who is in heaven. Therefore, when you give, do not sound a trumpet like the hypocrites in the synagogues and in the streets. They are seeking glory from men, and truly, they have their reward. But when you give, don't let your left hand know what your right hand gives, so your gifts may be in secret. Your Father, who sees in secret, shall reward you openly.

"When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets so they may be seen of men. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. But, when you pray, go into your closet, shut the door, and pray to your Father secretly, and your Father who sees you in secret shall reward you openly. When you pray, don't use vain repetitions like the heathens, for they think they shall be heard because of their many words. Don't be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

"Pray like this. Our Father who is in heaven, your name is holy. Your kingdom come, your will be done in earth like in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Don't lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil. For you have the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen.

"If you forgive men when they do you wrong, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you don't forgive men their mistakes, your Father won't forgive your mistakes.

"When you fast, don't have a sad face like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so men will know they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face, so you don't appear to be fasting. You Father sees you in secret and shall reward you openly.

10.

Get Your Priorities Right: Matthew 6:19-34

“Don’t lay up your treasures on earth, where moth and rust can ruin them and where thieves may break in and steal, but lay up your treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust can ruin, and where thieves don’t break through or steal. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

“The light of the body is the eye, therefore if your eye sees good, your whole body shall be full of light. But if your eye sees evil, your whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No person can serve two masters, for either he will hate one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

“Therefore I tell you, don’t worry about your life: what you shall eat, what you shall drink, or even what you shall wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothes? Consider the birds of the air; they don’t plant, reap, or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you much better than they? Which one of you can add one foot to his height by worrying? Why worry about clothes? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They don’t work, and they don’t sew, yet not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these.

Therefore, if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today lives and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how well will he clothe you? Oh you of little faith. Therefore, don’t worry about what you shall eat and drink or what you shall wear. The pagans seek after all these things, but your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be given you. Don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow shall take care of itself. This day has enough evil.

Those Who Search Find: Matthew 7:7-11

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you, for everyone who asks receives, and anyone who seeks finds, and it shall be opened to whoever knocks. What man among you, if his son asks for bread will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If evil people know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him?”

How to Live Happily: Matthew 7:12-20

“Therefore, in whatever things you would want men to do to you, do you to them, for this is the law and the prophets.

“Enter through the narrow gate, because the wide gate and the broad way lead to destruction, and many will go that way. But the gate and the way are narrow that lead to life, and few will find it.

“Beware of false prophets who come to you wearing sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You can know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but corrupt trees bear evil fruit. A good tree can’t bear evil fruit, and neither can a corrupt tree bear good fruit. Every tree that doesn’t bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore, by their fruits, you shall know them.

The Parable of the Wise and the Foolish Builders: Luke 6:46-49; Matthew 7:21-28

“Not everyone who calls me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does the will of my Heavenly Father will. Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, haven’t we prophesied in your name, and in your name cast out devils, and in your name done many wonderful works?’ Then I will tell them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of iniquity.’

“Therefore whoever hears my sayings and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon a rock. When rain and

floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, it did not fall, because it was founded upon a rock. Everyone who hears these sayings of mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. When the rain and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, it fell and great was its fall."

When Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine, because he taught them as one with authority and not as the scribes.

Teaching and Healing Healing a Centurion's Servant: Luke 7:1-10; Matthew 8:5-13

After he had ended his sayings to the people, he entered Capernaum. A certain centurion cared about his servant who was sick and about to die. When the centurion heard of Jesus, he sent the elders of the Jews to ask him to come and heal his servant. They went to Jesus and said, "The centurion is worthy that you should do this because he loves our nation, and he has built us a synagogue."

Then Jesus went with them. As he approached the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying, "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I am not worthy that you should enter my house,^[1] and I didn't consider myself worthy to come to you. Say the word and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having soldiers under me. I say to one go and he goes; and to another come and he comes, and to my servant do this and he does it."

When Jesus heard these words, he marveled at him and turned around and said to the people who followed him, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith, no, not in Israel. I tell you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Then Jesus said, "Return, and as you have believed, so it will be done to you."

His servant was healed in the same hour. When those who were sent returned to the house, they found the servant who had been sick was now well.

Jesus Raises the Dead: Luke 7:11-17

The next day, Jesus and many of his disciples went into a city called Nain. There were many people with him. Just as he came near to the gate of the city a dead man was being carried out. He was the only son of his widowed mother, and many people of the city were with her. When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said to her, **“Don’t cry.”** Then he went and touched the bier, and those who carried it stood still. He said, **“Young man, I tell you arise.”**

The dead man sat up and began to speak. Then, Jesus delivered him to his mother. A great fear came on everyone and they glorified God saying, **“A great prophet is risen up among us,”** and **“God has visited his people.”** This story of him spread throughout all Judea, and throughout the entire region.

John Sends Disciples to Jesus: Luke 7:18-23; Matthew 11:2-6

The disciples of John went to him while he was in prison and told him of all the things Jesus was doing. When John heard the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask, **“Are you the one who should come, or do we look for another?”**

Jesus answered them, **“Go and show John again those things which you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news preached to them. Blessed is the one who shall not be offended in me.”**^[2]

Jesus Speaks About John: Luke 7:24-35; Matthew 11:7-19

When John’s messengers had left, he began to speak to the people concerning John, **“What did you go into the wilderness to see, a reed shaken with the wind? What did you go to see, a man clothed in soft garments? Listen, they who wear soft and gorgeous apparel live delicately and are in kings’ courts. But what did you go to see, a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet. This is the one of whom it is written,**

'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way before you.'^[3] For I tell you, among those who are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist, but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than him. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John, and if you will accept it, this is Elijah, who was to come. He, who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Everyone who heard him including the tax collectors justified God since they had been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, as they had not been baptized by him.

The Lord said, "How shall I compare the men of this generation? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling one to another, 'We have piped for you, and you have not danced; we have mourned for you, and you haven't cried.' John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine and you say, 'He has a devil.' The Son of man is come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold a glutton, a wino, and a friend of publicans and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by all her children."

Jesus Rebukes Three Cities: Matthew 11:20-30

Then he began to chastise the cities in which most of his mighty works were done because they did not repent. "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment, than for you. And you, Capernaum, who is exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell, for if the mighty works which have been done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for you."

At that time Jesus said, "I thank you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so Father, for it seemed good in your sight. All things are delivered to me by my Father and no man knows the Son but the Father. In the same way, no man knows the Father except the Son, and to whomever the Son will reveal him. Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke on yourself and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

[1] The Jews considered themselves defiled if they entered a Gentile's house.

[2] This is what the prophet promised in Isaiah 29:18.

[3] This was foretold in Malachi 3:1 and he was called Elijah in Malachi 4:5.

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