

Second Edition
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THE LIFE OF CHRIST

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF MATTHEW



Panoramic View of Jerusalem



Judah



Samaria



Galilee

Charles R. Williams

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¹ Youngblood, Ronald: Editor. *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Nashville, Tenn. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986. **NOTE:** The headings for the major outline are from this source.

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(These are copyrighted materials and are not included in this web document:

They are provided as separate handouts.)

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² **NOTE AGAIN:** The headings for the major outline are from this source: Youngblood, Ronald: Editor. *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Nashville, Tenn. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986.

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SOURCE OF PICTURES:

Most of the pictures were taken by me while on a Bible Lands Tour of Jordan, Israel and Egypt in 1985. The few others are from *Manna* as noted on the photos.

HISTORY LEADING UP TO THE BIRTH OF CHRIST (JUDAISM UNDER ROMAN RULE)

- 63 B.C. GENERAL POMPEY OF ROME INVADES PALESTINE AND CAPTURES JERUSALEM.
- 48 B.C. JULIUS CAESAR APPOINTS ANTIEPATER (King Herod's Father) OVER ALL JUDEA AS PALESTINE IS NOW KNOWN.
- 44 B.C. JULIUS CAESAR IS ASSASSINATED AND A CIVIL WAR AND STRUGGLE FOR POWER ENSUES.
- 37 B.C. ANTONY (Julius Caesar's friend) APPOINTS ANTIPATOR'S SON, HEROD
- 37 B.C. HEROD THE GREAT APPOINTED AS TETRACH OF GALILEE.
A REVOLT OCCURS IN JUDEA AND HEROD MANAGES TO MAKE IT TO ROME WHERE ANTONY NAMES HIM KING OF JUDEA.
- 37-30 B.C. CLEOPATRA OF EGYPT POSED THE LAST GREAT THREAT TO ROMAN DOMINANCE.
She had a son by Julius Caesar and hoped to make him the next Caesar of Rome.
Later she fell in love with Antony and married him.
She encouraged Antony to fight Octavian who wanted to be the next Caesar of Rome.
- 31 B.C. ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA LOST THE BATTLE OF ACTIUM.
Herod the Great goes to Rome and tells Octavian he will be as dedicated to him as he was to Antony. Cleopatra and Antony commit suicide.
- 27 B.C. OCTAVIAN IS GIVEN THE TITLE AUGUSTUS CAESAR EMPEROR OF ROME; Luke 2: 1
He established the Pax Romana, the Roman Peace which for two centuries brought peace and prosperity throughout the Roman Empire which contributed to the spread of Christianity later.
- 37-4 B.C. HEROD THE GREAT IS OBSESSED WITH THE POWER OF HIS THRONE; Luke 2:1-16
He did everything he could to ensure its security.
He murdered his favorite wife and "playfully" drowned his young brother-in-law, Aristobulus.
Before he died he ordered that a number of prominent Jews be killed so that there would be a time of national mourning!
- 4 B.C. **THE BIRTH OF CHRIST** --- IT IS NO WONDER THAT THE BIRTH OF A JEWISH "KING" WILL NOT BE RECEIVED WITH ENTHUSIASM.

WHY WAS JESUS BORN AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME?

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law," Galatians 4:4

The word "fullness" means ripe. An apple begins as a seed, becomes a seedling, and eventually a tree which produces the bud from which the apple will grow. At just the right time the apple is picked for full flavor. If it is picked any sooner, it will be too green and tart. If picked too late, it will become mellow and rot. Jesus was therefore born by the providence and plan of God at just the right time. The world had been properly prepared for His coming by thousands of years of history.

Jesus was born of a woman, the virgin Mary. This promise was first made to Eve in Genesis 3:15. It was promised to Mary in Luke 1:30, 31. He was born under the law (the law of God, also known as the law of Moses). Jesus obeyed perfectly the Old Testament law given by God to the children of Israel after they left their bondage in Egypt.

FOUR WORLD EMPIRES CONTRIBUTED TO THE PREPARATION OF CHRIST'S COMING AND THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL.

EMPIRE:

CONTRIBUTION

Babylonian Contribution:

THE GREAT DISPERSION:

The Babylonians attacked Israel and took them into captivity on three occasions, 606, 597, and 586 B.C. This resulted in the dispersion of the Jews throughout Babylon, Asia Minor, Egypt, and parts of Media. The Jews took the word of God and their religion with them. While there, Ezekiel instructed them to establish places where they could worship and instruct since the temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians. These places became known as synagogues. These were ready made launching pads for the preaching of the gospel over 500 years later.

Medo-Persian Contribution:

THE GREAT CIVIL LAW MAKER:

The Medes and Persians established an enforced civil law that had to be followed by both the common man and the king himself, Daniel 6:8, 12, 15; Esther 1:13, 15; 8:8-11. This influenced the Greeks and the Romans to establish laws that were equitable to all. Even Paul was able to appeal to Caesar regarding his case, Acts 25:10, 11.

Grecian Contribution:**THE GREAT CULTURE AND LANGUAGE GIVER:**

Alexander the Great came from Greece and conquered most of the then civilized world. With him he brought the Greek culture, refinement and education, and the Greek language. Having a singular written dynamic language enabled people to communicate more easily over wide areas. The Old Testament began to be translated from Hebrew to Greek in 250 B.C. This resulted in the Septuagint Version which was later used by Jesus and the New Testament writers. As a result the New Testament when completed could be read by most everyone from Spain to India.

Roman Contribution:**THE GREAT BUILDER AND LAW ENFORCER:**

They made a number of contributions which enabled the preaching of the gospel to be more easily spread. They built roads to travel on (many of these were begun by the Medes and Persians), and they made it safe to travel by having an "enforced peace" through the use of a widespread army.

"And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child," Luke 2:1-5.

This fulfilled the prophesy of Micah 5:2:

"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;
For out of you shall come a Ruler
Who will shepherd My people Israel," Matthew 2:6

WHY WAS JESUS BORN?

1. "To save his people from their sins," Matthew 1:21.
2. To "receive the throne of His father David...and reign over the house of Jacob forever...of His kingdom there will be no end," Luke 1:32, 33.
3. To "be called the Son of God," Luke 1:35
4. To be a "light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your People Israel," Luke 2:32.
5. To 'be about His Father's business,' Luke 2

BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST (FROM THE FOUR GOSPELS)

I. CHRIST'S LIFE BEFORE HE CAME TO EARTH:

John 1:1-5; Hebrews 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16-20; Philippians 2:5-11; Genesis 1:26; John 8:56-58.

II. CHRIST'S LIFE ON EARTH BEFORE HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY:

Matthew 1 and 2; Luke 1 and 2.

III. CHRIST'S PUBLIC MINISTRY ON EARTH:

Matthew 3 into 26; Mark 1 into 14; Luke 3 into 22; and John 1 through 17.

IV. THE CLOSE OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY ON EARTH:

Matthew 26 through 28; Mark 14 through 16; Luke 22 through 24; and John 18 through 21.

V. THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST AND HIS PRESENT WORK:

Mark 16:19, 20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:1-11; 1 Timothy 2:3-6; Colossians 1:19, 23, 28, 29; 1 John 1:7.

VI. THE COMING OF CHRIST AND HIS FUTURE WORK:

Matthew 24:35-44; Hebrews 8:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 5:24-29; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; Revelation 2:11; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 22:1-5.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

(EXPANDED MAJOR OUTLINE FROM THE FOUR GOSPELS)

I. CHRIST'S LIFE BEFORE HE CAME TO EARTH:

- A. He was in the beginning with God and was God, John 1: 1-5.
- B. All things were made through him, Hebrews 1:1-3.
- C. By him all things were created, both visible and invisible, Colossians 1:16-20.
- D. He gave up his equality with God and became a man, Philippians 2:5-11.
- E. He was a part of God which made man, Genesis 1:26, 27.
- F. He claimed to be before Abraham and the world, John 8:56-58; 17:5, 24; Revelation 1: 8.

II. CHRIST'S LIFE ON EARTH BEFORE HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY:

- A. His genealogy is recorded in order to prove that he is the Promised One, Luke 3:23-38; Matthew 1:1-17.
- B. John fulfills the promise of the forerunner of Christ, Malachi 3:1; Matthew 3:1-17.
- C. Details of Christ's birth are recorded, Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-56; 2:1-20.
- D. Brief remarks about his infancy and preteen years are recorded, Matthew 2:123; Luke 2:21-39; Luke 2:40-52.

III. CHRIST'S PUBLIC MINISTRY ON EARTH:

- A. Jesus is baptized in order to fulfill all righteousness, Matthew 3:13-17.
- B. Jesus is tempted by Satan, Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12, 13.
- C. Jesus begins his public ministry, Matthew 4:13-17; Luke 3:23.
- D. Jesus selects the twelve, Mark 3:13-19.
- E. Jesus had a ministry in Jerusalem at the time of the Feasts, John 2:13-25; 5:1.
- F. Jesus had a ministry in Galilee, John 4:1-3; Matthew 4:12-23.
- G. At times Jesus withdrew out of Palestine to rest, Matthew 15:21; 16:13; Mark 31.

- H. The teaching of Jesus introduced the purpose of the gospel and the characteristics of the kingdom, Mark 1:14, 15; Luke 4:14, 15; Matthew 5 through 7; 13:1-58.
- I. Jesus worked miracles to prove his Sonship; over diseases, Matthew 4:23-25; over nature, Matthew 14:25-33; over the demonic world, Matthew 8:28-34; over death, John 11:1-45; Luke 24:6, 7.
- J. The last week of his life is recorded in detail, Matthew 21 through 26; Mark 11 through 14; Luke 19 through 22, and John 12 through 17.

IV. THE CLOSE OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY ON EARTH:

- A. Jesus is arrested and goes through six trials, Matthew 26 and 27; Mark 14 and 15; Luke 22 and 23; John 18 and 19.
- B. Jesus is put to death on the cross, his body is buried and resurrected, Matthew 27 and 28; Mark 15 and 16; Luke 23 and 24.
- C. After his resurrection he made appearances and then ascended into heaven, Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20 and 21; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

V. THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST AND HIS PRESENT WORK:

- A. After he gave the great commission and the promise of the power of the Holy Spirit he ascended in heaven to reign on His throne as King, Luke 24:50-53; Mark 16:19, 20; Acts 1:1-11.
- B. Christ is now mediator between God and men, 1 Timothy 2:3-6.
- C. Christ is now King over His kingdom and High Priest over his priests, Acts 2:33; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:4-6; Hebrews 8:1, 2; 1 Peter 2:9.
- D. Men are reconciled by Christ's cross and blood, and by their obedience to His word, Colossians 1:19-23; 2:10-13.
- E. Those who walk in the light and in fellowship with Christ have their sins continually removed by his blood, 1 John 1:7.
- F. All things are presently upheld by His power, Hebrews 1:1-3.

V1. THE COMING OF CHRIST AND HIS FUTURE WORK:

- A. Jesus will return, and when He does heaven and earth will pass away, Matthew 24:35-44.
- B. When Jesus returns He will not set his feet on earth, but He will meet the resurrected righteous in the air so that they might be with Him forever, Hebrews 8:4 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
- C. At the resurrection Jesus will execute judgment; those who have done good will have eternal life with God but those who have done evil will have a resurrection unto damnation, John 5:24-29; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.
- D. Jesus will give His saints victory over physical death and enable them to escape the second death, I Corinthians 15:50-58, Revelation 2:11.
- E. Christ will judge the sheep (righteous) and the goats (unrighteous), Matthew 25:31-46.
- F. Those who have served God faithfully will live with God around His throne forever, Revelation 22:1-5.

MATTHEW

THEME: Jesus the King

Part One: The Presentation of the King (1:14:11)

I. The Advent of the King; 1:1-2:23

- A. The genealogy of Jesus Christ (See Charts #1 - #4)
- B. Christ born of Mary



Modern Bethlehem



What Joseph and Mary would have seen in Egypt

- C. Wise men from the East
- D. The flight into Egypt
- E. Massacre of the Innocents (See Genealogy Chart on Herod the Great)
- F. Jesus home in Nazareth

SEE MAP 1

SEE MAP 2



Modern Nazareth

II. The Announcer of the King; 3:1-12

- A. John the Baptist Prepares the Way (See Special Article)
- B. John baptizes many in all the region
- C. John gives warnings to the Pharisees and Sadducees

III. The Approval of the King; 3:13-4:11

SEE MAP 3

A. John baptizes Jesus



Jordan River in the South



Mount of Temptation

B. Satan tempts Jesus

C. Angels ministered to Jesus

Part Two: The Proclamation of the King (4:12-7:29)

SEE MAP 4

I. The Background for the Sermon on the Mount; 4:12-25

A. Jesus begins His Galilean Ministry

B. Four fishermen called as disciples

C. Jesus heals a great multitude



View of Mt. of Beatitudes from Sea of Galilee



View of Sea of Galilee from Mt. of Beatitudes

II. The Sermon on the Mount; 5:1-7:29

A. The beatitudes (See Special Article)

B. Believers are salt and light

C. Christ fulfills the Law

D. Murder begins in the heart

E. Adultery in the heart

F. Marriage is sacred and binding

G. Jesus forbids oaths.

H. Disciples go the second mile

- I. Love your enemies
- J. Do good to please God
- K. The model prayer
- L. Fasting to be seen only by God
- M. Lay up treasures in heaven
- N. The importance of the lamp of the body
- O. You cannot serve God and riches
- P. Do not worry
- Q. Do not judge by a different standard
- R. Keep asking, seeking, knocking
- S. The narrow way
- T. Know false teachers by their fruits
- U. Must do the will of the Father to be saved
- V. Build your life on the rock by doing the words of Jesus

SEE MAP 5
(Palestine Site Map)

Part Three: The Power of the King (8:1-11:1)

I. The Demonstration of the King's Power; 8:1-9:38

SEE MAP 6

- A. Jesus cleanses a Leper
- B. Jesus Heals a Centurion's servant
- C. Peter's mother-in-law healed
- D. Many healed after Sabbath sunset
- E. The wind and wave obey Jesus
- F. Two demon possessed men healed
- G. Jesus forgives and heals a paralytic
- H. Matthew the tax collector
 - 1. Jesus is questioned about fasting
- J. A girl restored to life and a woman healed
- K. Two blind men healed
- L. A mute man healed
- M. The compassion of Jesus

II. The Delegation of the King's Power; 10:1-11:1

- A. The choosing of the twelve apostles
- B. Sending out of the twelve
- C. Warnings to the apostles about persecution
- D. Jesus teaches the fear of God
- E. Confess Christ before men
- F. Christ brings division
- G. Respect those who receive Christ and his apostles
- H. Give a cold cup of water to those who are in need

Part Four: The Progressive Rejection of the King (11:2-16:12)

SEE MAP 7

I. The Beginning of Rejection; 11:2-30

- A. John the Baptist sends messengers to Jesus
- B. Woe to impenitent cities; Chorazin, Bethsaida, Tyre, Sidon, Capernaum.
- C. Jesus gives true rest



Ruins of Capernaum Synagogue



Ruins of Chorazin Synagogue

II. The Rejection of Christ by the Pharisees; 12:1-50

- A. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath
- B. Healing on the Sabbath
- C. Behold, my servant whom I have chosen
- D. A house divided cannot stand
- E. The unpardonable sin
- F. The scribes and Pharisees ask for a sign
- G. When an unclean spirit returns
- H. Jesus' mother and brothers send for Him

III. The Consequences of the Rejection; 13:1-53

- A. The parable of the sower
- B. The purpose of parables
- C. Some listeners are deaf and blind
- D. Some listener's hearts are hardened by truth
- E. The parable of the sower explained
- F. The parable of the wheat and tares
- G. The parable of the mustard seed
- H. The parable of the leaven
 - 1. Prophecy and parables
- J. The parable of the tares explained
- K. The parable of the hidden treasure
- L. The parable of the pearl of great price
- M. The parable of the dragnet

IV. The Continuing Rejection of the King 13:54-16:12

SEE MAP 8

- A. Jesus rejected at Nazareth
- B. John the Baptist beheaded
- C. Feeding the five thousand
- D. Jesus walks on the sea



Sea of Galilee looking north



Saint Peter's Fish from Sea of Galilee

- E. Many touch Him and are made well
- F. Defilement comes from within
- G. A Gentile shows her faith
- H. Jesus heals great multitudes
- I. Feeding the four thousand
- J. Pharisees and Sadducees seek a sign
- K. The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees

SEE MAP 9

Part Five: The Preparation of the King's Disciples; 16:13-20:28

I. Revelation of Great Truths 16:13-17:13

- A. Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ
- B. Jesus predicts his death and resurrection
- C. Take up your cross and follow him
- D. Jesus transfigured on the mount



Mt. Tabor, Possible Mount of Transfiguration



Mt. Hermon, Possible Mount of Transfiguration

II. The Instruction in View of Rejection; 17:14-20:28

- A. A boy is healed
- B. Jesus again predicts his death and resurrection
- C. Peter and his master pay their taxes
- D. Who is the greatest
- E. Jesus warns of offenses
- F. The parable of the lost sheep
- G. Dealing with a sinning brother
- H. The parable of the unforgiving servant
 - 1. Marriage, divorce, and remarriage
- J. Jesus teaches on celibacy
- K. Jesus blesses little children
- L. Jesus counsels the rich young ruler
- M. With God all things are possible
- N. Parable of the workers in the vineyard
- O. Jesus a third time predicts his death and resurrection.
- P. Greatness in serving

Part Six: The Presentation and Rejection of the King; 20:29-27:66

I. The Blind Men Recognize the King; 20:29-34

- A. A great multitude followed him in Jericho.
- B. Two blind men praise him and call Him Lord and Son of David
- C. Jesus had compassion on them



Modern City of Jericho



Ruins of Ancient Jericho

- 1. Their eyes received sight.
 - 2. They followed them.
- D. There were two Jerichos in the time of Jesus.
 - 1. There was the Jewish Jericho, where most of the priests lived.
 - 2. There was the Roman Jericho, where most were Gentile residents.
 - 3. Nearby were the ruins of ancient Jericho referred to in the Old Testament.

II. The Public Presentation of the King; 21:1-22

- A. The triumphal entry of Jesus
- B. Jesus cleanses the temple

SEE MAP 10
SEE MAPS 13, 14, 15



Model of Herod's Temple



Model of Temple and surroundings

- C. The warning of the withered fig tree
- D. A lesson in faith

III. The Nation Questions the Authority of the King; 21:23-22:46

- A. Jesus' authority questioned
- B. The parable of the two sons
- C. The parable of the wicked vinedressers
- D. The parable of the wedding feast
- E. The Pharisees: Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?
- F. The Sadducees: What about the resurrection?
- G. The Scribes: Which is the first commandment of all?
- H. Jesus: How can David call his descendant Lord?

IV. The King Rejects the Nation 23:1-39

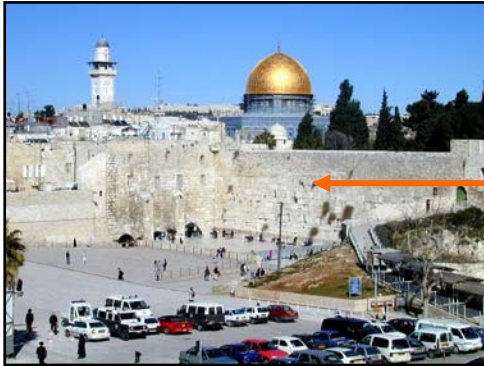
- A. Woe to the scribes and Pharisees
- B. Jesus laments over Jerusalem



Panoramic View of Jerusalem from Mt. of Olives

V. The Predictions of the Destruction of Jerusalem; 24:1-34

- A. The signs and times of the end of the Mosaic Age and the destruction of Jerusalem
- B. The tribulation before and during the time the Romans destroy Jerusalem
- C. Jesus' judgment on Jerusalem (See Special Article)
- D. The parable of the fig tree
- E. This generation will not pass away until this comes to pass



In A.D. 70 the Roman General Titus invaded Jerusalem, besieged it, and finally destroyed the temple and walled city.

In order to show the might of the Roman army, he left standing the western foundation wall which contained some of the largest man made stones in the temple mount.

VI. The Predictions of the Final Coming of Christ; 24:35-44

- A. Heaven and earth will pass away, but His word will not
- B. Of that day and hour no one knows but the Father
- C. It will be like the days of Noah when the flood came
- D. They did not know until the flood came
- E. Some will be left, and some taken.
- F. Be ready for He will come as a thief in the night

VII. The Parables of Preparation for the Final Coming of Christ; 24:45-51

- A. The parable of the faithful servant and the unfaithful servant
- B. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins
- C. The parable of the talents

VIII. The Predictions of the Final Coming of Christ; 24:35-51

- A. No one knows the day or the hour
- B. The faithful servant and evil servant
- C. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins
- D. The parable of the talents
- E. The Son of Man will judge the nations

IX. The Plot Against and the Crucifixion of the King; 26:1-27:66

SEE MAP 11

- A. The plot to kill Jesus
- B. The anointing at Bethany
- C. Judas agrees to betray Jesus
- D. Jesus celebrates Passover with his disciples
- E. Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper
- F. Jesus predicts Peter's denial

G. The prayer in the garden

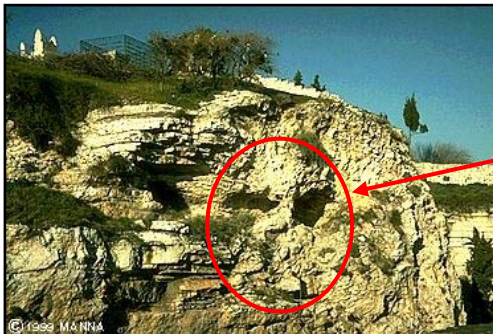


Garden of Gethsemane



View of Golden Gate from Gethsemane

- H. Betrayal and arrest in Gethsemane
- I. Jesus faces the Sanhedrin
- J. Peter denies Jesus, and weeps bitterly
- K. Jesus handed over to Pontius Pilate
- L. Jesus faces Pilate
- M. Jesus takes the place of Barabbas
- N. The soldiers mock Jesus
- O. The King on the cross



Golgotha, Hill of the Skull

This site is known as Gordon's Calvary, named after Col. Gordon who discovered the skull-like appearance on the side of the hill. Gordon's tomb is a short walk from here.

- P. Jesus dies on the cross
- Q. Jesus buried in Joseph's Tomb
- R. Pilate sets a guard



Tomb

This site is known as Gordon's tomb. It is typical of a rich man's tomb in the time of Jesus. The trough is below the entrance where the huge stone could roll.

Part Seven: The Proof of the King; (28:1-20)

SEE MAP 12

I. The Empty Tomb; 28:1-8

SEE MAP 13

- A. He is risen
- B. The women came to see the tomb
- C. An angel informs the women that Jesus is risen
- D. They are told to tell the disciples

II. The Appearance of Jesus to the Women; 28:9-10

- A. The women worship the risen Lord
- B. They are told not to be afraid and go tell the disciples

III. The Bribery of the Soldiers; 28:11-15

- A. Large sums of money are given to the soldiers to lie
- B. The soldiers were told to say that His disciples came and stole the body of Jesus

IV. The Appearance of Jesus to the Disciples; 28:16-17

- A. Some worshipped him
- B. Some doubted him

V. The Great Commission; 28:18-20

- A. All authority has been give to Jesus in heaven and on earth
- B. His disciples are to go and make disciples of all nations
- C. They are to baptize them into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- D. They are to teach them to observe his commandments
- E. Jesus promises to be with them until the end of the age



Mt. of Olives

On the right in this picture is the Mt. of Olives from which Jesus ascended into heaven. The Kidron Valley is below. The Garden of Gethsemane is to the left on the slop of the Mt. of Olives, and the base of the temple mount begins to the left in the picture.

SOURCES

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APPENDIX A: CHARTS AND MAPS

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JOHN THE BAPTIST

Introduction:

- I. He was called "Baptist" (Matt. 3: 1) and the "baptizer" (Mark 6:14) to differentiate him from others of that name (John), and to call attention to his distinctive ministry.
2. He was born 7 B.C. to elderly parents of priestly descent, Zachariah and Elizabeth who were related to Mary the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:5, 36).
3. He received a divine call to be a prophet (Lk. 3:2) and entered public ministry.
4. After John placed his seal of approval upon Jesus (John 1:24-36), their ministries overlapped for a time.
5. Shortly thereafter John was arrested and put to death by Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great and Malthace (one of Herod the Great's ten wives), Mark 6:27. (See Matthew 3:18-20 and Mark 6:16-29).
 - a. At the time John was arrested and put to death Herod Antipas was married to Herodias who had forsaken her husband Herod Phillip who was the son of Herod the Great and Mariamne II (another one of Herod the Great's ten wives).
 - b. This meant that Herod Antipas married the wife of his half-brother Herod Phillip while he was still living and therefore disobeyed the Mosaic law.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST:

- A. The New Testament places a very high estimate upon the importance of John and his ministry.
 1. Jesus said, "Among those born of woman, none is greater than John," Luke 7:28.
 2. He was the forerunner of Christ (Mark 1:2).
 3. His rite of baptism became a central requirement in becoming a Christian (Acts 2:38).
- B. His imprisonment and death had a great effect upon Jesus (Mark 1:14).
- C. Jesus regarded him as the second Elijah sent by God in accord with ancient prophecy (Mal. 4:5; Mark 9:13).
- D. He was the greatest figure yet produced under the old covenant (Matt. 11:11).
- E. He was a bridge to the old and new covenants.
 1. He did not preach something new, but it was a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies (Matt. 3:2; 4:17).
 2. He prepared the way for the Lord's coming, (Lk. 1:5-25, 57-66, 67-80).

II. THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST:

- A. In him the future predictions of the Old Testament began to find fulfillment (Matt. 11:10-15).
- B. He entered dramatically onto the scene of history in A.D. 28.
 - 1. He was clothed in a cloak of camel's hair and eating locusts and wild honey.
 - a. His food and clothing indicated his rejection of official Israel of the time and his conviction of a prophetic calling.
 - b. Everything about him recalled the prophet Elijah --- his mantle, existing in the wilderness (southern Transjordan), his message.
 - c. The wilderness was the same place to which Elijah had fled (1 Kings 19:4), and the place where God led His people to the promised land.
 - 2. He proclaimed the need for repentance and change of life.
- C. John's preaching extended into Samaritan territory (John 3:23).
- D. John's preaching attracted large crowds who responded well to his message (Luke 3: 10).

III. THE MESSAGE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST:

- A. John was a preacher who stood in the tradition of the prophets.
- B. All of his preaching rings of Old Testament imagery, content, and vividness.
 - 1. There is the winnowing fan, the threshing floor, the axe at the root of the tree, and the brood of vipers (Luke 3:15-17).
 - 2. There was great emphasis on ethical instruction.
- C. His message was one of urgency in that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Matthew 3:2).
- D. His message pointed not to himself but to the promised Messiah (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16; John 1:25, 27, 30; Acts 13:25).
- E. His good news was accompanied with severe denunciations of the status quo in Israel.
 - 1. He preached that physical descent from Abraham did not guarantee the favor of God.
 - 2. He preached that spiritual kinship with God must be evidenced in daily life.
- F. His message required that they repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins (Mark 1:4).

IV. JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS:

- A. The earliest part of Jesus' public ministry was spent in the circle of John.

1. They shared a common outlook and concern.
 2. They carried on Parallel ministries.
 3. They both practiced baptism in Judea.
- B. As Jesus' fame grew John's diminished (John 3:30).
- C. Both Jesus and John claimed authority from heaven, for themselves, and for one another (Matt. 21:23-27).

V. JOHN'S BAPTISM:

- A. There are several observations, which should be made about John's baptism.
1. True repentance and confession of sins were required.
 - a. There were those whom John refused because they refused to repent.
 - b. See Mark 1:4, 5; Matt. 3:6; 3:7-9; Luke 3:7-9.
 2. Faith in Christ, who was to come, was required (Acts 19:4).
 3. It was for or unto the remission of sins (Mark 1:4, 5).
- B. There is a contrast between John's baptism and Christ's baptism.
1. John's baptism demanded faith in the "one to come" (Acts 19:4; John 1:7, 8).
 2. John's baptism was administered in no name, but Christ's baptism is administered into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19).
 3. John's baptism gave the recipients the right to become children of God and citizens of God's kingdom, when it was established on Pentecost (John 1:1-14).
 4. John's baptism was limited to the preparatory period of the kingdom or church, but Christ's baptism has no limitation and is to last to the end (Matt. 28:19-20).

ASIDE #1 JOHN'S BAPTISM:

QUESTIONS:

1. Were the Apostles baptized again on the day of Pentecost?
2. Were the one hundred twenty baptized on Pentecost?
3. Why were the disciples of Acts 19:1-5 baptized again?

Read Acts 19:1-5:

After having returned to the church in Antioch of Syria to visit and also to give a report of his labors, Paul then set out on his third missionary journey. Judging from Luke's account, he apparently traveled alone. Luke states that Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus. The upper country was the Galatians and Phrygian region, and Paul visited and established the disciples throughout that territory. On his prior journey, Paul had desired to preach the gospel in Asia---a providence of Asia Minor whose capital city was Ephesus --- but the Holy Spirit forbade him to so do. Thus on his third Journey he was permitted by divine providence to enter upon a work in the city of Ephesus.

Luke stated: "And it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul ... came to Ephesus." Luke had already introduced Apollos --- as recorded in Acts 18:24-28 --- and that without a doubt, for a particular purpose or reason. For one reason, Apollos had made a very significant contribution to the cause of Christ; and for another reason, Apollos had known only of the "baptism of John."

The reader is left to infer that by Luke's account of both Apollos and the twelve who "knew only the baptism of John" that the matter of John's baptism constituted a problem that begged to be settled. The very great likelihood is that Apollos and the twelve were not the only disciples that knew only the baptism of John. The likelihood is that disciples of John beyond Palestine perpetuated his teaching and baptism. Apollos needed of course only to, be better informed concerning Christ, not baptized again; whereas, the twelve needed to be "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Apollos received John's baptism while it was valid --- or prior to the death of Christ. The twelve, on the other hand, had received John's baptism after the death of Christ and thus when John's baptism was no longer valid. Apollos only needed, therefore, to be further instructed relative to the fact that Christ had already come and had been raised from the dead, whereas, the twelve at Ephesus needed to be so instructed and also to be baptized into Christ. The twelve had received a baptism, which had ceased to be valid before they received it.

We need to understand that the kingdom or church existed in certain stages or periods of development prior to its actual establishment. The kingdom or church existed first in purpose, next in promise, then in prophecy, afterwards in preparation, and finally in fullness or perfection. John's baptism of repentance for the remission of sins was a part of the preparatory period of the kingdom. John prepared material that was to be fitted into the kingdom or the church. Like the prepared material for the Temple fitted together without the sound of a hammer, the material prepared by John fitted into the church on Pentecost without the sound of a hammer so to speak.

Those who refused John's baptism "rejected the counsel of God against themselves" (Luke 7:30). Those who were chosen as apostles had to have been baptized of John's baptism (John 1 and 2). This was also a requirement of the one who was to replace Judas as an apostle (Acts 1:21, 22).

The one hundred twenty in Acts 1 had already been baptized for the remission of sins. They, therefore, had the power, the right to become sons of God --- to enter the church or kingdom --- and thus they fitted into the church when it began on Pentecost. Luke recorded that about three thousand souls were added unto them --- unto the one hundred twenty on that day (John 1:1-14; Acts 2:41). The five hundred and all others who had received John's baptism fitted into the church or kingdom when it began on Pentecost, providing that they believed that Christ had been raised from the dead by the power of God.

John's work and baptism, therefore, was to prepare people for Pentecost (Acts 2) and the coming of the kingdom (Luke 3:3, 4). This all pointed toward Christ's death where the atonement was made. Thus, it prepared them for entrance as living stones in the church, which had a miraculous beginning on Pentecost. It should also be noted that Jesus and his disciples continued the work of John after John's death. The apostle John records that they were more successful in this work than John himself (John 4:1, 2).

John's baptism was one of preparation and was never intended to be permanent. It was futuristic (Acts 19:4). Christ gave the marching orders for his baptism after his resurrection (Matt. 28:19, 20) and it would begin on Pentecost (Acts 2:38). If, however, John's baptism did not serve the purpose stated ("for the remission of sins") and put people into contact with the blood of Christ when he died, it was a useless exercise which did not prepare them to enter the coming kingdom. Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost was addressed to people who had not repented of their sins and who had not been baptized for the remission of their sins.

ASIDE #2 DID JOHN THE BAPTIST BUILD A CHURCH, OR THE CHURCH, OR NO CHURCH?

1. If John the Baptist built a church then it did not have the blood of Christ in it for Jesus had not shed His blood.
2. If John the Baptist built a church then it did not have Christ as its High Priest because Jesus could not become high priest until He ascended into heaven (Hebrews 8).
3. If John the Baptist built a church then it did not have Christ as its head, because Christ could not become head until He ascended into heaven (Acts 2:36-38).
4. If John the Baptist built the church then there are two churches because Christ did not build His church until after His death (Matthew 16:18-20).
5. If John the Baptist built a church or the church then he was not a member of it because the least in the kingdom (church) was greater than he (Matt. 11:11).
6. John the Baptist did not build **a** church or **the** church since Jesus said He would build His own church and there is only **one** church (Ephesians 4)

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Introduction:

1. The accounts of the temptation of Jesus can be found in Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4:1-13.
2. The actual place of the temptation has not been conclusively identified, but the traditional place is across the Jordan River not far from Jericho.
3. It is a place identified with loneliness, hunger, and implied danger with wild beasts.
4. There are a number of impressive lessons in the temptation of Jesus.

I. We Learn That Satan Is Never Far Away.

- A. Mark's account suggests that the temptation immediately followed Jesus' baptism.
- B. The devil knows our weakest times.
 1. We never have to run an advertisement or send out a search party to find the opportunities to sin that Satan specializes in.
 2. Baptism does not wash away our weaknesses, but God provides a way of escape for every temptation (1 Cor. 10:13).

II. We Learn That Temptation Is Not Always Detrimental---It Can Have A Positive Result.

- A. This confrontation Jesus had with Satan made clear the stand Jesus took.
 1. In each case he could answer, "It is written..."
 2. Rather than using miraculous power he used **will** power and **word** power.
- B. The temptation Jesus endured was intense:
 1. Matthew 4:1-3---"...and the tempter came..."
 2. Mark 1:13---"...he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan."
 3. Hebrews 4:15-----Jesus "has been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," (See also 1 John 1:15-16).
- C. Temptation within itself is not sin.
 1. Sin is yielding to temptation.
 2. See James 1:12-16 for a detail of the life of sin.

3. Illustration: A young man on crutches was described as optimistic and friendly. He had suffered from infantile paralysis when a child. When asked how he could be so happy, he responded by saying, “The disease never touched my heart.” We can be tempted, but the disease of sin does not have to touch our hearts or break our will.

III. We Learn That Satan’s Attempts to Keep Us from God Begin with Doubt.

- A. “**If** thou art the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” Luke. 4:3 and “**If** thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence”, Luke. 4:9.
- B. Satan used this approach with Eve for the world’s first sin by getting her to doubt the truth of what God had said, Genesis 3:1-7.
- C. We can see the progressive nature of doubts used today to keep people from God.
 1. Doubt the existence of God, the inspiration of the Bible, or whether there is a heaven or hell.
 2. Doubt whether grace is adequate to save one so entrenched in sin.
 3. Doubt whether “I can hold out and be faithful” or whether “I can be forgiven after falling as a Christian.”
 4. Even the faithful are led to doubt whether others really love them and accept them or are really hypocrites, or whether the church is what it ought to be.

IV. We Learn That We Are Not To Expect Spiritual Rewards By Using Worldly Tactics.

- A. The devil offered Jesus the acclaim and the kingdoms of the world.
 1. Jesus was tempted by Satan to take a short cut to worldly reward.
 2. Jesus saw beyond the here and now.
- B. Jesus’ answer was, “It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve,” and this involves “heart, mind, and soul” in loving God.
- C. The world says we are failures without wealth, physical attractiveness, intelligence, talent and agility.
 1. The Bible teaches that these can be good things to have, if we use them wisely and are good stewards.

2. The Bible also teaches that God loves us and will reward us even if we do not have these things in any noticeable degree, if we serve Him.
- D. Compare the choices that Moses and Joseph made when they were tempted.

V. We Learn the Approach of Satan's Attack Is Not Always the Same and That We Must Answer Accordingly.

- A. Satan first tried to make Jesus doubt the care God had for him regarding the bread.
1. When that didn't work the devil reversed his tactic and tried to get Jesus to trust God so much that He should exploit the care of the angels to rescue Him, as if He could still trust God to rescue Him even if He threw in with Satan.
 2. Satan first implied that God led Him out into the wilderness to die of starvation and then says that if He takes a short cut to victory God will save Him.
 3. Satan knows how to tug, twist, push, and pull the language of temptation.
- B. Satan's word was "two-edged."
1. Jesus made effective use of God's word in answering, "It is written..."
 2. God's word is "two-edged" also (Hebrews 4:12) to contend with the "wiles" of the devil (Ephesians 6:10-17).
- C. Satan could quote scripture, but quoting scripture has no inherent merit unless it is quoted, used, and applied correctly by one with honorable intent.

IV. We Learn That Our Best Talents Should Be Used To Save And To Serve Others.

- A. Jesus was tested to see if His awareness of being "about my Father's business" and His newly recognized power would be misused for His personal comfort and to gain recognition from the world.
1. His answer, "It is said, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God."
 2. He came to seek and save the lost, not exalt Himself with selfish motives.
- B. How are we using our best assets?
1. Many have brilliant minds, charismatic personalities, good speaking abilities, dexterity of body and multiple talents, but so few think of using them first to serve God.

2. Someone has said, “Too often the cream of the crop of Christian youth is siphoned away by delusions of worldly grandeur from careers that can also honor God”

VII. We Learn That What Worked For Jesus Will Work For Us.

- A. Jesus resisted the devil and “He departed from Him for a season,” Luke 4:13.
 1. Satan never gives up; for, he was gone only for a season.
 2. The important lesson is that Satan was defeated at this point in Jesus’ life.
- B. Jesus was tempted as we are and was victorious.
 1. He did not use miracles, but relied upon God’s word and promises just as we do.
 2. He was victorious, as we can be.
- C. “Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you,” James 4:7-8.

CONCLUSION:

1. At times people ask, “If God does not want us to yield to temptation, why did He not make us so that we had no power to decide otherwise. If we were made as robots, with no capacity for decisions, there would be no honor to God in our service to Him. But when we have the capacity, as free moral agents, to ignore Him and live in sin, and yet choose to serve Him, He is honored by our choice.
2. We should use our ability to choose and honor God with our love and obedience.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew Chapters 5, 6, and 7

FOUNDATION FOR THE GOSPEL AND THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

I There Are Attitudes for the Disciples in the Kingdom of Christ; Matt. 5:1-9.

- A. Poor in spirit: sense their spiritual need, humble-minded.
- B. Mourn: know what sorrow means.
- C. Meek: gentle, patient, longsuffering.
- D. Hunger and thirst after righteousness: want to be and do what is right.
- E. Merciful; compassionate.
- F. Pure in heart: clean morally
- G. Peacemakers: make and maintain peace.

II. There Are Consequences in the Lives of Those Who Are Disciples of Christ In The Kingdom; Matthew 5:10-12

- A. They shall be persecuted.
- B. They shall have all manner of evil said against them falsely.
- C. They are to rejoice and be tremendously glad.
- D. They will have great reward in heaven.

III. The Disciples of Christ Have a Relationship to the World; Matt. 5:13-16.

- A. They are to be the salt of the earth.
 - 1. They will affect the lives of others.
 - 2. They will preserve and save.
 - 3. They will be an influence for good.
- B. They are to be the light of the world
 - 1. Their light shines because of good works.
 - 2. The purpose of the good works is to glorify God.

IV. Christ Came To Live The Mosaic Law And Fulfill It; Matt. 5:17.

- A. Christ came to live the law of Moses perfectly.
- B. Christ came to fulfill the law and the prophets until its purpose is completed.

- C. The law of Moses was done away with after the New Covenant was established;
Colossians 2:14-16; Ephesians 2:14-16; Hebrews 8.

V. Christ Came To Give A New Covenant; Matthew 5:21-48.

- A. His disciples are not only to not murder but also not to hate.
 - 1. Do not be angry without a just cause.
 - 2. Do not look down upon or curse others.
 - 3. Be anxious to make reconciliation with others.
- B. Adultery is wrong, but so is lust or wrongful desire.
- C. Sin by members of the body endangers the soul.
- D. There is only one situation where God approves of someone putting away a spouse and marrying another, and that cause is fornication on the part of the guilty partner.
 - 1. It is God who makes a marriage.
 - 2. It is God who puts them asunder.
 - 3. If the guilty party marries again, they live in adultery.
 - 4. Whoever marries someone put away for adultery, lives in adultery.
- E. The disciple is to love his enemies and he is not in the business of getting even.
- F. The disciple is to imitate the Father who is perfect.

VI. The Disciple's Heart Must Be Right When He Does Good; Matt. 6:1-18.

- A. He is not to make a show of his religion as hypocrites do.
 - 1. He is not to give in order to be noticed, but give privately and unannounced.
 - 2. He is not to pray to be seen of men or repeat over and over empty phrases which are used only to impress men --- Jesus gives a sample prayer
 - 3. He is not to indicate to others his sacrifices by having a sad face.
- B. He is to be sincere in his love and humble in his demonstration of a Christ-like life.

VII. The Disciple Is To Put His Faith And Trust In God For His Needs; 6:19-34.

- A. Store up treasures in heaven rather than on earth.
- B. Man cannot serve both God and money.
- C. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and trust in His care.

VIII. The Wise and the Unwise Are Given Warnings; Matthew 7:1-28.

- A. The disciple is not to judge others with a different measure than he judges himself. (Judge righteous judgments (John 7:24).
- B. Do not give sacred things to those who will trample and abuse them.
- C. The disciple must seek God for the right and good.
- D. The disciple is to do to others what he would have done to him.
- E. The disciple will enter the narrow gate, which leads to eternal life, rather than the wide and easy gate where most people enter and which leads to destruction.
- F. The disciple is to watch out for false teachers who look good on the outside but when further investigation is made of their teachings their fruit is corrupt.
- G. The disciple learns who will enter the kingdom of God.
 - 1. Not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord."
 - 2. He that does the will of the Father in heaven will enter the kingdom.
 - 3. Not he that just does good works, or teaches in Christ's name.
 - 4. Unless he has done the will of the Father to enter the kingdom of God, He does not even know their name.
- H. Anyone who hears the will of God and does it, builds his life on the everlasting rock.
- I. Anyone who hears the will of God and does not do it builds his life on what will be destroyed.

IX. Jesus Impressed the Crowd For He Taught Them as One Having Authority; Matthew 7:28, 29.

- A. Jesus spoke the truth.
- B. Jesus spoke the truth in love.
- C. Jesus spoke in absolutes.

“YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH”

Matthew 5:13

Introduction:

1. The power of influence is staggering.
 - a. We are born with influence
 - (1) Look at the changes that come when a baby is born into this world.
 - (2) The family is changed forever.
 - b. We cannot lose our influence, either good or bad.
 - c. We do not put our influence in the coffin with us (Abel—Hebrews 11)
2. The Christian has been given the greatest position of influence of all.

Discussion:

I. This Is A Description To Appreciate---“Ye are the salt of the earth.”

- A. Salt is absolutely necessary.
 1. Napoleon’s army nearly bled to death because it ran out of salt.
 2. It is necessary for life.
 3. We are needed (2 Tim. 4:11).
 4. Never say, “I’m a nobody.”
- B. Salt works at the expense of itself.
 1. Christ came to seek and to save the lost and “spent” himself to accomplish that task.
 2. Christ paid a price for your salvation and the church (Acts 20:28).
 3. What is being a Christian costing you?
- C. Salt must come in contact with a substance in order to have influence.
 1. Some people are so tactful in religion they never make contact with others with their religion.
 2. When salt makes contact it remains salty.
 3. We should not lose our influence when we come in contact with the world.
- D. Salt preserves and prevents.
 1. It keeps meat from spoiling.

2. Preserving our nation depends on godliness (Prov. 14:34).
 3. Righteous people could have saved Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19).
 4. Christians have a saving influence (Romans 1:16; Matthew 28:19-20).
- E. Salt purifies.
1. It purified water in 2 Kings 2:19.
 2. Christians are to be pure and influence purity (1 Timothy 4:12).
- F. Salt can be destructive.
1. Salt on the lawn or too much salt in the human body can cause death.
 2. There is a time to reprove and rebuke in order that sin can be destroyed (2 Timothy 4:2).
 3. God's word had a destructive influence (2 Cor. 10:4-5).
 4. God's word is described as a sword (Eph. 6).
- G. Salt creates thirst.
1. Our lives should incite greater desire in others to hunger and thirst after good things (righteousness, Matthew 5).
 2. We should not weaken the righteous appetites of others.
- H. Salt gives flavor.
1. Job says, "Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt or is there any taste in the white of an egg?"
 2. Christians should sweeten disappointments and lighten burdens (2 Cor. 1:3-6; Gal. 6:2).
- I. Salt speaks for itself.
1. When you taste salt you know immediately what it is.
 2. The Christian doesn't have to wear a placard around his neck saying, "I am a Christian."
 3. They will know us by our actions and words, "Let your speech be salted with grace..." Colossians 2.
- J. Salt makes a difference.
1. Christians should make a difference (church, home, school, work, community, etc.)
 2. Would you be missed?

II. There Is A Danger To Be Avoided---“But if the salt loses its flavor, wherewith, how shall it be seasoned?”

- A. If I lose my influence as a Christian, how will the world be influenced?
- B. A branch may become fruitless, a sheep may go astray, and a soul may depart.
- C. How can the Christian lose it?
 - 1. He can lose it by failing to be a Christian.
 - 2. He can lose it by being constantly exposed to the world and allowing it to influence him instead (James 4:4).

III. There Is A Destiny To Abhor---“It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”

- A. This means separation in fellowship (1 Cor. 5).
- B. This means separation in eternity (Matthew 25).

CONCLUSION:

The Christian must remind himself each day of the power of his influence.

“YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD”

Matthew 5:14-16

Introduction:

1. Light is powerful.
 - a. It gives life to the world.
 - b. It guides the way and saves the lost in what would otherwise be a world of darkness.
2. We should consider what Jesus meant by being lights to the world.

Discussion:

I. We Need To Let Our Lights Shine.

- A. Jesus commanded it (John 14:15).
- B. The world is in darkness and needs light (1 John 5:19; Eph. 5:8-14).
 1. Christians are the only people with the proper light for a world darkened by sin.
 2. Each Christian is a candle and each candle makes a difference.
- C. Only the light can expose ungodliness (Eph. 5:13).
- D. Light will help others to see the way (John 14:6; Matthew 5:15).
- E. We need to let men see our good works (Matthew 5:16).
 1. This is not to be seen of men (Gal. 6:10).
 2. It is for the purpose of glorifying God.
- F. It causes others to glorify God.
 1. This is the duty of man (Rev. 4:11).
 2. This is the reason for preaching the gospel to every creature (Romans 1:14-18; 10:13-17).
- G. Its purpose is to also guide others.
 1. We must “send the light” and “throw out the lifeline.”
 2. Love cares for others (1 Cor. 13).
- H. It proves who you are.
 1. To be a light one must first come to the Light (1 John 1:7).
 2. One cannot be a Christian without being a light bearer.

II. We Need The Power To Shine.

- A. The power comes from Christ and His word.
 - 1. The fuel comes from His word (2 Timothy 2:15).
 - 2. We must store it in our hearts (Psalm 119:97).
 - 3. It must guide our every action (Psalm 119:105).
- B. It must be trimmed through seasons of prayer.
 - 1. We must pray for wisdom so that our lights will be focused (James 1:5).
 - 2. Through prayer our lights reach out to God and in behalf of others.
- C. Our lights shine more brightly when we are dedicated to God.
 - 1. We must be faithful (Rev. 2:10).
 - 2. We must walk in the light (1 John 1:7).

III. We Need To Avoid Whatever Causes Our Lights To Grow Dim.

- A. Fear is a major enemy (2 Timothy 1:7).
 - 1. We must not let Satan “blow it out.”
 - 2. We must not be afraid and hide it under a basket.
- B. Love of the World will lead to a loss of light.
 - 1. The “dirt” of the world will dim our lights.
 - 2. We must not be conformed to the world (Rom. 12:1-2).
- C. Neglect of the power source will dim our lights.
 - 1. Light must connect and Christians must be connected.
 - 2. We must not fail to study and pray.
 - 3. We must not fail to fellowship with other Christians.
 - 4. We must not fail to stay in connection with our power source: GOD.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. We must let our light shine so that God can be glorified by our lives.
- 2. A Christian desires light rather than darkness.
- 3. The Christian is not afraid for his deeds to be seen.

MATTHEW 24

THE SIGNS AND PROPHECIES Of MATTHEW 24

Introduction:

1. The parallel passages are Mark 13 and Luke 21.
2. These passages have been used by millennialists to support what they call the "two-stage theory" of Christ's second coming which is to include his (1) coming "for the saints", followed seven years later by his (2) coming "with the saints."
 - a. They describe the intervening seven years as a time of "rapture" for the saints with Christ and a time of "tribulation" for those who remain on earth.
 - b. The "signs" of vs. 4-14 are understood by them to apply to the time before the first stage of his coming which are usually associated with events going on today.
 - c. The events of vs. 15-28 are identified by them as the "great tribulation," the final three and a half years of the "tribulation period."
 - d. They say that following the tribulation, Christ will return to earth and reign 1,000 years.
3. A careful reading of the text, however, will show that none of these teachings are found in Matthew 24, Mark 13, or Luke 21.

Discussion

I. The Key Texts and the Context:

- A. The time-text of Matthew 24 is verse 34; "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished."
 1. This verse divides the chapter into two sections.
 - a. What goes before verse 34 applies to the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in A.D. 70.
 - b. What follows verse 34 applies to the end of the world, the time of which is not indicated.
 2. The premillennialists and dispensationalists explain the word "generation" as meaning a race or family, that is, the nation of Israel will be preserved until these things be fulfilled (see notes in *The New Scofield Reference Bible*).

3. However, the definition of the Greek word *genea* (generation) is "contemporaneous existence" when combined with the Greek word *ante* (this); *genea ante* = "this generation".
 4. Matthew's use of the word "generation" elsewhere in his gospel means "contemporaneous existence;" (see Matthew 11:16; 12:38-45; 16:4; 17:17; 23:36; and then 24:34).
 - a. It is obvious in all these references that Jesus is talking about his own generation.
 - b. To translate 24:34 differently would contradict how Matthew uses the word everywhere else in his writings.
- B. The transition text verses of Matthew 24 are verses 35 and 36; "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only."
1. These verses begin the section referring to the end of the world, in which no signs were given, but rather the general command to "watch" (see vs. 42, 44, 50; 25:13).
 2. Look at the differences in the two sections.
 - a. The first section Matt. 24:1-34 describes the events leading up to and including the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
 - (1) They are abnormal events.
 - (2) The fig tree gives warning of impending destruction.
 - (3) The events are local in nature (Judea, Sabbath, and temple).
 - (4) The saints are urged to flee the city when they see the signs.
 - (5) There is a note of imminence; it's just around the corner.
 - (6) These events will occur in "this generation."
 - b. The second section Matthew 24:35-44, however, applies to the end of the world. Note the differences in the above section:
 - (1) They are **normal times** with normal people working at different tasks and carrying on the routine affairs of daily living comparable to the days before the flood when no sign was given but the preaching of Noah.
 - (2) **No warning except the preaching** of Noah.
 - (3) **No exact time** is given, but his coming is as a thief.
 - (4) This section describes a **worldwide** situation and judgement not limited to one nation.
 - (5) The **saints are taken** rather than urged to flee.
 - (6) There is the suggestion of delay, therefore **be ready at anytime**.

C. The context is found in the preceding and following events of Matthew 24.

1. The axe is already at the root of the trees (Jewish nation as God's people); (Matt. 3:10).
2. In the parable of the wicked husbandman, unbelieving Judaism would be cut off, and others would be admitted to the Father's vineyard (Matt. 21: 33-45; 8:11-12).
3. In Matthew 22 a final debate is held between Jesus and the Jewish leaders followed by stern warnings in Matt. 23, and that the blood of all the righteous martyrs of the past would be required of that generation (Matt. 23:35-36).

D. The disciples asked questions about statements made by Jesus about the temple.

1. As Jesus left the temple for the last time his disciples shared their awe about the temple, but Jesus warned them that not one stone would be left standing.
2. The disciples asked two questions; (1) When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of your coming, and (2) of the end of the world.
3. They thought that only the end of the world could bring such results.
 - a. What they didn't know, but what Jesus knew, was that Titus' army was soon to burn the temple and demolish completely the city and temple.
 - b. Josephus described it, "that there was nothing left to make those that come thither believe it had ever been inhabited."
4. Jesus answered the disciple's two questions separately, and in order; He first gave signs of the impending destruction of Jerusalem so that the saints could flee from the destruction, and then gave exhortations about His coming and the end of the world.

II. Signs of the Destruction of Jerusalem:

A. General Signs:

1. False messiahs trying to gain political power would come forth. Josephus comments on this fact and Acts 5:33-37 refers to it. (Matt. 24:4-5)
2. Wars, famines, and earthquakes; two famines are recorded in Acts; many earthquakes before A.D. 70; Pompeii was destroyed in A.D. 63 (Matt. 24:6-8).
3. Persecution of Christians (Matt. 24:9, 13).
4. Gospel to be preached to whole world fulfilled in Col. 1:6, 23. (Matt. 24:14). Colossians was written in A.D. 61.

B. A Specific Sign:

1. Jesus quotes from Daniel; "...when therefore ye see the abomination of desolation...standing in the holy place..." Matt. 24:15.

2. Daniel used this expression three times; chapters 9, 11, and 12.
3. Luke's account identifies the "abomination" as the encompassing of Jerusalem by the Roman army (Luke 21:20).
4. Jesus was therefore discussing a local holocaust, which they could escape (vs. 16-21).
5. In v. 21 he warns of a great tribulation; Josephus says that in the destruction of Jerusalem 97,000 were taken captive and enslaved and 1,100,000 died. Horrible stories are told of what happened within the walls of Jerusalem.

C. Apocalyptic Language:

1. The language of vs. 27-31 sounds like the Second Coming of Christ and the end of the world, but those who are familiar with the Old Testament prophets recognize this as a very special type of figurative language known as apocalyptic.
 - a. Similar language is used to describe the destruction of Babylon (Isaiah 13:10), the destruction of Edom (Is. 34:4, 5), and the destruction of Egypt (Ezek. 32:7, 8).
 - b. Similar references to the "coming of the Son of Man" are found in Matt. 16:27 and 26:64 where it means a coming in judgment rather than the final Second Coming. These references and Mark 9:1 found their fulfillment on Pentecost (Acts 2).
 - (1) Look at the words of Jesus in Matthew 16:27-17:1; "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father **with His angels**, and then He will reward each according to his words. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they **see the Son of Man coming** in His kingdom."
 - (a) The second statement is undoubtedly about the Day of Pentecost when the kingdom came with power (See Acts 1:6-8; 2:1-3).
 - (b) But what about the first statement? It sounds like Jesus is talking about His Final Coming when all men will be judged by their works; yet, the context is about the coming of His kingdom (See also Mark 8:38-9:1).
 - (2) Look at the words of Jesus in Matthew 26:64; "It is as you said, Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will **see the Son of Man sitting** at the right hand of the Power, and **coming on the clouds of heaven**."
 - (a) Jesus is being tried before Caiaphas the priest, and He tells him that he will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.

- (b) This has to have happened in Caiaphas' time; therefore, it has to refer to the coming of the kingdom (the church; See Matthew 16:16-18 and Colossians 1:13) on the Day of Pentecost.
- (3) Look at the words, which describe Daniel's vision about what would happen during the time of the fourth kingdom (Roman Empire); "...And behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom. That all people, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed."
- (a.) What event occurred in the fourth kingdom when Jesus received His kingdom?
- (b.) This has to refer to the establishment of His church when they saw it come with power.
- c. The term angels in apocalyptic language (with Old Testament parallels) was often used to mean earthly messengers or preachers, particularly those who were charged with preaching the gospel and "gathering in the elect." (See Matt. 11:10; Luke 7:24, 27; 9:52; Mark 1:2; James 2:25; Rev. 2:1, the words "messenger" and "angel" are taken from the same Greek word *angelos*).
- 2. To understand the meaning of New Testament apocalyptic language, the Bible student must first look and see how it is used in the Old Testament.

D. The Parable:

- 1. You can know when a tree is about ready to give its fruit; when it puts forth tender branches and leaves. In addition this tells you that summer is near. (Matt. 32-34).
- 2. This parable and the preceding apocalyptic language are signs of nearness, at hand. They are warnings to flee the city before its destruction.
- 3. If these references were to the literal Second Coming of Christ then these signs would appear too late to be helpful. The coming would already be past instead of being "nigh" as in the parable of the fig tree.

III. The End of the World:

- A. Some Contrasts exists between the two parts of Matthew 24.
 - 1. Some have already been noted (see I.B.2.).

2. Also the word "days" is used to describe the tribulation associated with the destruction of Jerusalem (vs. 19, 22, 29); BUT in the Second Coming (24:36; 25:46) the singular "day" is used to refer to that event (24:36, 42, 44, 50; 25:13).
 3. Jesus was very specific about the destruction of Jerusalem, but acknowledged his own lack of knowledge of the time of his Second Coming (v. 36).
- B. Jesus taught the suddenness of the Second Coming (vs. 43-44).
1. This same picture is given in I Thess. 5:1-3 and II Peter 3:10.
(He will come as a thief in the night)
 2. He continues in Matthew 25--parable of ten virgins, parable of the talents, which speaks of being prepared for the Second Coming, and concludes with the portrayal of the last judgment.

CONCLUSION:

W A T C H !

BE READY!

"For in an hour that you think not the Son of man will come... "

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS THE CHRIST

Matthew 28; 1 Corinthians 15

Introduction:

1. There were those at Corinth who denied the bodily resurrection of Christ and therefore the bodily resurrection of all.
2. Greek philosophy believed that all physical matter was evil.
 - a. This gave the Greeks a problem of accepting Christ as God living in the flesh (John 1:1-14).
 - b. This also gave the Greeks a problem in believing in the resurrection of Christ's body and the general resurrection of all bodies (Acts 17:32).
3. Paul lays out an argument of proof based on scripture, eyewitnesses, and his being an authorized apostle inspired of God.

Discussion: 1 Corinthians 15

I. The Dead Will Be Raised (1-34).

- A. The resurrection of Christ proves it (1-11).
 1. The scriptures foretold it (1-4).
 2. Eyewitnesses attested to it (5-11).
- B. To deny the resurrection is absurd (12-34).
 1. If the dead rise not, it would mean Christ did not (13).
 2. It would follow that preaching Christ is useless (14).
 3. It would mean our faith is worthless (14)
 4. It would mean that the apostles were liars (15).
 5. It would deny all possibility of salvation from sin (16-17).
 6. It would mean that the righteous dead were lost (18).
 7. It would mean all believers in Christ were to be pitied (19).
 8. It would mean that even the rite of baptism for the dead, as practiced by the heathen, was absurd (29).
 9. It would mean that sufferings and privations of the apostles were vain and useless (31-34).

- C. Paul gives an illustration of the reasonableness of the doctrine of the resurrection (introduced parenthetically, as is often found in Paul's writings) (20-28).
 - 1. Christ has been raised up (20).
 - 2. As death came to all through one person (Adam), it is fitting that the resurrection should come through one (21-22).
 - 3. The order of the resurrection is given (23-28).

II. The Nature of the Raised Bodies Is Described (35-41).

- A. It is like grain that is planted (36-38)
- B. It is like different kinds of flesh (39).
- C. It is like different kinds of celestial bodies (40-41).
- D. It is described as:
 - 1. Incorruptible (42)
 - 2. Glorious (43)
 - 3. Powerful (43)
 - 4. A spiritual body (44)
 - 5. Like the risen body of Christ (45-50).

III. Those Who Shall Remain Alive Until the Second Coming of Christ Are Described (55-57).

- A. They will be changed in an instant (55).
- B. They will participate in the resurrection just like the others (56-57).

IV. The Practical Application of the Doctrine of the Resurrection Is Laid Out (55-58).

- A. It places the Christian in a position of strength, the great victory already having been won (55-57).
- B. All of the Christian's energies should be devoted fully to the service of God, being assured that his labor is not in vain ("in the Lord" (58).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. The resurrection of Christ's body makes it possible for the resurrection of our body.

2. Christians should have no fear of death.
3. Christ gives the victory, because he was victorious over death.

SATANOLOGY

A Study of Satan

Introduction:

1. Without any explanation we are introduced to Satan in Genesis 3.
2. A number of questions arise concerning him;
 - a. What is the origin, position, and power of Satan?
 - b. What is the explanation for Satan's rebellion?
 - c. Why did God allow it?
 - d. What is his future?
3. The Christian should know his/her enemy well in order to fight against him and win through Christ.
4. A number of names and descriptions are applied to Satan:

Satan, “**adversary**, to oppose, to lie in wait,” (Rev. 12:9; 20:2); *Abaddon*, “the **destroyer**,” (Rev. 9:11); *Apollyon*, “the **accuser** of our brethren,” (Rev. 12:10); “the adversary,” (1 Peter 5:8); *Beelzebub*, “**lord of the flies**,” (Matt. 12:24); *Belial*, “**worthless and lawless**,” (2 Cor. 6:15); “the **deceiver** of the whole world,” (Rev. 12:9); “the great **dragon**,” (Rev. 12:9); “an **enemy**,” (Matt. 12:24); “the **evil one**,” (Matt. 13:19, 38); “the father of lies,” (John 8:44); “the **god** of this world,” (2 Cor 4:4); “a **liar**,” (John 8:44); “the **prince** of the power of the air,” (Eph. 2:2); “the **ruler** of this world,” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11); “the ancient **serpent**,” (Rev. 12:9); “the **tempter**,” (Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5).

Discussion:

I. What Is The Origin, Position, and Power of Satan?

- A. The Bible states clearly that only the Godhead is eternal; that is, it always has been and always will be (Neh. 8:9; Col. 1:15-17).
- B. The Bible also states clearly that God has made all things through his Son (Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:1-2).
- C. We can conclude therefore that Satan was necessarily of God's order and power of creation.

1. Satan, therefore, has no power to seriously challenge the power of Jehovah.
 2. God is omnipotent, but Satan isn't.
- D. The natural question which arises from this is, "Did not God create evil or make Satan?"
1. The one answer to this question is emphatically, "No!"
 - a. God is not tempted with evil nor does he tempt anyone with evil (James 1:13, 14).
 - b. God cannot even look on iniquity because his eyes are pure (Hab. 1:12).
 - c. God is light and in him is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5).
 - d. One purpose of God sending forth his Son is to destroy the works of Satan (1 John 3:8).
 2. We can be assured that God did not make Satan or cause him to be the evil he is today.
 3. There are verses in the Bible which state that God created evil (Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6), but the word "evil" in these verses is referring to afflictions and punishments, not immoral deeds (Job 2:10; Prov. 22:3).

II. What Is the Explanation for Satan's Origin and the Prevalence of Sin?

- A. The answer lies in God's creation of a host of angels in heaven (Eph. 3:14-15).
1. The scriptures teach that when God made angels he gave them power and organization; cherubim, seraphim, arch angel, etc. (Col. 1:15-17).
 2. Angels were created before the world was made (Job 38:4-7)
 3. The scriptures teach that some angels rebelled and were cast out of heaven because they did not keep their proper place of authority and habitation (Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4).
 4. 1 Timothy 3:6 indicates that Satan fell because of pride.
 5. A major conclusion here is that angels were created with free moral choice and some chose to rebel against Jehovah, God.
 - a. Satan must have been an angel created with great power but because of pride rebelled against God and is seen as one falling from heaven.

- b. Satan must not have kept his proper level of authority (principalities, domain), (Jude 5).
- B. The purpose of angels was to serve God and do His will; therefore, they were under law (Psalm 103:21).
 1. Angels must have had a trial period just as we are undergoing trials to test our love and desire to follow God and His righteousness.
 2. Lucifer's fall and that of the angels was great indeed since they were not housed in animal life and did not have one to tempt them with sin.
 - a. Lucifer was puffed up as a result of pride and selfishness (1 Tim. 3:6: Jude 6).
 - b. Lucifer wanted the power, place, and rule of God.
- C. Perhaps one of the best descriptions given of Satan is found in Isaiah 14:12-14 and Ezekiel 28:2-17 where the king of Babylon and the king of Tyre are represented by the personification of Satan.
 1. One can know that this is personification because all of these statements could not be literally true of these two earthly kings.
 2. Notice the description found in Ezekiel 28:2-17:
 - a. *Your heart is lifted up...you have said that you are God and sit in the seat of God...full of wisdom and perfect in beauty...*
 - b. *You were in the Eden, the garden of God...You were the anointed cherub...*
 - c. *You were on the holy mountain of God...You have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire...*
 - d. *You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created...until unrighteousness was found in you...*
 - e. *Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty...You have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness....*

NOTE: The king of Tyre personified the spirit of Satan (Rev. 9:1).
 3. Notice the statements in Isaiah 14:12-14:
 - a. *How you have fallen from heaven, O day star (Lucifer), son of the morning...*
 - b. *How you are cut down to the ground, that did lay low the nations...*
 - c. *You said in your heart 'I will ascend into heaven...I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...I will sit upon the mount of the congregation...*

- d. *I will ascend above the highest clouds...I will be like the Most High...*
- e. *Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit....*

NOTE: These words demonstrate the pride of the king as it was similar to the pride of Satan. As Satan fell, so shall Babylon.

III. Why Did God Allow Sin To Enter Heaven?

- A. God created angels in his own image, and they are denoted as his off-spring with the term “sons of God.” (Job 38:47)
- B. Angels were created to serve God as intelligent free moral agents.
 - 1. Angels could not be holy without their choosing to be holy and full of righteousness.
 - 2. It was by means of intellect and free choice that sin entered heaven (Jude 6: 2 Peter 2:4).
 - 3. The same free choice between good and evil also enabled the good angels to give glory to God and dedication to the principles of righteousness.
 - 4. To see God one must choose to be pure in heart (Matt. 5:8).
- C. God will not destroy Satan or the rebellious angels because he bestowed upon them an eternal nature, but they will be punished eternally just as the spirits of evil men will be punished (Rev. 20:10; 14:10-11).

IV. What About Satan’s Power and Future?

- A. Satan and his angels are finite creatures.
 - 1. Satan has great knowledge, power, and circulation, but he is not omniscient, omnipotent, or omnipresent (Luke 13:15-16; Acts 10:38; Job 1:6-7).
 - 2. Since Satan is a created being his powers are limited but God cannot go against the principle of free moral agency of Satan to exercise his powers until the great Day of Judgment (Job 1:6-10; Luke 22:31-34; Rev. 12:10; 1 Pet. 5:8).
 - 3. Our war is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, powers of darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places; therefore, we need to put on the whole armor of God so that we can defend ourselves against Satan (Eph. 6:12-18).

- B. Though Satan is powerful and is our accuser (Rev. 12:10) we have an Advocate, Jesus Christ, who pleads for us (Luke 22:31-34; 1 John 2:1).
- C. Every Christian needs to be watchful and vigilant (1 Peter 5:8).
- D. The Christian can and must resist Satan (James 4:7).
- E. Satan and his angels will always exist, but they eventually will be cast in a lake of fire forever and ever.

CONCLUSION:

1. Satan was once an angel with great power but because of his pride and his desire to sit on the throne of God he rebelled against God and sinned.
2. Satan was the original sinner and therefore has practiced sin longer than any other.
3. Because of his power and free moral agency he and some of his angels are allowed to go to and fro influencing others to rebel against God (Job 1-2; 1 Kings 22:19-23; 1 Peter 5:8).
4. He tempts men to sin (Matt. 4:1).
5. He lays snares for men (2 Tim. 2:26).
6. He takes the word of God out of the hearts of men (Matt. 13:9).
7. He puts wicked purposes into the hearts of men (Eph. 4:27).
8. He blinds men to the gospel (2 Cor. 4:4).
9. He harasses righteous men (2 Cor. 12:7).
10. He accuses men before God (Rev. 12:10).
11. He sows tares (Matt. 13:38-39).
12. He hinders God's servants (1 Thess. 2:18).
13. He holds the world under his evil influence (1 John 5:19).

DEMONS: FACT OR FICTION?

Charles R. Williams

The following articles appeared in the *News Examiner* 01-29-03 through 03-07-03:

DEMONS: FACT OR FICTION? #1

Lately, there has been a good deal of discussion through the media regarding the subject of demons. There was a television special about demon possession just a few weeks ago. A report from the highly respected Reuters News agency claims that **the Pope personally practiced several “exorcisms”** recently on persons who claimed to have been possessed with demons. **Several important questions arise;** (1) Are demons real, (2) Who were they, (3) Do they possess people today, (4) Are there those who can cast out demons today?

There are ninety-eight references in the Bible about demons; so, there is no doubt that the Bible speaks of demons and demon possession as real. There are at least **five major views** on what demons were in the Bible: (1) Departed spirits of wicked men, (2) fallen angels, (3) a race that existed and fell before Adam was created, (4) the off-spring of angels who married human women, and (5) simply false superstitions which were in reality accommodative language describing physical diseases and mental illnesses.

Let's begin with the last one that says they were false superstitions. This belief says that demons as individual beings **never have existed**, but were simply a way that superstitious people used to explain certain extreme physical and mental diseases such as epilepsy and palsy. There are **several problems with this view**: (1) The scriptures list “demon possession” separately from other physical and mental diseases. Notice Matthew 4:24; “...and they brought to him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them...” Demon possession was recognized by the first century writers as a problem **distinctly different from physical and mental disorders**. (2) It is also observed that demons were recognized as **spiritual beings who often spoke on their own**. Diseases are not individual beings and they don't speak, “And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of God,’” Luke 4:41.

The view that demons are the **spirits of a race that existed before the time of Adam and Eve** has little support. Those who hold this view say that Genesis 1:1 states that the heavens and earth were completely made and inhabited as God intended, but something happened and it became “without form and void;” thus, God had to ‘start over’ and redo the earth (Genesis 1:2-31). The problem with this view is that the verse does not say that what God originally made became void. It says, “The earth **was** without form, and void...” Genesis 1:2-31 simply goes back and gives details on the creation process of God. Nowhere in the Bible is there made mention of a race of beings before the creation of Adam except for angels.

Charles R. Williams

DEMONS FACT OF FICTION? #2

Ever since William Blatty wrote his novel, *The Exorcist* in 1971, there has been a heightened interest in Demonology. The book was made into a movie in 1973 which resulted in the subject of demon possession becoming **a popular subject**. Before then the subject was seldom discussed. It was basically relegated to the category of “ancient myths.” Because of the popularity of the novel and especially the movie, other scripts with demonic themes have appeared on the scene; *Amityville House*, *Rosemary’s Baby*, *Omen I*, *Omen II*, and of course *The Exorcist II*.

One noted author, who writes about popular trends in America, noted that the next **fashionable curiosity** to arrive on the scene has been the explosion of a curiosity about angels. A few years ago you would have been hard-pressed to find a book on angels. Now you can find whole sections dedicated to the subject. You will find my articles on angels on our church web site.

But who or what are demons? Can we be possessed by them? We noted in the first article that there are **five major views** on what demons are. In a process of elimination by a study of the scriptures we concluded that **demons were real personalities**. (1) They were not seen by Jesus or the New Testament writers as an explanation for mental illnesses or diseases (Mat. 4:24). (2) They were not the spirits of a race that existed before the creation

of Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:1-31). (3) They were not the result of angels marrying female humans; for, Jesus said that angels do not marry or have sex (Mk. 12:25). Angels were created as a whole race. **They do not produce baby angels** among themselves much less have physical relations with humans.

The fourth theory is that demons are **fallen angel spirits**. This view, however, has some difficulties. In order for the physical eye to see them, angels have appeared as men, horses, flaming chariots, creatures with wings, etc. (Gen. 18), but the Bible never says they entered into or possessed human beings. Angels did not require a body nor did they have any reason to desire a body. **Demons, however, wanted human bodies** and were often found among tombstones. Besides, Peter and Jude point out that the fallen angels are being held in “chains” in the unseen world reserved for the Judgment Day (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).

The fifth possibility is that demons are the **departed spirits of wicked men**. This is how the ancient writers such as Josephus, Philo, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, Ignatius, and others viewed them. Even pagan authors described them thusly. Did demons, however, ever have bodies? Notice Jesus’ statement to Peter after His resurrection, “Handle me and see, for I am not a disembodied spirit,” Luke 24:39. Demons knew definitely who Jesus was. They pleaded not to be cast back into the abyss. They had no choice but to obey Christ and confess that He was the Christ.

Charles R. Williams

DEMONS: FACT OR FICTION? #3

The first two articles in this series examined the five major theories about the identification of demons. The scriptures identify demons as real and evil spirit beings (Matthew 4:24; Luke 4:40-41). It was concluded that the greatest evidence both biblical and extrabiblical points to their identification as **the spirits of dead evil men**, who were allowed to possess the bodies of a few human beings on earth. The final question is, “Are demons allowed to possess the bodies of humans today?”

All the reliable information I know about demons is revealed in scripture by men, who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the truth, especially about a realm that cannot

be seen without the aid of God's revelation (2 Peter 1:19-21). Some people have the idea that demon possession has been around at least since the beginning of the human race. The fact is there are but five references in the Old Testament about demons, and they refer to false gods which are not real in the first place. In addition there is **not one single record of demon possession in the Old Testament**. It does, however, contain a prophecy that when Jesus comes and builds his church he would "cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land," Zechariah 13:1-2. Jesus has come and he has built his church.

Look at the facts. There is not one single reference in the Old Testament about humans being possessed by demons or the casting out of demons for those thousands of years. However, from the time Jesus began his ministry until his death, a span of about three years, there were **sixty-two references written** about demon possession and the casting out of demons. After Jesus built his church, we find **only five references** to demon possession in the New Testament. Jesus realized there would be those who would still be possessed with demons after his death; thus, he promised some of them would be given a gift to cast out demons (Mark 16:17-18).

After the book of Acts was written, there is no specific mention of demon possession or the gift of casting out demons. The book of Acts records the first thirty years of the church. The total span of time for demon possession was about thirty-three years.

What was the purpose of God's allowing humans to be possessed at that particular time? Jesus worked miracles **to prove that he was the Son of God** (Matthew 11:2-6; John 20:30-31). These miracles confirmed his claim and proved his power over nature, sickness, diseases, death and evil spirits. Jesus left behind temporary gifts (Ephesians 4:8-15; 1 Corinthians 13:8-13) for the purpose of **confirming the word** being preached by the apostles and prophets in the first century; that it was from God and not from the minds of men (Mark 16:17-18; Hebrews 2:3-4). When the word of God was completed and confirmed there was no further need for these gifts of miracles, including the casting out of demons. When the 'evil spirit passed out of the land' there was no need for the casting out of demons.

Charles R. Williams

DEMONS: FACT OR FICTION? #4

There was little interest in the subject of “exorcism” until the book and movie *The Exorcist* were circulated and thus popularized. After that, the claims of demon possession exploded. These and other media productions have had a great deal of influence on how the public at large views demons and exorcism. However, whatever views or portrayals there are about demons, demon possession, and exorcism, **they must be tried and tested by the standard of truth.** In all my articles, including this series, I have appealed to only one standard of truth, the revelation of scripture. Who better knows about the unseen world than God, be it good (angels) or bad (demons)?

The modern form of exorcism (casting out of demons) is derived principally from the *Rituale Romanum*, dated about A.D. 1620. The ceremony is a combination of prayers and scripture readings designed to subjugate the evil spirit and to force it to depart from the victim. The **readings and the prayers are repeated many times** while calling upon a vast pantheon of “sacred” names. After the sermonic portion is concluded there are more prayers uttered for the possessed person and for the protection of the exorcist. All of this is repeated until the desired results are obtained. It is described as a long and exhausting ritual (See R. H. Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*).

Did Jesus or the apostles ever perform a ritual such as that described above? Read for yourself; “When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits **with a word**, and healed all who were sick,” Matthew 8:16; “But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be quiet, and come out of him!’ And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him,” Mark 1:25; “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And he came out that very hour,” Acts 16:18. These are similar to all sixty-two references on demons in the Bible.

What is the difference between what Jesus and the apostles did and the so-called exorcisms of today? If demons can possess people today, then why is it necessary to have such a “long and exhausting ritual?” Are the demons of today stronger and the power of God weaker? God forbid! **It is about authority.** After Jesus cast out demons with few words, notice the crowd’s response, “Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among

themselves, saying, ‘What is this...For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him,’” Mark 1:27.

It is also about whether or not God still allows people to be possessed by demons. As I wrote in the last article, I believe that **God has kept His promise** in confirming Jesus as the Son of God and scripture as the word of God through signs, wonders, and miracles; and afterwards removed the unclean spirit from the land (Zechariah 13:1-2; Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4). **Christ has been victorious over Satan.** He gives the same victory to Christians. “If God is for us, who can be against us...” (Romans 8:31-39).

Charles R. Williams

HELPFUL REFERENCES:

Matthew 4:24
Luke 4:40-41
Matthew 9:32
Matthew 12:22
Mark 16:15-20
Mark 1:23-24
Mark 5:7-8
Luke 8:31
1 Timothy 4:1
Matthew 8:28-34
Matthew 12:24
Luke 10:17-18
Colossians 2:14-15
1 John 3:8
Ephesians 4:7-15
and other references noted in the articles.

Ariel View of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem

