

# “EMMANUEL”

The Mystery that is  
Jesus Christ,

The Promised Messiah



(Unedited)  
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## JESUS' DIVINITY

“In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. He made all things, and without him nothing was made that was created.

In him was life, and the life was the light. And the light shined in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.<sup>1</sup>

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness to bear witness of the Light; that all people through him might believe. John was not the true Light, but was sent to bear witness of the Light. This is the true Light, which lights every person born into the world.

The Light was in the world, He made the world, and the world didn't recognize him. He came unto his own people, and his own rejected him as the Christ. But to those who receive him, to them he gave the power to become the children of God. Even to those that believe on his name, JESUS!

Not born of blood, nor the will of the flesh, neither the will of man, but of God. Then the Word was made flesh and came to live among men, (and we saw his glory, the glory of being the only begotten of the Father,) full of love and truth.

John bore witness of him, saying, “He that comes after me is preferred, because he was before me.” And of his fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.

For the law was given through Moses, but the gospel built upon the law through grace and truth would come by Jesus the Christ. No man has seen God at any time, except for the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father. He has declared JESUS!”

### **John 1:1–18.**

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:3-5.

## 6.

# Abraham and His Nephew Lot

Nearly a millennia after the Great Flood, wickedness again flourished on a greatly populated earth, as the memory of the foiled attempt of the Tower of Babel had faded into history. *Terah*, a descendant eight generations from Shem, had three sons, *Abram*, Nahor, and Haran, who had a son named Lot. But Haran died before his father in the city of Ur of the Chaldees in ancient Babylon. So Abram and Nahor planned to leave Ur. Nahor married his niece Milcha, daughter of Haran. Abram married his half-sister *Sarai*, but she was unable to have children. (see Gen. 11:27-30) Terah in his old age decided to leave the city of Ur. He began this historic journey with his entire household and flocks. From the city of Ur, Terah's nomadic band traveled northwest up the Euphrates River, 150 miles past the city of Babylon. Two hundred and fifty miles farther Terah crossed over the Euphrates River and turned northward. Two hundred more miles brought Terah's family to Haran in Paddan-aran in Mesopotamia.

Traveling about ten miles a day, they pitched their tents toward evening. Their flocks grazed and were watered for the night. After a few months, Terah had arrived at Haran, and here the family would dwell. Afterwards Terah died at Haran at age 205.

At Haran, Abram and Nahor prospered as their flocks and servants increased. Nahor's family also increased, and he eventually had 12 sons. But Sarai remained childless. One day the LORD God spoke to Abram, now age 75, to leave his father's household at Haran for a special Promised Land. So Abram took Sarai, Lot, his brother's son, and all their servants and flocks. This band left Haran and traveled southward.

Four hundred miles later they reached the borders of Canaan. Abram journeyed through the land until he came to Sichern [Shechem] in the plain of Moreh later called Samaria. The Canaanites, descendants of Canaan,<sup>3</sup> a son of Ham, occupied this land and the Mediterranean seacoast. The Canaanites were pagan worshipers. At Shechem, located in the plain of Moreh near mount Ephraim, the LORD God appeared to Abram and told him this land would be his inheritance. Abram built an altar to the LORD God at Shechem, later called Shechem.

Abram then traveled 20 miles to the mountains in the south near Bethel and pitched his tents beyond Bethel and before Hai or Ai three miles to the southeast. Here Abram built another altar to the LORD God. (Here Abram and Lot found plenty of grazing for their flocks.) Afterwards Abram journeyed southward some 58 miles toward Beer-sheba. But Abram encountered a famine in this land and turned westward 32 miles toward the Mediterranean coastline and then another 150 miles to the borders of Egypt. Within the fertile Nile delta, the Egyptians spied Abram's nomadic band. Seeing Sarai's beauty, the Egyptians took her for their Pharaoh. Fearing for his life, Abram insisted that Sarai was merely his sister. Delighted with Sarai's beauty, Pharaoh gave Abram sheep, oxen, and donkeys along with servants, both male and female donkeys, and camels. But the LORD God sent great plagues upon Pharaoh and his household because of Sarai's captivity. Angered at Abram for lying about his wife, Pharaoh released Sarai and sent Abram's band out of the country. (see Gen. 12:1-20)

Abram's caravan left Egypt and headed for Beer-sheba. He was now extremely rich in cattle, silver, and gold. Over 250 miles later, Abram again pitched his tents beyond Bethel. Here the herdsmen of Abram and Lot fought because their flocks were too large to graze together. Because the Canaanite and Perizzite dwelt in this land, only one other group could remain. So Abram gave Lot the choice, and he selected the lush, well-watered lower plains southeast of the Jordan. Lot, with his flocks and herds, left Abram's company at Bethel and descended eastward 24 miles into the Jordan Valley. At this time, the LORD God renewed his promise to Abram and gave him the seed of the Promised Land of Canaan forever. (Gen. 13:14-18) Meanwhile, turning southward, Lot's band journeyed 40 miles adjacent the eastern shoreline of the Dead Sea until they came upon the southeastern plains of Moab. Abram remained in the upper portion of the land of Canaan.

The southeastern plains of Moab held two great cities, Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot pitched his tents near these urban centers. But the men of Sodom were wicked and exceedingly great sinners before the Lord. Four kings then conquered Sodom and took the citizens captive. Lot and his family were among the captured. When a survivor from the city told Abram, he armed his fighting servants, numbering 318 strong, and pursued these kings into the land of Dan 93 miles north of Bethel. Abram and his men attacked at night, slaying many and rescuing Lot. Abram's attacking force then pursued these kings' fleeing men some 40 miles to Hobah, west of Damascus. (see Gen. 14:13-15)

[*Author's Reflections:* Recent archaeologist findings have uncovered two ancient cities that were destroyed by fire estimated around 2,350 B.C., which could be the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. These cities are called Bab edh-Dhra located on the Jordanian side on the southeastern peninsula of the Dead Sea. Seven miles far south, stands the city of Numerira.]

Lot returned to the plains of Moah and dwelt in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is surmised that the forces of the four kings destroyed Lot's tent village because he and his Hebrew band now lived in Sodom. As a result, Lot married a Sodomite who either became a stepmother to his two very young daughters, or bore him two daughters.

But the Hebrews at Sodom stopped worshiping the LORD God over the next 20 years and became Sodomites. As the sinful lust of the people continued, Lot remained faithful.

Meanwhile Abram had lived ten years in Canaan, but Sarai was still childless. So Sarai gave Hagar, her handmaid, to be a surrogate who would bear Abram's child. Abram took Hagar the Egyptian to be his second wife, and she soon conceived. (see Gen. 16:1-3) Feeling Sarai's bitter hatred, Hagar fled in fear to the south toward Egypt. Some 140 miles away in the wilderness of Shur, an angel found Hagar by a stream of water and told her to return and be submissive to Sarai. A week later Hagar arrived back at Abram's tent village. Several months later, Hagar endured the pains of labor and brought forth a son. She named him Ishmael as the angel in the wilderness had instructed. Abram was now 86 years old.

When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD God appeared before him. The patriarch fell on his face and the LORD God renewed His covenant, instructing Abram to be blameless and walk before Him, which he did. Abram's seed would indeed be multiplied greatly. Years later, the LORD God changed Abram's name to *Abraham* and instituted circumcision to seal the covenant, which Abraham and his entire household of males performed. The LORD God also changed Sarai's name to *Sarah*. When Abraham was 99 years old and Ishmael was 13, the flesh of their foreskin was circumcised. (see Gen. 17:9-14)

Meanwhile, as Abraham later sat in the doorway of his tent during the heat of the day, (the "*Mystery that is Jesus Christ*" once again occurred in what becomes the first recorded representation of the Holy Trinity.) Here the Lord Jesus' physical form stepped out of the translucent spiritual form of the Almighty God in heaven, and along with two angels appeared in the distance. [In the divinity gospel narrative of John, Jesus Christ speaks of this very encounter with the patriarch (see John 8:56.)] As the Lord [Jesus in the Oneness of the Almighty God] appeared to Abraham on the plains of Mamre, as he sat in the doorway of his tent. Abraham ran out to meet them, bowing before them saying, "My Lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, pass not away, I pray you from your servant. Let a little water, I pray you be fetched, and wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree. And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort your hearts. After that you can move on. For this is why you have come to your servant." And they said, So do, as your have said." (**Genesis 18: 3-5**)

So Abraham rested into the tent and told Sarah what was need to be prepared. As a result, Abraham served a great feast of meat, bread cakes, butter, and milk as the did eat. And they said to Abraham, "Where is Sarah your wife?" and he said, "Look, in the tent." and he [the Lord Jesus] said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life [Spring], and look, Sarah you wife shall have a son." (**vv. 9,10**) When Sarah heard this for the door of the tent from behind him. Now both Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken int age, as she had ceased in her monthly woman cycle. As a result, Sarah laughed within herself saying, "After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? (v.12) So the Lord [Jesus} said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying 'Shall I of a surety bear a child when I am old? Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return to you, according to the time of life, and shall have a son.'" (**vv.13,14**) When Sarah denied, saying, "I laughed not" for she was afraid, the Lord said, "No. But you did laugh." (**v.15**) So in the Spring, Sarah would have a son and call his name Isaac, "the one who laughs."

The men rose and left Bethel, walking toward Sodom as Abraham accompanied them and led the way. Then the Lord, speaking to the two angel said, “Will I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord. To do justice and judgement that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoke of him.” And the Lord [Jesus] said to Abraham, “Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous. I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of their evil, which is come to me, and if not, I will know the truth.” (v.17-21)

But as the two men [angels] turned away from them and continued towards Sodom, Abraham drew near, and began bartering with the Oneness of Almighty God saying, “Will you also destroy the righteous with the wicked? “Suppose perhaps if there be fifty righteous within the city, will you also destroy the fifty righteous that are there? Continuing his bold interruption before the Almighty God’s presence, Abraham stated, “This should be far from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked. Why would you treat the righteous with the wicked, remove this far from you. ‘Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?’” The LORD said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.” But Abraham replied saying, “Look now, I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord, being merely but dust and ashes, ‘Yet suppose perhaps forty-five righteous, will you destroy all the city for the lack of five?’” The LORD replied, “If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it.” But Abraham spoke again asking, “Suppose if perhaps forty be found there?” And the LORD answered, “I will not destroy it for forty righteous. But Abraham answered, “Please let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak. ‘Suppose if perhaps thirty be found there,’” And the Lord answered, “I will not destroy it for thirty.” Abraham answered, “Now look, I have taken upon me to speak to the LORD, “Suppose if perhaps twenty be found there,” and the Lord replied, “I will not destroy it for twenty righteous. “Oh let not the LORD be angry and I will speak yet one more time, “Suppose if perhaps, ten shall be found there?” and the Lord gave his final answer, “I will not destroy the city for ten righteous souls.” (vv.23-33) Finish speaking with Abraham, the LORD [Jesus] went on his way, and Abraham returned to his tent village. [This encounter between Abraham and the Lord would be spoken of in the Gospel of John,<sup>2</sup> where Jesus the Messiah was nearly stoned for recalling the event.]

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<sup>2</sup> John 8:52-58.

As the two angels came upon Sodom at evening, Lot sat in the gateway. Seeing them, Lot rose up and went out to meet them, bowing before these angelic figures. Lot escorted them to his home, but before they could retire for the night, the men of Sodom surrounded the house. These sinners, young and old, desired the two strangers. When Lot went outside and offered his two virgin daughters instead, the Sodomites refused these women and threatened his life. They lusted for the two strangers! So as Lot was pulled back inside, the angels smote the Sodomites with blindness, making them unable to find the door.

Meanwhile [the Lord Jesus] had arrived. Twenty-four years after Lot's rescue and return to the plain cities, the peoples' sins within Sodom and Gomorrah had grown completely out of control. [The Lord Jesus] went throughout the city and investigated the lifestyles at Sodom and Gomorrah. Even the darkness of night couldn't hide the peoples' actions, which were beyond redemption. As twilight neared, and Lot delayed and couldn't convince his two son-in-laws to leave, and the angels had to lead him, his wife and two daughters by the hands out of the city. "Escape for you life. Look not behind you, neither stay you in all the plains. Escape to the mountain unless you will be consumed," the angels said. (**Genesis 19:17**) So Lot, his two daughters, and wife fled into the mountain at daybreak. As the sun had fully risen, [the Lord Jesus] caused fire and brimstone to rain down from heaven, completely destroying these cities. As the roar of this massive destruction occurred, Lot's disobedient wife, a Sodomite, looked back upon the desolation and was turned into a pillar of salt. From a great distance, Abraham viewed this awesome destruction as the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. The area had become a wasteland. Even the plentiful grasslands had been consumed. (see Gen.19:1-28)

An outpost in the nearest city of Zoar located just two miles south of the Dead Sea, Lot feared for his life. Because of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, he and his two daughters were exiled and sought refuge in a mountain cave. Lot's daughters realized no man would ever consider them for a wife. Then on consecutive nights, the daughters made Lot drunk, and both women became pregnant by their unknowing father. Nine months later, the oldest daughter had a son named Moab whose descendants were the Moabites. Likewise the younger daughter had a son named Benammi whose descendants became the Ammonites. (see Gen. 19:30-38)

*Part I*

*A New*

*Testament*

*Covenant*

*(The Great Awakening)*

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will  
make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with  
the house of Judah...”

***Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrew 8:8-11, KJV***

# 4. God Chooses Mary (The Key of David)

[Luke 1:26-38]

**I**n Elisabeth's sixth month of pregnancy, the angel Gabriel came down from heaven to the village of Nazareth. He sought a young virgin named Mary engaged to a man named Joseph. Her husband to be belonged to the lineage or house of King David from Bethlehem. Finding her, he said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women." (**Luke 1:28**)



His greeting troubled and confused Mary. Gabriel told her, "Do not be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. You will conceive and bear a son, whom you shall call **JESUS**. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of King David to reign over the house of Jacob forever.<sup>27</sup> His kingdom will have no end." (**Luke 1:30-33**)

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<sup>27</sup> Genesis 49:10, Isaiah 9:6-7, Jeremiah 23:5.

[*Author's Reflections*: Contrary to popular belief, Jesus' kingdom to come will not be in heaven, but as the "Key of David," His kingdom will be here on earth whose capital city will be Jerusalem.<sup>28</sup> Therefore Jesus Christ will reign from the actual throne of king David in the newly formed Promised Land over his followers forever.

As part of fulfilling the "Key of David," the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Hosea all prophesied that a resurrected King David would be one of the individuals that would indeed sit with the Lord Jesus upon His earthly throne in the regeneration of the planet.<sup>29</sup> (During this Millennium of peace of the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection, the saints of old and God's elect of the Little Flock, true believers, (both Jew and Gentiles,) who remain loyal solely to the gospel teachings of Jesus Christ will share in His kingdom.)]

"How can this be", Mary asked, "since I am a virgin?" Gabriel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy seed born will be called the Son of God. Also, your elderly cousin, Elisabeth, has conceived a son and is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."<sup>30</sup> (**Luke 1:37**)

[*Author's Reflections*: Spiritually, in the original King James version, the expression "holy thing which shall be born of thee" is not blasphemous, derogative or divisive. Here, is one the greatest mis-understood revelations of the entire holy Bible by Theologians and biblical scholars alike. The angel Gabriel's divine message merely tries to indicate to all believers that the holy seed being carried by Mary of Nazareth was not the "Holy One" (John 1:13), but a holy shell that would one day house the "Holy One," the Messiah. (Realize, the greatest man ever born of a woman, spoken by the Lord Jesus' own mouth, not about Himself, but would be identified as John the Baptist as noted in the gospel of Matthew 11:11.)]

Mary proclaimed, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to your word." (**Luke 1:38**) Finished, Gabriel ascended to heaven. Afterward, the Holy Spirit came to Mary as foretold by the prophet Isaiah,<sup>31</sup> and the power of the Most High God overshadowed her, and a holy seed was conceived. [The immaculate conception prophesied in the Old Testament had finally occurred.]

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<sup>28</sup> Revelation 3:12.

<sup>29</sup> Mark 10:39-40; Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 34:23, 37:24; Hosea 3:5.

<sup>30</sup> Jeremiah 32:17.

<sup>31</sup> Isaiah 7:14.

# 16. The Boy Jesus among the Scribes

[Luke 2:41-51]

In accordance with God the Father's mandate, the first of the three great annual biblical festivals<sup>57</sup> approached. Joseph and Mary, as they had done every year, departed from Nazareth after the Passover celebration. In 8 A.D., a twelve-year-old Jesus also went along to the Holy City. (see Luke 2:41-42)

[The lunar month on the Jewish calendar begins when the first sliver of moon becomes visible. In ancient times, the new month was determined by observation. When people observed the new moon, they would notify the Sanhedrin. When the Sanhedrin heard testimony from two independent, reliable eyewitnesses that the new moon occurred on a certain date, they would declare the "rosh chodesh," first of the month, and send out messengers to tell people when the month began.]

Four days later, Joseph's large family rounded the Mount of Olives and viewed a scene unlike any other in the ancient world. Across the Kidron Valley and set among the surrounding hills, the city of *Jerusalem*, a picture of unmatched beauty, lay before them.

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<sup>57</sup> Deuteronomy 16:16.

The gleaming, gold-embellished temple, the most sacred location in the Jewish world, dominated the view from the Mount of Olives. It stood high above the old City of David at the center of a gigantic white stone platform. To the south of the temple was the Lower City, a sea of one- and two-story limestone dwellings, buff-colored from years of sun and wind. Atop many homes were woven roof structures for coving to act as an additional dwelling place for the overflow of people during the holidays. Narrow, unpaved streets meandered among the houses and sloped downward toward the Tyropean Valley, which ran through the center of this sector. Herod had built a sport Hippodrome in this poor section near the Temple Mount.

Upon entering the city, travelers immediately noticed the oppressive dust and heat during the warm months, voices raised in anger or song, the clatter of hooves and odors of cooking food. Journeying toward the Minor Market, a rectangular area about 300 by 100 yards, visitors passed open air shops where Jerusalem's craftsmen — the city's weavers, dyers, potters, bakers, tailors, carpenters and metalworkers — sat at work. Farther along stood a colorful bazaar where merchants sold fruits, vegetables, dried fish, sacrificial animals, clothes, perfume and jewelry.

The marketplace was always crowded and busy, especially on Monday and Thursday, the main market days when citizens and visitors came there to buy goods or mementoes. Perishable goods were on sale every day. Only on Saturday, the Sabbath was the market empty and quiet.

Weary travelers could always stop to rest or refresh themselves at one of Jerusalem's many taverns or restaurants. They might select from a menu offering fresh or salted fish, fried locusts, vegetables, soup, pastry and fruit. They could drink local wine or imported beer.

The farmers of Jerusalem, like their rural cousins, went out each morning to tend their crops. Most of them worked in the rich olive groves that covered the surrounding hillsides and provided the city's only major export. Jerusalem's numerous craftsmen had long been organized into guilds and most of them worked in communal shops. The members of each guild lived in a cluster of houses in a particular section of the city, and they usually had their own synagogue. It is estimated at this time that at least 480 such structures were located within the city.

Most of Jerusalem's working class, normally estimated at 25,000, lived in the crowded, noisy precincts of the Lower City. During the Passover celebration, however, the city's population swelled to about 250,000 to 100,000. Their homes stood packed closely together.

In contrast the broad, fashionable avenues of the Upper City were laid out in an orderly grid pattern like the stately cities of Greece and Rome. This part of the Holy City was the home of rich and powerful Jewish families, such as the Sadducees, and high-ranking Roman officials. Comfortably removed from the rest of the population, they lived in spacious white marble mansions and palaces built around courtyards with formal gardens and pools.

Here the magnificent royal palace of Herod the Great was situated in the uppermost northwest corner of this sector. Directly in front stood the upper market, with its Roman style arcades along three sides and an open court for market booths in the center. There were shops for the dealers in luxury goods: the distillers of expensive oils and perfumes, the master tailors and silk merchants, the goldsmiths and silversmiths, the dealer in ivory, incense and precious stones. Household slaves bought expensive imported foods for their master's banquet tables. Not far away was the palace of the high priest.

Herod also built a theater in this section. It was a large, open-air auditorium with semicircular rows of stone seats ascending from a central stage. Wealthy Jews came there to watch the best of Greek and Roman drama. Most traditional Jews scorned this and other outgrowths of Greco-Roman culture as immoral, however.

Near the northeastern corner of the Upper City stood the old palace of the Maccabean kings, and not far away the Gazzith, the meeting building of the 70-man Sanhedrin Council, the ruling Jewish body. This spacious structure had a seating arrangement in the shape of a horseshoe, whose honored upper middle seat was reserved for the high priest.

Jerusalem had no natural water supply. In order to compensate for this, private citizens collected water. Stored in big, round pit-like receptacles that drained the run-off from the rooftops during the five-month rainy fall and winter seasons. These structures were known as "cisterns." The city eventually had a public water supply that was designed by using three subterranean aqueducts, pools and fountains. The largest of these pools was the Serpent's Pool, a defensive moat outside the Western Wall of the Upper City near the Hinnom Valley. A great reservoir network under the Temple Mount had a total capacity of 10,000,000 gallons. These reservoirs and the pools were supplied with water by rainfall and by the aqueducts.

As Joseph's party arrived, they entered Jerusalem through the Lower City and made their way through the crowded streets assembled at an appointed house. On the eve of the Passover, the males of each household purchased a young healthy lamb from the marketplace. At home, the women roasted the lamb and prepared the necessary items for the joyous feast. With nightfall, the entire household gathered to eat the Passover.

The lad Jesus and his parents sat on pillows around a low Greco-Roman style table, and everyone leaned on their left elbow. As was customary, the head of the household lifted his wine goblet and gave the traditional Passover blessing: "Blessed be to God, king of the Universe, who brings forth fruit from the vine." When each person had drunk, the host also lifted a loaf of unleavened bread and blessed it by stating, "Blessed be to you, O God, king of the Universe, who brings forth grain from the earth."

They ate the entire lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs such as chicory, bitter crest, hawkweed, sow thistle and wild lettuce. A rice and lamb stew-like broth called "sop" accompanied the meal. The unleavened bread was dipped into a large, common bowl of the sop. Then a second, third and fourth goblet of wine was consumed. During the feasting, the lad Jesus as all young boys were required by the LAW to ask the meaning of this night, and were told the words given to Moses.<sup>58</sup> The joyous festivities lasted into the night. To close out the feasting, the household sang a hymn from one of the Psalms.

At the close of the Passover and the seven days of unleavened bread, Jesus' family and relatives prepared to return home to Galilee. In the morning Joseph's party left the Lower City through the eastern gate. Jesus secretly remained at Jerusalem, as he tried to prematurely begin his ministry. (see Luke 2:43)

Crossing the Cedron brook the caravan passed the orchard grove of Gethsemane. The two-mile road rounding the Mount of Olives was blooming with olive trees. The group came upon the crossroad to Jericho. Twenty-two miles later after descending 2,300 feet into the wilderness of Judea, they reached the outskirts of Jericho, the city of palm trees. Exhausted, Joseph and Mary rested as the large group lodged for the night beneath the many palm trees.

*[Author's Reflection: Within Joseph and Mary's large group is believed to have been her sister, the mother of Zebedee's two sons James and baby John. Perhaps, even the family of Simon and Andrew were amongst the gathering along with other boys from the region of Galilee (see Matthew 20:21; Mark 10:35-40).]*

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<sup>58</sup> Exodus 13:8-10; 14-16.

In the morning, Mary and Joseph supposed that Jesus was within their Galilean caravan, but the lad Jesus could not be found! Soon, their worst fears had been realized. Jesus was not within their walking caravan. The couple frantically sought Jesus among their relatives and friends and ascended back through the wilderness of Judea then returned to Jerusalem by the afternoon. The guardians then relentlessly sought throughout the various sectors of the city for several hours but found no sign of the young Christ. Hundreds of synagogues would have to be visited. Disappointed, the couple returned to their dwelling place terrified that something had happen to Jesus. (see Luke 2: 44-45)

Meanwhile, the young Jesus probably spent his nights upon the Mount of Olives, which overlooked Jerusalem and the Temple. Alone, he could pray in total solitude to his Heavenly Father, the Almighty God. Afterwards, the trunk of an olive tree would have been used as a pillow and Jesus wrapped his cloak about his as a bedroll. No doubt, angels safeguarded the young Christ as he slept. (This very sleeping habit, Jesus would adapt later during his ministry while staying at Jerusalem.) In the morning, Jesus returned to the huge Court of the Gentiles, where he sat in on various Rabbis' lessons. (see Luke 2:46)

After three days, to their amazement and joy, they finally located Jesus within the temple grounds. They found him sitting in the middle of the doctors, master scribes were the interpreters of the sacred scrolls. Jesus both listened and asked them questions. Jesus was listening to them and asking them questions.

Mary and Joseph were astonished. Mary scolded him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." **(Luke 2:48)** "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be about My Father's business?" **(Luke 2:49)** Neither Mary nor Joseph understood this statement. Jesus had spoken of his Heavenly Father.

The family then left Jerusalem journeyed back to Galilee arriving several days later at the village of Nazareth. Mary remembered everything that was said at the temple and treasured them within her heart. At Nazareth, Jesus was once more subjected to his guardians until the beginning of his ministry, still some 18 years away. (see Luke 2:51)

## 4.

# Jesus Calls his Disciples

[Matthew 4:12-22; Mark 1:16-20; John 1:43-51]

**F**rom the wilderness, Jesus days later walked along the Jordan River some 70 miles up the Ghor Valley to the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee. Twelve miles later, Jesus came to Capernaum in the county of Galilee. Located near the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum bordered the ancestral homeland of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, two of Jacob's sons. (Zebulun was the sixth son of Leah and Naphtali the youngest of two son by Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid and concubine of Jacob.) Because he was the light of the world,<sup>66</sup> Jesus' arrival in this disease-afflicted and spiritually dark area fulfilled the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah, "The people who sat in darkness and death would see a great saving light."<sup>67</sup>  
**(Matthew 4:16)**

Jesus began his famous ministry. His first recorded message announced, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near. **Repent and believe the Gospel!**"  
**(Mark 1:15)**

Despite its abundant sickness and disease, Galilee was a beautiful and prosperous region. Its provinces boasted much agriculture because of the fertile soil and perfect weather conditions. The grassy plains were prime for growing grain and quite suitable for grazing sheep. Grapes, figs, olives, pomegranates and many other fruit grew abundantly there. [*Author's Reflections*: Yet with no real "middle class," the poor and especially children suffered from malnutrition, which was reflected in the high mortality rates among the young.]

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<sup>66</sup> Genesis 1:1-5.

<sup>67</sup> Isaiah 9:1-2.

Galilee also contained the huge crystal- blue freshwater lake of the *Sea of Galilee*, an oval pear-shaped inland lake about 13 miles long and seven to eight miles at its widest point and about 150 feet in depth. It was fed by the upper Jordan River, rainfall and springs on the northern side from and from the much smaller lake Hulah to the north. More properly called a lake, within this body of water 42 species of fish flourished and supplied a thriving fishing industry of no less than nine very populated cities such as Bethsaida, Chorazin, Capernaum, Tabgha, Gennesaret, Magdela, Tiberias, Sennabris and finally Philoteria stood on or near its western shoreline.

The rabbis of ancient times report, “Although God has created seven seas, yet He has chosen this one as His special delight.” Anyone looking upon the beauty of the blue water against the green and brown background of the mountains around the Sea of Galilee would understand that statement. This freshwater lake is the largest in Israel and among the world’s most beautiful.

From any point on the rocky shore, all other locations along the shoreline are visible. Around the sea, the hills of Galilee reach nearly 1,400 feet above sea level, and the mountains of today’s Golan Heights, then the region of Decapolis, reach more than 2,500 feet above sea level.

There are several hot mineral springs surrounding the Sea of Galilee. The largest of these is in the capital city of Tiberias, where Herod Antipas included it in his hot baths. Many of the Lord Jesus’ future recorded miracles would happen near the lake. (Apparently, when these springs and baths did not provide cures, people would sought out the Rabbi from Capernaum, who would have established a reputation of being a great healer.)

The next morning as he walked along the Sea of Galilee toward Bethsaida, the home of Philip, Jesus encountered this disciple again. “Follow me,” he commanded, and he did. It was also the city of Andrew and Simon. Jesus saw these brothers in their docked 26-foot long boat mending and cleaning their net after a night of fishing. He commanded them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (**Matthew 4:19**) The brothers immediately followed. Jesus had reclaimed his original three disciples.

As Jesus walked farther along the coastline, he also saw another pair of brothers. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also mending their nets. Jesus called, and they immediately left their father Zebedee with his hired servants. The five men followed Jesus along the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee. One hour later, they arrived at Capernaum, which would be his key city. As Jesus arrived back at Capernaum, Jesus would use Simon's modest yet spacious home as his headquarters. Simon was married and a well-established fisherman with a couple of boats. This indicated that Simon lived a very comfortable life.

Afterward, Philip journeyed to the village of Cana about 22 miles west of Capernaum through hilly country. Arriving, he found his best friend Nathanael resting beneath a fig tree. With great excitement, Philip told Nathanael, "We have found the Christ, about whom Moses in the Law and the other prophets had written about.<sup>68</sup> It is Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael asked, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" (**John 1:45-46**) A devout student of the Law, Nathanael realized, as prophesied by the prophet Micah that the Christ must come from Bethlehem.

Philip had almost traveled a day's journey and probably rested the night at Cana as he continued his oration on Jesus of Nazareth. At dawn, Nathanael was compelled to come and see. So they journeyed back to Capernaum. Within earshot, Jesus stated, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." (**John 1:47**) "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus replied, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." Realizing Jesus of Nazareth's awesome telepathic powers, Nathanael proclaimed, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (**John 1:49**)

Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that. You shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." (**John 1:50,51**)

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<sup>68</sup> Genesis 49:10; Deuteronomy 18:18; Isaiah 9:6; Jeremiah 23:5; Ezekiel 34:23; Zechariah 9:9.

## 4.

# The Samaritan Woman

[Matthew 4:12; John 4:1-42]

**A**s news spread of John the Baptist's arrest and imprisonment, the Pharisees immediately began spying on Jesus of Nazareth's movement. The Pharisees soon learned that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John. (His disciples were actually doing the baptizing.) The young self-proclaimed prophet from Galilee would now become the main focus of the Pharisees' urgent concern. When Jesus learned of this, he left Judea and began his long journey to Galilee through the dangerous region of Samaria. No Jew normally traveled through this region. (see John 4:1-3)

*Samaria* was located within the Promised Land's upper plateau, barely ten miles north of Jerusalem in the ancestral land of the second half of the tribe of Manasseh. This central hill country was bordered by the Mediterranean on the west whose upper tip is crowded by Mount Carmel, which projects into the sea. This mountain range runs slightly south 12 miles until it terminates abruptly into hills. Just north lays the great Plain of Esdraelon. Further west formed the Valley of Jezreel with Mount Gilboa on the south. A large wilderness area descending into the Ghor Valley bounded the east. The fertile soil and rainfall were perfect for cultivating fruit and especially the olive trees that covered the region. The people also cultivated vegetable gardening and wheat farming. Yet among this spacious landscape, only a few towns and villages lay close together in its center.

So Jesus and his band of disciples journeyed through the dangerous heartland of the Samaritans. Their nightly encampment was probably before the white capped limestone cliffs of the mountain range of Lebanon. In the morning, Jesus continued along the wide, hot valley floor north of the Ascent of Lebanon and viewed the low-lying hills to the east and the gradual rising heights to the west. Ten miles later, Mount Gerizim came into view. Passing under its heights, Jesus came within two miles of Sychar near the ruins of the ancient city of Shechem.

Around 720 B.C., The Assyrian army under king Shalmaneser began a three-year siege of Samaria in the ninth year of the reign of Hoshea, the nineteenth and last king of Israel, before capturing the Northern Kingdom of Israel. As captives, the ten tribes of Israel were taken to the area near the Caspian Sea in Parthia (see 2 Ki. 17:5-18). Only the poorest Israelites were left behind and king Shalmaneser had different immigrants mingle with the remaining Israelites to produce the Samaritans.

Likewise, in 457 B.C., the Persian king Artaxerxes who had conquered Babylon, allowed some 50,000 Jews under Nehemiah's leadership to return to their beloved, but destroyed Jerusalem. Then, as the Jews struggled to rebuild the walls of their holy city, the Samaritans fiercely harassed them. The bitter hatred of that time had lingered to Jesus' time. During the Jewish exodus to Babylon, the Samaritans, descendants from the displaced ten tribes of Israel, had kept the worship of Jehovah alive from Mount Gerizim in Samaria. On every Saturday, just like in Jerusalem, the Samaritans carried out the Sabbath rituals. They truly believed that they had become the chosen people of the LORD God and that the Jews no longer had the right to this claim. This bitter wound was forged nearly 500 years ago and was never mended. So the Samaritans, like the Jews, were awaiting the arrival of the Christ.

At noon, Jesus and his band of disciples reached *Jacob's Well*, which laid two miles on the outskirts of the Samaritan city of Sychar, in the shadow of Mount Gerizim. The patriarch Jacob had given this famous parcel of ground to his beloved son Joseph. Jacob had brought this site from Hamor<sup>81</sup> (John 4:5), the father of Shechem, for the sum of 100 pieces of silver. Therefore, this land had become the inheritance of the children of Joseph, who had returned from the Exodus. The well was a deep spring about nine feet in diameter and 75 feet below ground. Being early April, the water level of the well was at its peak of nearly four feet.

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<sup>81</sup> Genesis 33:19.

Upon arriving at the well, Jesus sent his disciples into the city to buy food. As he sat down by the well, a Samaritan woman approached him. She carried a large stone jug and began the difficult and timely task of drawing water, completely ignoring the Jew across from her.

After a while, Jesus broke the silence. “Will you give me a drink?” he asked. “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan. How can you ask me for a drink?” she said with surprise, because neither race had dealings with the other. Jesus replied, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”<sup>82</sup> (**John 4:10**) [*Author’s Reflections: Here the Lord Jesus, being the Son of God and member of the Godhead, He is proclaiming Himself as part of the “Salvation of Jehovah,” the “Living Water” to be shared with the entire world. Furthermore, at the Lord Jesus’ crucifixion some three years away, blood and Water, the Water of Salvation, would flow from his pierced side to fulfill the words of the prophet Isaiah (see John 19:34).*]

The woman informed the stranger, “Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us this well?” But Jesus said, “Everyone who drinks this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. The water I give him will become in him a spring of water spewing up to eternal life.” (**John 4:11-14**)

The Samaritan woman begged, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming back here to draw water.” Then Jesus said, “Go, call your husband and come back.” She replied, “I have no husband.” Jesus said, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five common-law husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.” (**John 4:15-18**)

Exposed for her acts of fornication, the woman perceived she was in the presence of a prophet. She quickly changed the subject and said, “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” Jesus replied, “Believe Me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth (Matt. 27:51),<sup>83</sup> for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (**John 4:21-24**)

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<sup>82</sup> Isaiah 12:1-6, 44:3; Jeremiah 2:13; Zechariah 13:1, 14:8.

<sup>83</sup> Jeremiah 31:31; Acts 17:24.

When the woman insisted that when the Christ [the Messiah] comes, he would reveal all things, Jesus answered, “I who speak to you am he.” (**John 4:26**) Just then the disciples returned. They marveled that their Master had talked freely with the Samaritan woman. But no one dared ask why the two were talking with each other. Realizing that she was in the presence of the Christ of Israel, the Samaritan woman left her water pot and quickly fled Jacob’s Well.

At Sychar, the woman beckoned for the entire city to come and see the Jewish man who told her all the things she had ever done. “Could this be the Christ?” she proclaimed. Curious, the entire city journeyed toward Jacob’s Well.

Meanwhile, Jesus’ disciples pleased with him saying, “Master, eat.” But Jesus said to them, “I have meat to eat that you know not of.” Then the disciples began asking one another if someone else had brought him something to eat. Then Jesus said to them, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” (**John 4:34**) Jesus continued to warn, “You should not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes harvest?’ Behold, I say to you, ‘Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.’ And he that reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit to life eternal, that both he that sows and he that reaps may rejoice together. And here is that saying true, ‘One sows, and another reaps.’<sup>84</sup> I sent you to reap that where you bestowed no labor. Other men labored, and you are entered into their labors.” (**John 4:35-38**)

Reaching Jacob’s Well, many of the Samaritans from the city of Sychar believed in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ because of the woman’s testimony. These citizens pleaded with Jesus to stay with them. Remaining in Sychar for two days, Jesus preached the gospel, and many more believed because of his words. Then the people said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said. Now we have heard him ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Christ, the Savior of the world.” (**John 4:42**)

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<sup>84</sup> Amos 9:13.

# 12.

## A Young Man with Palsy

[Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-13; Luke 5:18-26]

Some days later, Jesus entered Capernaum from a ship that had sailed across the Sea of Galilee. His arrival was immediately spread throughout the city, and many gathered within Simon's house until there was no room left. Many were forced to stand outside the open doorway as Jesus preached the Word of God.

When a man stricken with palsy, believed allowed from his previous sinful lifestyle, and lying on a bed could not enter the house. So the four men who carried him climbed the outside steps leading to the rooftop. Upon reaching the roof, the four men began to loosen the tiles. Then they attached ropes to the paralyzed man's litter and slowly lowered the cot into the middle of the room before Jesus. As he viewed their determination and faith, Jesus said to the sick man, "Take heart, son. Your sins are forgiven." (**Matthew 9:2**) Immediately, the sick man was healed.

Certain Pharisees and scribes sat within the gathering reasoned within their evil hearts, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Jesus' spirit perceived what they were thinking and said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven' or 'Get up, take your bed and walk'?" (**Luke 5:22,23**) Jesus continued to prove that "He" being the Son of God had the power to forgive sin on earth by stating "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." He said to the paralytic a second time, "I tell you, get up, take your bed and go home." (**Mark 2:10-11**)

Instantly, the healed man rose and did what Jesus had commanded, leaving the house under his own power and glorifying God. All the people now marveled at Jesus' awesome power, and they too glorified God, who had given such power to men. They were filled with fear saying, "We have seen remarkable things today." **(Luke 5:26)** They had never seen this type of miracle before.

Afterward, Jesus rose and left Simon's damaged house after honoring the mezuzah. He walked the short distance to the nearby coastline of the Sea of Galilee. There, the young prophet taught all the multitudes of people that had come to him.

# 5. Parables Shown to Apostles

[Matthew 13:1-52; Mark 4:1-34; Luke 8:4-18]

**T**he same day, Jesus left Simon Peter's house and sat by the seaside. Here, a great multitude had gathered to hear him speak. So Jesus entered a ship and sailed just offshore on the Sea of Galilee. As the whole crowd stood on shore, Jesus sat down in the boat and taught seven truths in parables. Jesus began with the parable of the Tares, "A sower went out to sow his seed. Some fell by the wayside and were trampled on and eaten by birds. Others fell on stony places lacking soil and spouting, the sun withered them because their roots lacking moisture didn't take hold and no fruit was yielded. Some fell among thorns, which choked the life from. But some fell on good ground and sprang up to produce fruit 100 times, some 60 times and some 30 times." (**Mark 4:3-8**)

Jesus continued with the parables of the Hidden Treasure, the Pearls, the Candle, the Net, the Mustard Seed and the Leaven. (see Matthew 13:24-51) Yet the people, however, couldn't understand as Jesus' words confused everyone. This fulfilled the prophecy in psalms saying, "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."<sup>123</sup> (**Matthew 13:35**) When he had said these things, the Lord Jesus shouted from the ship, "He that has ears to hear, let him hear." (**Luke 8:8**)

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<sup>123</sup> Psalms 78:2.

Sailing back to shore, Jesus sent the bewildered multitude away. Alone in Simon's house, the apostles asked their Master why he spoke in parables. He replied, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that 'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might repent and be forgiven.'" (**Mark 4:11,12**)

When the apostles crowded around Jesus and said, "Explain to us the Parable of the Tares in the field." Stunned at their lack of knowledge, Jesus explained, "The one who sowed good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The tares are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil.

[In summary, the sower sowed the word of God (the gospel) on the earth. Those fallen by the way side are those who upon hearing the word, but Satan comes immediately and takes it away before its stored in their heart. Those sown on stony ground, hear the word and immediately receives it with gladness, but having no root in themselves endure only for a time. When affliction or persecution comes because of the word, immediately they stumble now being offended by the word of God. Those sown among thorns, hear the word, but the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches along with the lust of other things enter in choking off the word and it becomes unfruitful (see Ezekiel 33:31).

Those sown on good ground, hear the word and receives it with patience bring forth fruit much fruit (see Mark 4:11-20.)] The harvest is the end of the age of the world, and the harvesters are angels. As the tares are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who does evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear." (**Matthew 13:37-43**)

Jesus also explained the Parable of the Hidden Treasure; Likewise the parable of Pearls, which symbolizes the LORD God's precious gospel. Jesus said, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for beautiful pearls. So when he had found one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and purchase it." (**Matthew 13:45,46**) Jesus continued with these two parables. In the parable of the Candle, Jesus stated to them, "Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick? For there is nothing hidden, which shall not be manifested, neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should become known. If any man have ears to hear, let him understand." (**Mark 4:21-23**)

The second and final parable was that of the Net. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like to a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind. Which, when it was full, they drew to shore and set down and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world. There, the angels shall come forth and separated the wicked from among the just and shall cast them into the furnace of fire. There shall be walling and gnashing of teeth" Jesus stated. (**Matthew 13:47-50.**)

When Jesus asked the apostles if they understood all that was said, they replied, "Yes, Lord!" Then Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe which is instructed to the kingdom of heaven is like to a man that is householder, which brings forth out of his treasure things new and old." (**Matthew 13:52**) [*Author's Reflections: Therefore, one must teach the Gospel using the foundational teachings of the Old Testament woven into their sermon or lesson of the New Testament Gospel story.*]

# 15.

## Jesus is the true Bread of Life

[Matthew 14:34-36; Mark 6:55-56; John 6:22-71]

The following day, the people from yesterday's miracle feeding had returned home and through the night spread the news that only the twelve disciples had departed by ship from the area beyond Bethsaida. Jesus had stayed behind. Therefore at first light, ships from Tiberias set sail across the Sea of Galilee to where the miracle feeding had occurred. When these people landed and arrived at the spot of the miracle, they neither saw Jesus or his disciples. So they set sail back across the waters for Capernaum. (see John 6:22-24)

Meanwhile, as Jesus had landed and stepped from his boat, the citizens of Gennesaret knew of his arrival. Then Jesus and the twelve apostles walked the 3½ miles along the coastline of the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum. No doubt after eating breakfast at Simon-Peter's house, Jesus and the apostles enter the city's synagogue, where he would teach. (A non-Sabbath Day, Jesus' ministry had become so popular that he no longer awaited the evening service, but taught the people during prime work hours.) This would be Jesus' defining moment of the Gospel when he would purge his Father's threshing Floor separating the wheat, true believers being both Jew and Gentile, from the chaff, the unbelievers.

Finally, the fleet from Tiberias arrived and found Jesus teaching inside Capernaum's packed synagogue. They asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for the food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." (**John 6:26,27**)

Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” Because Jesus claimed to be the Christ, they asked him what special sign or miracle he would show them that they might see and believe him? What will it be? Our forefathers did eat manna in the desert wilderness as it is written, “He gave them bread from heaven to eat.”<sup>143</sup> The Jews were looking for a similar miracle as the “Corn from Heaven”<sup>144</sup> to occur. Jesus answered them, “Truly, I tell you, Moses didn’t give you the bread from heaven. But my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which came down from heaven and will give his life to the world.” (John 6:32-33)

When the people asked the Lord to evermore give them this bread, Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He that comes to me shall never hunger, and he that believes on me shall never thirst. But I tell you, that you also have seen me and believe not. All that the Father gave me shall come to me, and those that comes to me I will in no way turn away. For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is God’s will, that of all which he has given me I should lose none, but should raise them up again at the last day. Also this is God’s will, that everyone, who sees the Son and believes on him, may have everlasting life. And I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:35-40)

The Jews began grumbling against Jesus, because he had said, “I am the Bread of Life, which came down from heaven.” Then they said, “Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it that he claims to have come from heaven?” Jesus responded by speaking about the “Hidden”<sup>145</sup> or Spiritual Manna from heaven by saying, “Complain not among yourselves. No man can come to me except the Father, which has sent me draw him. And I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall be all taught of God.’<sup>146</sup> Every man therefore that has heard and has learned of the Father comes to me. Not that any man has seen the Father except he who is of God, he has seen the Father. Truly, I tell you! He that believes on me has everlasting life. I am the **Bread of Life**, which came down from heaven. If any man eats of this bread, he shall live forever. And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” (John 6:43-51) Jesus’ words greatly offended the Jews. (Two years later at his last Passover celebration, Jesus would substitute his own flesh or broken body and shed blood for the unleavened bread and wine of the Passover feast.)

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<sup>143</sup> A wafer-like bread which tasted like honey that the LORD God provided every morning (Exodus 16:15-35.)

<sup>144</sup> Psalms 78:24.

<sup>145</sup> Revelation 2:17; Hebrews 10:18-20.

<sup>146</sup> Isaiah 54:13.

The Jews therefore argued amongst themselves questioning, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Then Jesus said to them, "Truly, I tell you! Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. And I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood dwells in me and I in him. As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father. So he that eats me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven. Not as your forefather did eat manna and are dead. He that eats of this bread shall live forever.

Many of Jesus' disciples, some whom had walked with the Lord for nearly two year, when they had heard his synagogue message, stated, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" Jesus said to these disciples, "Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe." (**John 6:60-64**)

Jesus had known from the beginning, which of them did not believe and who would betray him. He now informed the false disciples, "That is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him." From that moment, many of Jesus' disciples rejected him as being the Christ and went back to their former lives, never to walk with the great prophet again. His discipleship, once estimated well over 100 strong, was now reduced to 82 men, including the twelve apostles.

Jesus left the synagogue as those fallen disciples walked away. Viewing their departure, Jesus confronted the twelve apostles by asking, "Will you also leave me?" Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." (**John 6:67-69**) Jesus responded, "Have not I chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil." (**John 6:70**) He referred to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, who would betray him. Leaving Capernaum, Jesus would now begin his journey down the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee for Jerusalem for the Passover.

Meanwhile, earlier that morning as Jesus had landed at Gennesaret, runners rushed throughout Galilee. They brought the sick and carried the bedridden out into the streets leading southward along the great prophets' route. Then, with Jesus' permission, those who merely touched the hem of his garment were cured. (see Matthew 14:35-36)

## 6.

# The Mount of Transformed

[Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36]

**S**ix to eight days later, Jesus began a very special mission, believed from the city of Caesarea Philippi. Taking only Peter, James and his brother John, he journeyed to a very high mountain (see Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28), probably about 10 miles away to Mount Hermon.

[The word Hermon in Hebrew means “sacred” or forbidden. Its’ ranges formed the northernmost limit of Joshua’s conquest.<sup>159</sup> It rises nearly 10,000 feet above sea level and is the highest point in the entire range; 1,968 feet higher than any part of the Lebanon Mountain, and supports thick forest up to 3,300 feet. It towers above the Bashan plateau and upper Jordan Valley. Hermon has three summits situated like angles of a triangle, and about a quarter of a mile in distance from each other. This mountain was considered a great landmark for the Israelites. Heavy precipitation, well over 40 inches, mainly in the form of snow, falls on the summit and western slopes. The eventual run-off sinks through the porous sandstone and supplies the sources of lake Huleh, the Sea of Galilee, which feeds the Jordan and Litani rivers, which include the oasis of Damascus.]

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<sup>159</sup> Joshua 12:1.

Regardless of the mountain's location, hours later upon arriving, Jesus and three apostles from its' base, climbed upward some 3,000 to 5,000 feet to a small knoll before sunset. During the night while Jesus prayed and the apostles slept, his earthly human form was transformed back into the form of the Word of God, the Day Star, that existed before creation.<sup>160</sup> Jesus' face shone as the sun, and his sparkling clothing became as bright pure white light unlike anything on earth, as the a flash of bright lightning. (see Matthew 17:2) [*Author's Reflections*: The book of Revelation adds that in Jesus' natural form, the texture of His head and hair were snow-white like wool, and His eyes are like to flames of fire. His feet are like fine brass, which were burnt in a furnace.<sup>161</sup> Moses, the great "Law Giver," had even wrote about Jesus' Divinity being the "Light of Creation," in the first three days of creation recorded the book of Genesis.<sup>162</sup> In addition, the purpose of adding this account of the Mount of Configuration recorded only in the three other gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke<sup>163</sup> again validates their claims to Jesus' Divinity, which matches the entire theme of the gospel of John.] Then, Moses and Elijah appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus about his eventual suffering, rejection<sup>164</sup> and death at Jerusalem.

As the three apostles abruptly woke, they viewed Jesus' glory along Moses the Lawgiver and Elijah the greatest of the Old Testament prophets<sup>165</sup>, who would prepare the way for the coming Christ, stood with him. As the two patriarchs were speaking to Jesus, Peter boldly interrupted them and said, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us make here three tabernacles: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." (**Luke 9:33**) Peter did not know what he was saying being terrified.

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<sup>160</sup> John 1:1-14, 2 Peter 1:19.

<sup>161</sup> Rev. 1:14-15.

<sup>162</sup> Gen. 1:3-5.

<sup>163</sup> Deut. 17:6.

<sup>164</sup> Psalm 22.6.

<sup>165</sup> 2 Kings 2:11.

Suddenly, the same thunderous cloud that once covered Mount Sinai, overshadowed the mountain and caused the three humans to fear for their lives as they entered the cloud. Then the voice of God the Father thundered, “This is my Son, whom I love. With him I am well pleased. Listen to him!” (**Matthew 17:5**) Upon hearing the Almighty’s voice, the apostles fell upon their faces trembling with the fear of death. Then Moses and Elijah departed as the cloud vanished. Jesus walked over and touched the three apostles and commanded them, “Get up. Don’t be afraid.” Looking up, the disciples saw no one but their Master, who had returned to his human form. Calmed by their Master’s touch, the three apostles rested the remainder of the night in awe of what had occurred on the *Mount of Transfiguration*.

*[Author’s Reflection:* Concerning Peter’s request for building three tabernacles, under the New Testament of the gospel, the building of physical building would hold no place. This was first explained by Jesus Christ to the Samaritan Woman at Jacob’s Well that not even temple at Jerusalem would be a place of worship (John 4:21-24). Likewise, the apostle Paul would make this very clear as God would not dwell in temples built by human hands (Acts 17:24). The church of Jesus Christ would be a spiritual foundation housed within a person (Luke 17:20-21), and could be a little as two or three gathering together in Jesus’ name (Matthew 18:20).

The next day, the four men climbed down from the mountain and began their return journey. Along the way, Jesus instructed the three, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.” Puzzled at Elijah’s presence, Peter asked, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” Jesus answered, “Elijah surely came first and will restore all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected?<sup>166</sup> But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him.” (**Mark 9:12,13**) Then the disciples understood that Jesus had spoken of John the Baptist and continued this historical journey.

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<sup>166</sup> Malachi 4:5.

# 15.

## Jesus Raises Lazarus

[John 11:1-54]

**B**eing the heart of winter, Lazarus, believed to be a young man, was near death at the village of Bethany. His worried sisters, Martha and Mary, urgently sent messengers to find Jesus. (Shortly after their departure, Lazarus unknowingly died.) Some thirty miles later, the messengers found him and repeated the sister's message, "Lord, the one you love is sick." When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." (**John 11:4**) Jesus stayed in Bethabara for two more days as the bewildered messengers returned to Bethany. There, they relayed the fact that regardless of the message, he delayed at Bethabara.

When Jesus told the apostles, "Let us go back to Judea," his disciples said, "Master, lately the Jews sought to stone you, and yet are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If any man walks in the day, he doesn't stumble because he sees the light of this world.<sup>195</sup> But if he walks in the night, he stumbles because there is no light in him."<sup>196</sup> (**John 11:9-10**)

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<sup>195</sup> Proverbs 4:18.

<sup>196</sup> Proverbs 13:9.

Then Jesus stated, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go that I may awake him out of this sleep.” Then the disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will recover.” (Jesus spoke of Lazarus’ death, but they thought he had spoken of sleep.) But Jesus plainly stated, “Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so you may believe. But let us go to him.” (**John 11:7,10-15**) Then Thomas, nicknamed Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go that we may die with him.” The group set off back across the Jordan River and continued their journey.

On his arrival, Jesus learned that Lazarus had been buried for four days. The village of Bethany, which consisted of about twenty homes, was located about fifteen furlongs<sup>195</sup> from Jerusalem. This distance, called a Sabbath Day’s journey, was just less than two miles away. Many Jews came to Martha and Mary’s home to comfort the sisters over the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she rushed to meet him while Mary, overcome with grief, sat still in the house. “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died,” a sobbing Martha told him. She continued, “But I know, that even now whatsoever you will ask of God, God will give it to you.” (John 11:22)

“Your brother will rise again,” Jesus said. Bereaved, Martha’s response echoed with doubt in Jesus’ mind as she said, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus quickly and firmly proclaimed, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies. Whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (**John 11:25,26**) “Yes, Lord,” Martha told him. “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”

Woefully, Martha returned home, and called Mary aside whispering, “The Master has come and is calling for you.” As soon as she heard, Mary rose quickly and went to Jesus, who had not moved. When the Jews comforting Mary saw her leave in haste, they followed saying, “She goes to the grave to weep there.” Martha would soon rejoin Jesus.

Arriving, Mary fell at his feet in tears and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, along with the Jewish women who accompanied her, He was deeply disturbed in his spirit by their lack of faith. “Where have you laid him?” He asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Tears flowed down Jesus’ cheeks as he wept. Some Jews remarked, “See how he loved him!” But others asked, “Could not he, who opened the eyes of the blind, have kept this man from dying?” (**John 11:37**) Again, Jesus was deeply hurt in his spirit.

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<sup>195</sup> A furlong is 1 $\frac{7}{8}$  of a mile.

Soon he came to the tomb on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives, which was a cave and a huge stone laid across the entrance. “Take away the stone,” he commanded. “But Lord,” Martha objected, “by this time there is a bad odor of decay, for he has been there four days.” Again Jesus scolded Martha’s lack of faith. “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”

Some men removed the huge stone. Jesus looked toward heaven and prayed. He said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I know that you hear me always, but because of the people which stand here I said it that they may believe that you have sent me.” (**John 11:41,42**)

Then he called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” Instantly the dead man came out of the tomb, his hands and feet wrapped in strips of linen, and head napkin over his face. Not yet free, Jesus commanded, “Loose him, and let him go.” (**John 11:44**) [*Author’s Reflections: Jesus’ words held a dual message. Physically Lazarus had to be freed from his burial clothing. Spiritually, Satan still controlled Lazarus’ spirit as his body had begun to decay and hence the phrase “Let him go!” So as his spirit returned, Hell’s demons that swarmed around the body were forced to release their gruesome grip.*] Lazarus was alive!

After viewing this awesome miracle, many Jews believed in Jesus. But some rushed from the site through the Mount of Olives for Jerusalem and painting out of breath told the Pharisees what Jesus had done. Then the chief priest and the Pharisees urgently met to discuss what must be done about Jesus. “If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him as the Christ, and then the Romans will come and take away both our positions and nation.”

Caiaphas said, “You know nothing at all!” “Do you not realize it is better for us that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish?”<sup>196</sup> (**John 11:47,48**) As high priest, Caiaphas was predicting that Jesus would be the person sacrificed for the Jewish nation. With the nation’s destruction prevented, Jesus’ death would also serve to rally all of the Jewish children of God scattered abroad.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Psalms 2:2.

<sup>197</sup> Isaiah 49:6.

[*Author's Reflections:* What Caiaphas had just predicted was based on the practice of the High Priest at Yom Kipper reaching his right hand into a cloth bag and pulling out one of two smooth stones. The white stone signaled a good year and divine favor and the selection of the black stone meant divine disfavor on the people. With Caiaphas' actions, and according to the rabbis teaching in the Jerusalem Talmud,<sup>198</sup> a black stone would be picked for the next 40 years without a single white stone being collected. This only ended in 70AD with the siege and destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans, where an estimated 600,000 men, women and children were slaughtered.)

Obviously, Yahweh or the Heavenly Father, was greatly displeased with the rejection of His beloved son Jesus Christ. The selection of 40 straight black stones following the trial and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth had to have an ominously frustrating effect on the High Priest and Chief Priests. With the question of Jesus of Nazareth's existence and claims of being the Messiah, the recording of this strange occurrence would be very contrary to Judaism's vested religious interest in not accepting Jesus as the Christ.]

From that moment on Caiaphas, the chief priest and the Pharisees met everyday and plotted Jesus' death. As a result, he could no longer move freely among the Jews of Judah. Instead, Jesus went thirteen miles north to Ephraim, a city near the wilderness, where he stayed with his disciples.

Ephraim translated means "fruitful place." The land was that of hilly pastures and ideal soil for crops. The city was named after the second son of Joseph by his Egyptian wife Asenath. This stretch of thicket or brush land extended from the Jordan on the east to the Mediterranean on the west. It was reached by a laborious ascent through steep and narrow ravines, nearly impassable for an army. (See Joshua 16:1-10) There, Mount Ephraim was part of a mountain ridge in central Israel within the territory of Ephraim and the western half of the tribe of Manasseh. The prophet Samuel's parents were from Mount Ephraim. The forest of Ephraim was the scene of the handsome Absalom, King David's favorite, but rebellious son's defeat and death. (See I Samuel 1:1-20; II Samuel 18:1-33)

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<sup>198</sup> Soncino version, Yoma 39b.

## 25.

# Cost of Being a Disciple

[Luke 14:25-35, 15:1-32, 16:1-31, 17:1-10]

**A**s Jesus left the chief Pharisee's house, a large multitude followed. Jesus turned and revealed the test of being disciples. He said to them, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26,27)

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?<sup>231</sup> For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

"Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still along way off and will ask for terms of peace.<sup>232</sup> In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:28-33)

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<sup>231</sup> Proverbs 24:27.

<sup>232</sup> Job 22:21.

Jesus then gave his disciples a stern warning by speaking the Parable of Salt. He said, “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He that is capable must hear.” (Luke 14:34,35)

Then all the publicans [tax collectors] and sinners gathered around Jesus to hear what he had to say. But the Pharisees and scribes mumbled, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” (Luke 15:2) Then Jesus told them the Parable of the Lost Sheep. “What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he loses one of them does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and goes after the one that was lost until he finds it? When he finds it, he lays it upon his shoulders rejoicing. Then when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me for I have found my sheep which was lost.’ I tell you, that there is a similar joy in heaven over one sinner that repents more than over ninety-nine just persons, who didn’t have to repent.” (Luke 15:4-7)

Then Jesus told the parable of the Lost Coin.<sup>233</sup> Here, a woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one pieces does not light a candle and sweep the house looking diligently until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls her friends and her neighbors together saying, ‘Rejoice with me! For I have found the piece which I had lost.’ Likewise I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents.”

Jesus then began the Parable of the Prodigal Son. It revealed the overwhelming love of the heavenly Father for repentant sinners and the righteous. In summary, a certain man had two sons. The younger asked for and received his inheritance, but he went to a distant land and spent all he had on wild living. Then a severe famine left the sinful son in need. A citizen of that country hired him to feed swine. In time, he grew weak and hungry, longing to fill his stomach with the husks that the pigs were eating. In this wretched condition, he decided it would be better to return to his father as a hired servant where there was plenty to eat. He planned to say, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired men.”

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<sup>233</sup> Part of a wife’s ten piece silver bridal headband that was greatly valued.

But while he was still a great distance from home, his father saw him and had compassion on him. He ran to his son, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. The father ordered his servants, “Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.” So they began to celebrate.

When the righteous son arrived home from working, he learned of his brother’s return and jealously refused to join the celebration. When his father came out to discuss the matter, he said to his father, “Look, these many years have I serve you, neither transgressed I at any time your commandment. And yet, you never gave me a baby calf, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this your son came home, which has spent your life’s work on harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf.” His father came out and explained to him, “Son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!” (Luke 15:11-32)

[*Author Reflection:* Besides an individual’s repentance, a second symbolism the parable of the “prodigal son” is a representation of the displaced ten tribes of Israel coming home in the End of Days <sup>234</sup> to his older brother Judah. The Jewish people of Judah were scattered but they always knew they would return to the Promised Land of Canaan. Spiritually, they never left the area, but await their time to return. This fulfillment began with The Balfour Declaration of November of 1917 and ends with the birth of the Jewish nation of Judah, (today’s nation of Israel,) on May 14, 1948.]

Jesus taught on many more subjects. The lengthy Parable of the Unjust Steward directed at his disciples and all future clergy about putting money over the service of God. Jesus said also to his disciples, “There was a certain rich man, which had a steward, who he accused him of wasting his goods. And he called him and said, ‘How is it that I hear this of you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you may no longer be a steward.’

Then the steward said within himself, ‘What shall I do? For my lord takes away from me the stewardship, I can no longer dig. To beg, I would be ashamed. But this is what I plan to do when I am put out of the stewardship, that they may receive me into their houses.’ So he call everyone of his lord’s debtors to him, and said to the first, How much do you own my lord? And he said, a hundred measures of oil. And he said to him, Take your bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then he said he to another, ‘And how much do you own?’ And he said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ And he said to him, ‘Take you bill, and write eighty.

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<sup>234</sup> Isaiah 11:12; Hosea 1:11, 3:4-5, 14:4-8, 50:4-6, 17-20; Jeremiah 3:11-15, 33:7-8, 14; Zechariah 10:6-12.

And the lord complimented the unjust steward, because he had done wisely, for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.” Therefore, his lord said, to him, “Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting damnation.” The Lord Jesus concluded with these words: “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?” **(Luke 16:1-12)**

Jesus also warned against worshiping money. He said, “No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon [money].” **(Luke 16:13)** Now the Pharisees, who loved money, heard these words and ridiculed Jesus.

Jesus then told the lengthy Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, which highlight the two vastly different segments of Hell. The upper consisting of Abraham’s bosom, where the saints rest and the lower portion of Satan’s ever growing domain of eternal fire of torment. He said, “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up from his eternal flame of torment<sup>235</sup> and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus resting in his bosom. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

“But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’

“He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’

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<sup>235</sup> Isaiah 66:24.

“Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’ He said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ Abraham said, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even by someone rises from the dead.’” **(Luke 16:19-31)**

Jesus now warned his disciples not to become stumbling blocks for those who would enter the kingdom of God. He said, “It would be better to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around your neck than to cause a little one to stumble.” **(Luke 17:2)** Jesus also taught his disciples the importance of forgiveness. “Listen carefully. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him and if he repent forgive him. But if he sins against you seven times in a day and seven times asks forgiveness, you must forgive him.”<sup>236</sup> **(Luke 17:3-4)**

At this time, the apostles asked the Lord Jesus to increase their faith. Jesus responded, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you.” **(Luke 17:6)**

In his closing statement, Jesus spoke the Parable of Service, which highlighted the faith and duty of true believers. He said, “Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? Would he not rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink’? Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’”<sup>237</sup> **(Luke 17:7-10)**

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<sup>236</sup> Leviticus 19:17.

<sup>237</sup> Job 22:3.

# 1. The Messiah's Promised Visitation Rejected

(Jesus Rides Into Jerusalem)

[Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44;  
John 12:12-50]

The next day was Saturday, the Sabbath the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. It was just five days before the annual Passover and the Holding Day of the one-year-old Passover Lambs.<sup>262</sup> Jesus stayed at Bethany during the morning and didn't go to the temple complex for the Sabbath service. In the afternoon, Jesus and the apostles approached the nearby village of Bethphage, which was located on the crossroads between Jericho and Jerusalem. He sent two of them, saying, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'" (**Mark 11:2,3**)

So the two apostles went their way and found everything just as Jesus had said. But while Peter and John were untying the colt, certain men who were the owners, and who stood nearby asked, "Why are you loosening the colt?" Upon repeating Jesus' reply, the men's fears were calmed and they let them go. They brought the colt back to Jesus. [*Author's Reflections:* According to the Law of Moses, five days before the Passover, a one-year-old lamb with no skin blemish or disease was held at Jerusalem. At 3:00P.M., on the afternoon on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, the Passover lamb would be killed, prepared and quickly roasted for the evening feast. This is one of the main reasons why Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, had to ride into Jerusalem on this particular day.]

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<sup>262</sup> Exodus 12:3.

Meanwhile, news raced ahead to Jerusalem of Jesus' planned ride, which covered about two miles. A crowd estimated at 250,000 to 100,000 poured out of the city and flocked to the bottom of the Mount of Olives. (Amongst this immense crowd, were individuals that had witnessed what Jesus had done when he had called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead. For this reason the people also met Jesus, for they heard that he had done this miracle.) This action caused the Pharisees to comment, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him." (**John 12:19**)

The retrieving of the white colt and its' mother was all mad possible so that it would be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Zechariah nearly 560 years ago, as it states, "Fear not, daughter of Zion: Behold, your king comes sitting on an ass's colt."<sup>263</sup> (**John 12:15**) As Peter and John successfully brought the donkey and its' white colt to Jesus, the apostles threw their outer garments over it as a makeshift saddle of comfort, and he sat on it. Many of his 70 disciples spread their outer coats in the road. Still others scaled the long trunks of the nearby palm trees and quickly hacked down the branches of emerald green plumes. The leaves themselves were frequently 20 feet in length and drooped slightly at the edges. Then as Jesus approached, these palms were bowed to the ground, (a symbolic gesture for a king was actually an attach of both Herod Antipas' authority along with the temple priests, elders and especially Caiaphas and Annas' power.) As they rounded the bottom of the Mount of Olives, the entire band of some 82 disciples began to rejoice and praise God for the mighty works Jesus had done. They shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed be the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"<sup>264</sup> (**Mark 11:9,10**)

But some of the Pharisees in the crowd step forward and said, "Teacher, silence your disciples!" He answered, "I tell you, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."<sup>265</sup> (**Luke 19:40**) As Jesus continued his ride, likewise the great multitudes caught up in the mad frenzy of the Messiah's arrival that went before and followed Jesus began shouting, "Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." In honoring the promised king of Israel, many took off their outer garment and laid down their coats while many others laid down waving palm branches before him.

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<sup>263</sup> Zachariah 9:9.

<sup>264</sup> Psalms 118:25,26.

<sup>265</sup> Habakkuk 2:11.

When certain Greeks<sup>266</sup> among the gathering that came also to worship at the Passover approached Philip and asked to see Jesus, he told Andrew and the two conveyed the message to Jesus as he rode. Jesus stopped and spoke of the benefit that would result from his death and resurrection. “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies [buried], it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. The man that loves his life shall lose it, and he that hates his life in this world shall keep in to life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honor. Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour,’ but for this cause came I to this hour. ” (John 12:24,27)

Despite being troubled in heart, Jesus prayed, “Father, glorify your name!” Suddenly, a voice from heaven said, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” (John 12:28) Some believed the voice was thunder while others insisted an angel had spoken. Then Jesus announced, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world [Satan] will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth [excepted as the Christ], will draw all men to myself.” (John 12:30-32) Jesus spoke of the kind of death he would suffer.

[*Author’s Reflections*: Here marks the end of the ancient biblical world and the fulfillment of the Old Testament Covenant with Israel and the Jewish people was at hand. So important was this moment that Jesus Christ would forgo the prophecies of Ezekiel and other prophets for the Day of the Lord<sup>267</sup> and allow all the be saved under the prophesied new Covenant of Jeremiah.<sup>268</sup> This is also recorded in the book of Hebrews 8:8-11. (But his rejection, would bring on the horrific and dreadful “Day of the LORD” bring the wrath of God Almighty’s vengeance upon humanity for doubting the gospel in what is known as the “**Great Tribulation**,” the beginning of sorrows (Matthew 24:8; Romans 1:18-21). Even Moses prophesied about mankind’s out of control evilness of the latter days leading to the wrath of God (Deut. 31:29). By mankind’s refusing to repent and believe the gospel, the fate of humanity will be sealed, because the protective sacrifice of the Heavenly Father’s Son, Jesus Christ, will go unclaimed again (John 3:16-17; Mark 16:15-16). In all, the phrase “Day of the LORD” is mentioned at least seventeen times in the Old Testament (Isaiah 2:12, 13:6, 9; Ezekiel. 13:5, 30:3; Joel 1:15, 2:1, 11, 31, 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obadiah 1:15; Zephaniah 1:7, 14; Zech. 14:1; Malachi. 4:5 and three times in the New Testament Acts 2:20; 2 Thessalonians 2:2 and 2 Peter 3:10.)

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<sup>266</sup> 1 Kings 8:41,42.

<sup>267</sup> Ezekiel 38, 39.

<sup>268</sup> Isaiah 11:9-15; Psalm 37:29; Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Following His death and acceptance resurrection, the Heavenly Father's millennium of peace for the Lord Jesus would begin for all to enjoy. A world of complete peace void of Satan and his demons, who would all inherit the Lake of Fire forever (Rev. 20:7-11, 21:1-8.)]

But instead of accepting Jesus of Nazareth as the long awaited Christ, the crowd insisted, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ [the Messiah] will live forever,<sup>269</sup> so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up?' Who is this 'Son of Man?'"

Then Jesus said to them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light." (**John 12:35,36**)

Suddenly, the majority of the enormous crowd no longer believed that Jesus was the Christ, even though he had done many miracles before them. This was to fulfill the saying of Isaiah the prophet: "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"<sup>270</sup> (**John 12:38**) For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah had said elsewhere: "He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them."<sup>271</sup> (**John 12:40**) Isaiah said these things because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.

But many members of the chief rulers of the Jewish people believed. But they did not confess Jesus as the Christ because they feared the Pharisees who would put any of his followers out of the synagogues. These men loved the approval of men more than the approval of the LORD God.

Jesus then shouted, "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the One who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the One who sent me. I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words. That very word which I spoke will condemn him on the last day. For I did not speak on my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say." (**John 12:44-50**) Jesus continued his solemn ride.

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<sup>269</sup> Isaiah 9:7.

<sup>270</sup> Isaiah 53:1.

<sup>271</sup> Isaiah 6:10.

Jesus soon came upon the huge wall of the holy city. He looked at Jerusalem and suddenly wept over the city. [Like a great mural upon its massive wall, Jesus foresaw the massive destruction of the holy city and its 1,000,000 to 600,000 men, women and children being massacred by the Roman army. Here, the Romans would soak oil rags and wood planks into large cracks forged by their huge battering rams, which were set ablaze. In the construction of Jerusalem's massive wall, Herod the Great had used 200 ton blocks of limestone, which held a hidden fault. Limestone holds water and as the liquid boiled and the vapor built pressure, it exploded and allowed the Romans to breach the walls. During the destruction, every stone block of the Temple would be completely torn down. This event would occur within four decades in the future.] Through teary eyes, Jesus said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another,<sup>272</sup> because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from the Christ,<sup>273</sup> (the Messiah)." (Luke 19:42-44)

[*Author's Reflections:* In parallel to the Jewish's invitation of 29 A.D., and prior to the start of the Great Tribulation, the Jewish people of the world would be given a final change to accept Jesus Christ as the long-awaited Messiah. This would allow the Jewish people the only opportunity to share in the Messiah's glory of the 1<sup>st</sup> Resurrection. (As a trigger, its strongly believed that with the "rebirth" of the Jewish Nation of Israel in 1948,<sup>274</sup> that the last generational time line for the World's destruction would begin. Blindly, today's lukewarm Laodicean church is completely unaware of the importance of the forming of the Nation of Israel, and why the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus' ministry must be carried out to complete the prophesied return of spiritual Israel's fullness of the Last Days.<sup>275</sup>)]

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<sup>272</sup> Micah 3:12.

<sup>273</sup> Daniel 9:24.

<sup>274</sup> The Balfour Declaration of 1918, which led to the rebirth of the Jewish nation of Israel on May 14, 1948.

<sup>275</sup> Amos 9:14-15; Ezekiel 4:3-6, 34:13, 37:10-14, 21:22; Isaiah 66:8; Jeremiah 16:14-15, 31:10.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem through the East Gate, the remainder of city was stirred and asked who had caused such a commotion. The multitude now merely answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee." (**Matthew 21:11**) [*Author's Reflections: The Jewish people no longer saw Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, but merely a prophet from Galilee and therefore he held no claim of being the LORD God's Messiah. This they believed was justified as Galilee is not mentioned anywhere in the Holy Scrolls in relations the Christ. (see John 7:52)*] Then Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem. Dismounting the colt, Jesus in clear sight of the Roman Antonia Fortress probably entered the northern wall of the temple. After walking across the Court of the Gentiles, Jesus entered the inner structure of the Women's Court housing the temple and looked around and saw that everything was in order. As evening arrived, Jesus left the city and rounded the Mount of Olives with the twelve apostles. They journeyed back to Bethany.

# 1. Jesus' Agony in the Garden

[Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46;  
John 17:1-26]

Jesus and the apostles descended from the top of the Mount of Olives to the olive orchard of Gethsemane. The garden of Gethsemane was actually a small farmhouse and olive press, (believed in a small cave,) located on the plot of land situated across the Kidron ravine and at the base of the Mount of Olives. It stood  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile from the walls of Jerusalem and 100 yards east of the bridge over the brook of Cedron. In this orchard grove grow olives, figs and pomegranate trees grew in abundance, especially the olive. On the outskirts, Jesus told eight of his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." (**Matthew 26:36**) The eight were accustomed to Jesus' favoritism towards his inner circle. He took Peter, James and John further into the grove, as he became deeply distressed and troubled. It was approximately 9:00 P.M. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." (**Mark 14:33,34**) As a reminder, Jesus told the three apostles, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." (**Luke 22:40**)

Jesus went a little further, a stone's throw away, and fell to the ground on his face in distress. He wrestled with the idea of being the world's final sacrifice. He first spoke to his heavenly Father in Aramaic saying, "Abba" meaning, "my Father." Jesus continued, "Father, take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." (**Mark 14:36**) The symbolic cup of sin Jesus spoke of held a fatal dose of poison if consumed and he inwardly toiled with the question, "Why must I die?" Here, the Lord Jesus momentarily rallied against this "a Pyrrhic victory." But Jesus soon came to terms with himself and knew he couldn't be rescued from his divine destiny of becoming the world's final sacrifice ordained by the love of his Father in heaven, which would fulfill the words of John 3:16.

So in the latter part of the first hour, an emotionally shaken Jesus, lifted his eyes toward heaven and asked, “Father, the time has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify you. For You gave him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those You have given him.<sup>331</sup> Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in Your presence with the glory I had with You before the world began.” (**John 17:1-5**) [Jesus was speaking of being the Word of God and the first “Light of Creation” whose presence was shown in the figure on the Mount of Transfiguration, who was born not of flesh and blood from man (see John 1:13), but the will of God.<sup>332</sup>]

An angel from heaven descended and strengthened him. Being in anguish during the first hour, he prayed more earnestly. His sweat was like great drops of blood falling to the ground. His strength restored, Jesus returned to his inner circle of three apostles and found them sleeping for the grief they too had felt. He woke them and angrily asked the boastful Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” (**Mark 14:37,38**) Startled, the three men quickly awoke only to see their master walking away.

Jesus went away for a second hour and prayed the same thing, “Father. Remove this cup from me!” Despite his anguish, Jesus realized the Almighty’s will must be done. He then prayed a lengthy prayer to his Father for the apostles. Jesus said, “I have revealed You to those whom you gave me out of the world. Now they know that everything You have given me comes from You.<sup>333</sup> For I gave them the words You gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from You, and they believed that You sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those You have given me, for they are Yours. All I have is Yours, and all You have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy

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<sup>331</sup> Daniel 7:14.

<sup>332</sup> Genesis 1:1-5; Matthew. 17:2; Mark 9:2-3; Luke 28:29; Revelation 1:13-15.

<sup>333</sup> Psalm 22:22.

Father, protect them by the power of Your name—the name You gave me—so that they may be one as We are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name You gave me [**JESUS**]. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction [Judas Iscariot, the son of perdition] so that Scripture would be fulfilled.”<sup>334</sup>

“I am coming to You now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them Your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that You take them out of the world,<sup>335</sup> but that You protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Dedicate them by the truth. Your word is truth. As You sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I dedicate myself, that they too may be truly dedicated.” (**John 17:6-19**)

With the second hour of prayer completed, Jesus returned to the three apostles. He again found them sleeping, because their eyelids were heavy. They would not have known what to say to him anyway. This time Jesus did not wake them. He left to pray a third hour.

Alone again, Jesus prayed the same earlier words a third and final hour to his Father starting by asking this cut of sin to be removed. Then having accepted the will of his Father to become the world’s final sacrifice for sin, Jesus now directed his prayers for those throughout the entire world who would believe the gospel. “My prayer is not for the apostles alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent me. I have given them the glory that You gave me, that they may be one as We are one. I am in them and You in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent me and have loved them even as You have loved me.

“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory You have given me because You loved me before the creation of the world. Righteous Father, though the world does not know You, I know You, and they know that You have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make You known in order that the love You have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” (**John 17:20-26**)

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<sup>334</sup> Psalm 109:8.

<sup>335</sup> Jesus’ words are the undeniable proof that the “Rapture” is a blinded myth.

In full acceptance of his fate, Jesus went back to the three sleeping apostles. Looking at his three disciples, Jesus whispered, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." For the moment, Jesus would let them sleep. Suddenly the still of the night was shattered. Jesus then shouted, "Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!" **(Mark 14:41,42)** The other eight apostles rushed to join their Master as Judas Iscariot approached with a large, threatening mob.

# 1. The Resurrection

(The Mystery of Jesus Christ)

[[Matthew 17:62-66; Mark 16:1; Luke 23:56]

As the Lord Jesus was laid in Joseph's tomb, a 72-hour countdown began on that Wednesday evening in 29 A.D., as prophesied in the gospel.<sup>390</sup> Sunset saw the start of the annual Passover. All over Jerusalem, both in the upper and lower cities, One-hundred thousands Jewish people along with Gentiles were reclining on pillows around low style table to eat the Passover.<sup>391</sup> This was a joyous festival as the Exodus of the Israelites was relived for one more year especially among the supporters of Caiaphas, the Chief Priest, Pharisees and scribes. Yet the High Priest and his colleagues still feared the prophecy of Jesus of Nazareth's resurrection.

[*Author's Reflections:* Yet for one small group, the Lord Jesus' followers, who gathered in a few homes the celebration held no warmth. Their Master was died. Here, the mood eating the Passover was a solemn one, and for the first time the tasting of the "Bitter Herbs" became a reality. The night seemed to last forever as they tried to cope with why the man they had believed to be the Christ was killed. The apostles also wrestled with Judas' betrayal, one who was apart of their inner circle for three years was also dead. The three watches of the night past slowly this particular night.]

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<sup>390</sup> Matthew 12:39-40; 16:4, Luke 11:29-30.

<sup>391</sup> Exodus 12:27.

According to 1 Peter 4:5-6, during the Lord Jesus' three day captivity in Hell, He preached the gospel from the upper portion of Paradise along with the thief on the right (Luke 23:43) to those across the great gorge of the lower portion of Hell that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. Apparently, the sinners that repented after hearing the Lord's gospel would be transported, along with the thief on the right, beneath the Holy Altar of Heaven, with the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The next morning, Thursday, being a High Day Sabbath, the chief priests and Pharisees unaware that they were fulfilling the scriptures in finalizing the breaking of the first Covenant with Israel, gathered before Pilate. They clearly planned to separate themselves from any connection with Jesus of Nazareth. They stated, "Sir, we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples will come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead."<sup>392</sup> This last deception will be worse than the first." (**Matthew 27:63,64**)

Pilate informed them, "You have your own guard. Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." (**Matthew 27:65**) Storming from the palace, the priests made the tomb secure by hammering wooden blocks beneath the huge stone to seal the bolder and posting their own temple guard. Strict orders were given that no one must pass or get near the grave-site before Sunday morning. So with sharpened spears and razor shape swords, the temple guards were prepared to kill anyone who approached. Evening saw the elapse of the first 24 hours. The watch would continue to intensely guard the tomb over the next three days.

[*Author's Reflections:* Shortly after the trial of Jesus Christ, Pilate marched his army northward and forcefully crushed a Samaritan rebellion. In turn they complained to the ruling governor in the east stationed in Syria, who sent the Prefect of Judea by ship across the Mediterranean Sea to Rome to respond to the Samaritan's accusations before the emperor, his foster father-in-law. However on arrival, Tiberius was dead and Caius was emperor. As a result, Pilate was banished to Vienna on the Rhone across the Alps, and years later, deep in despair it is believed that he committed suicide by drowning himself.]

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<sup>392</sup> Psalms 2:2-3.

As a new day appeared, Friday morning, Mary Magdalene's group of women went to the huge marketplace near the temple complex to buy ointments and spices. The market was a rectangular area about 300 by 100 yards, thousands had gathered because of yesterday's holiday. The women passed open-air shops where Jerusalem's craftsmen — the city's weavers, dyers, potters, bakers, tailors, carpenters and metalworkers — sat at work. Making their way, one couldn't help but hear the many small groups slandering their Master's reputation of being a false prophet and surely not the Christ. But again, what could the women say Jesus was dead. Farther along stood a colorful bazaar where merchants sold fruits, vegetables, dried fish, sacrificial animals, clothes, perfume and jewelry. Arriving at the shop, the women purchased the items needed and returning to the home within the lower city. There, they prepared the ointments and spices. But the preparation was carried out through woeful tears of sorrow, and took several hours to complete.

When evening came, they stopped all work and rested on the weekly Sabbath, Saturday, in accordance with the commandment.<sup>393</sup> (see Luke 23:56) Friday Evening saw the elapse of the second full day or 48 hours.

In the morning at the Temple complex, the Saturday's gathering saw a mixture of moods surrounding the events of Jesus of Nazareth and his treatment at the hands of the Pharisees and scribes. There were only a few supporters but many adversaries, who painfully boasted about his death. For the first time in nearly four years, those opposed to Jesus of Nazareth's teaching and movement had nothing to fear from the brash young self-proclaimed prophet. The hours slowly passed as scribes now taught their normal stale ways of interrupting the holy scrolls throughout the morning and into the afternoon. Soon, the complete of the Lord Jesus' 72 hour imprisonment in Hell ended!

Contrary to popular belief, the resurrection of Jesus Christ occurred sometime between 3:00P.M. and 6:00P.M., or prior to sunset, exactly 72 hours<sup>394</sup> after he was laid in Joseph's tomb on this Sabbath evening in the year 29 B.C.<sup>395</sup>

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<sup>393</sup> Genesis 2:3; Exodus 20: 8.

<sup>394</sup> Psalms 16:10.

<sup>395</sup> Matthew 12:4.

Seventy-two hours after his burial, the **Resurrection** of Jesus Christ occurred. [*Author's Reflections*: Endowed with divine power through God's personal commandment,<sup>396</sup> the Lord Jesus wasted no time departing hell's domain of agonizing fire and brimstone. In a fraction of a second, his spirit reentered his corpse within Joseph of Arimathea's darkened tomb and harden shell of the myrrh wrap. Now alive, Jesus immediately threw the head napkin off his face as his divine body left the burial linen cloth upon the resting slab. Once clothed, Jesus Christ now passed through the huge stone into the Sabbath's late afternoon sunlight. He walked away from the garden cemetery, complete unseen by the Jewish temple watch who carefully carried out their duty. So Jesus of Nazareth's actual resurrection went totally unnoticed by his disciples and the world, and His divine offer of saving everyone and avoiding the dreadful "Day of the Lord" went unclaimed (John 12:31-32.)]

As the sun disappeared below the horizon and the first three stars appeared in the sky, a priest atop the temple complex sounded three sharp blasts on the shofar's horn. The sound echoed throughout the lower city, the Mount of Olives and the surrounding area. The holy Sabbath had ended. As darkness covered Jerusalem, Mary Magdalene's group of women woefully nestled within a house for the night. With everything prepared, they planned to start for the garden cemetery well before dawn. The apostles were at a loss. For 3 ½ years they had given up everything to follow the great prophet and now he was dead. Should they go back to their old occupations or start new ones? Bewildered, the apostles would sleep, uncertain of their future. The whereabouts of the resurrected Jesus Christ over the next 15 hours is one of the great-untold mysteries of the gospel story.

[*Author's Reflections*: Ironically, only a few centuries later, the full meaning of the Passover and Jesus' true resurrection was completely lost. Another spring festival would have overshadowed the LORD God's mandated Passover Feast that must be continued by true believers, Jews and Gentiles, as the Lord Jesus' desires of his disciples; "Do this (the Passover) in remembrance of me" Luke 22:19. Instead of keeping the annual Passover, misled Christian leaders would blindly lead their flocks into adopting a pagan holiday called Easter, which is strictly forbidden by God the Father's will.<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> John 10:18.

<sup>397</sup> Deuteronomy 12:30,31.

The name Easter was derived from the Anglo-Saxon goddess of Spring, or yearly rebirth of ancient times, Astarte, (who is actually the consort or wife of “Baal” the sun god.) It would be the “rebirth” surrounding Astarte, a Canaanite goddess, that would trap Christians into believing it was speaking of Jesus’ resurrection. This spring festival is actually a celebration of sexual fertility, and is praising Baal the fertility god’s wife, Ishtar or Astarte. (This celebration is also the sin of queen Jezebel<sup>398</sup> of the Old Testament.) Astarte, a Canaanite deity’s fertility symbols are the rabbit that quickly multiplies and the egg, which signifies birth. [The Babylonian Ishtar, which is pronounced “Easter” was a day that commemorated the resurrection of one of their gods that they called Tammuz, who was believed to be the only begotten son of the moon-goddess Astarte and the sun-god Baal.]

Following the spreading of the gospel throughout the western lands of Europe, traditional Christianity, a weakened version of the gospel, would appear and adopt many old pagan celebrations into the new religion. (By the 1st century, Sunday would mistakenly become the church’s new Sabbath day of worship in the false belief that Jesus Christ rose early Sunday morning.<sup>399</sup>) Against God the Father’s Old Testament mandate and the gospel teachings of Jesus Christ for the importance of the Passover, Easter Sunday would blindly grow to become one of the largest celebrations in the world.]

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<sup>398</sup> 1Kings 16:29-33.

<sup>399</sup> Galatians 1:6.

# 1. The Ascension

## Jesus Returns to Heaven)

[Matthew 28:18-19; Mark 16:15-19; 24:47-52;  
Acts 1:1-12]

*Prologue: A formal exposition have I made, O Theophilus [an early convert], of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:1-3).*

**W**eeks later, the Lord Jesus led His entire band of 120 disciples, both men and women, from Galilee to Bethany of Judah. Beginning on Sunday, the four-day journey either took the route through Samaria or the Ghor valley of the Jordan River. These would have been some of the greatest days of the disciples' lives. Never again, would they be so long in the presence of the physical Lord Jesus. Forty days after his resurrection and many infallible miracles of proofs (see Acts 1:3), sometime during the day, Jesus Christ led his band of disciples out as far as the village of Bethany, and lifted up his hands and blessed them.

Here, the Lord Jesus gave them some final instructions before his departure back to heaven. “All authoritative power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”<sup>410</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,<sup>411</sup> baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age of this world.” (**Matthew 28:18-20**) These words ended the Gospel of Matthew.

Jesus also told them about the consequences of spreading and believing the gospel. He again stated, “Go into all the world and preach the good news of the gospel to every creature, (all nationalities). Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.” (**Mark 16:15-18**)

In spreading the gospel, Jesus pointed out that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name among all nation, beginning at Jerusalem, for they are witnesses of the gospel. But first, He must send to them the promised of my Father, as they were to stay in the city of Jerusalem, until they would be clothed with power from on high (see Luke 24:47-49) Jesus commanded: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Ghost.” (**Acts 1:4,5**)

Coming together from the others the eleven apostles stood before Jesus and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Ghost comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (**Acts 1:6-8**)

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<sup>410</sup> Daniel 7:13-14.

<sup>411</sup> Isaiah 52:10.

After he said this, Jesus lifted his hands and blessed them. As he spoke, Jesus the Christ was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud received him from their sight. (see Luke 24:51) This cloud was the Almighty God's<sup>412</sup> presence calling his Son home. According to the gospel of Mark, upon his arrival in heaven, Jesus once again sits at the right hand of God the Father interceding on mankind's behalf, as King David prophesied would happen.<sup>413</sup> (Mark 16:19)

As the 120 disciples stared into heaven, two men stood by them in white clothing. "Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in a similar way as you have seen him go into heaven." (**Acts 1:11**) So the group returned to Jerusalem with great joy, being only a Sabbath day's journey from Mount Olives.

After entering the city, the disciples met in an upper room. Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, and James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas son of James gathered with the other 109 disciples. They joined together as one in constant prayer to God the Father in Jesus' name, along with all the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren or other male followers (see Acts 1:14) [*Author's Reflections*: Its believed that amongst the gathering in the Upper Room were at lease one of Mary of Nazareth's other four sons named James, Joses, Simon and Judah, and probably James.]

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<sup>412</sup> Exodus 16:10.

<sup>413</sup> Mark 16:19, Psalm 110:1.

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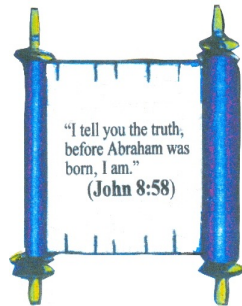
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## Embracing the Lord's Unconquerable Gospel, not Christianity's Deadly Deception

The Book of Haggai prophesied that Almighty God would “shake the nations” back to repentance for a last chance to believe His divine gospel of Salvation before the End of Days. (Hag. 2:7; **Mark 1:15**) This explosive, yet factual book called **EMMANUEL, The Mystery that is Jesus Christ, (The Promised Messiah)** fulfills all Messianic Prophecies and portrays the Lord's entire gospel like never before. Fully exposed is the great deception of false gospel of traditional Christianity, which according to the book of Revelation, is blindly orchestrated by the “Synagogue of Satan,” masquerading as the Lord's Gospel. (**Matt. 24:4,5**; Rev. 3:9) For biblical clarity, this book begins with a 24 chapter Old Testament compendium, which reveals the Lord Jesus' divine face as the Almighty God's first light of Creation. (Genesis 1:1-3) Experience the Lord Jesus' presence as He barbers with the patriarch Abraham, and wrestles with Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, at Peniel. An advanced non-denominational gospel read, it reveals the myth behind pagan Christmas on December 25<sup>th</sup>, Easter and the Rapture before the ending of the Great Tribulation. (**Luke. 17:22-37**) This ten-part chronology is based on the Gospel's three Gnostic King James narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke and the Divinity story of John, and will allow the reader to easily skip from place to place. Biblical life in the 1<sup>st</sup> century is being revived by careful recanting the Lord's entire gospel from “His” perspective based on scripture, which only Simon-Peter the “Key-holder” was allowed to change. (**Matt. 16:17-19**) Likewise, the epistles of Paul can support, but never override the Lord's gospel. Jesus Christ alone is the “*Light of the World*.” Jesus and his disciples were, of course, Jews. The Lord's gospel is put into simple English translation, and to avoid structural cynicism, each chapter is accompanied by the original biblical scriptures, as the gospel is fulfilled by over 500 Old and New Testament referenced footnotes. The Lord Jesus challenges all those who believe on Him, “If you continue in My word [the Gospel], then are you My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (**John 8:31,32**) Come and walk in the Lord Jesus' footsteps, and reclaim a narrative seldom preached today.



Jonathan B.  
Hobbs

