

*Lesson 38 – Along the Borders of Galilee and Samaria  
About 2/15/30 AD*

In the last lesson we saw Jesus briefly return to Judea and travel to Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead. After that the Jewish leaders strengthened their resolve to kill Jesus. It wasn't yet His time, so He retired out of Judea to the northwest to a place called "Ephraim" which was "along the border between Samaria and Galilee."<sup>1</sup> where He could keep a low profile until the Passover.

*The Parable of the Unjust Judge*

**Luke 18:1 Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. NRSV**

Jesus encouraged His disciples, and us, to never to lose heart in the coming age but to always take their needs to God in prayer. He taught that lesson by relating the following parable.

**Luke 18:2 He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men.**

The judge in the story wasn't a good judge or even a good man. He represented the antithesis of the character of God.

**Luke 18:3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary (or opponent).'**

The judge was presented with a plea for justice by a widow who was enduring wrong from her adversary. As a widow, she had no influence nor money. She only had the right on her side.

**Luke 18:4a "For some time he refused.**

At first this wicked man couldn't be bothered to render a judgment even though it was right.

**Luke 18:4b-5 But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually ~~wear me out~~ beat me down with her coming!'"**

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<sup>1</sup> John 11:54 and Luke 17:11.

<sup>2</sup> Edersheim suggests that the phrase translated here "wear me out with her coming" should be translated "bruise me at her coming." This is backed up by Strong's primary definition of "to beat black and blue, to smite so as to cause bruises and livid spots. It is also backed up by the definition given in the Outline of Biblical Usage of "to hit under the eye (buffet or disable an

However, even this selfish judge decided it would be to his own best interest to get the case of this weak and powerless woman off of his docket even though he cared nothing for the justice of the matter.

**Luke 18:6-7 And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?”**

Jesus made the case that if even the unjust judge in the parable eventually rendered judgement against the adversary of the woman, how much more would the Just, Righteous and Loving God render a just judgement against the adversary of His chosen ones. We should keep in mind that the name Satan means “adversary.”<sup>3</sup>

**Luke 18:8a I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.**

Though it might seem to the believers, who make up the Church, that the just judgment of its adversary and adversaries is a long time in coming, in God’s view of time it is coming swiftly. It will come when Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, returns at the end of the Great Tribulation. In the meantime, we should never be discouraged but keep coming to God with our righteous prayers.

**Luke 18:8b However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”**

In Luke 17:30, which Jesus had just taught, He had referred to the end times of the Rapture and Tribulation. It seems to me that the purpose of the question He asked was to underline the importance of His command to “pray always and not lose heart.” If they didn’t keep in prayer their faith would suffer.

### *The Parable of the Tax Collector and the Pharisee*

**Luke 18:9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable:**

This was clearly addressed to the Pharisees who were self-righteous. Although Jesus wasn’t in Judea at this time, the Pharisees, who were the agents of the Sanhedrin, were still stalking his footsteps and were usually sitting in the front row of His audiences.

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*antagonist).” The judge’s real concern was that the woman might become more aggressive rather than more wearisome.*

<sup>3</sup> The Hebrew is טָוֵן {sä-tän’} which means “adversary.”

Luke 18:10 **“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.**

Although Jesus knew the Pharisees wanted to kill Him, Jesus told this parable as an effort to draw them to the merciful salvation God was trying to give them.

Luke 18:11 **The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men <sup>4</sup>—robbers, evildoers (*unjust*), adulterers—or even like this tax collector.**

In fact, Jesus had earlier said of the Pharisees that they were robbers:

John 10:8 “All (*the Pharisees*) who ever came before me were thieves and robbers.”

Jesus had told the Pharisees that they were spiritual adulterers:

Matthew 12:38-39 “Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, ‘Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you.’ He answered, ‘A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign!’”

Jesus had told the Pharisees that they were evildoers (ἄδικος {ä'-de-kos} - unjust):

Matthew 12:40 “They (*the Pharisees*) devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers.”

Luke 18:12 **I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’**

This was this Pharisee’s definition of righteousness. Jesus had said that the “righteousness” of the Pharisees was not sufficient for salvation:

Matthew 5:20 “For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

The standard of righteousness that God required was laid down by Jesus and the Law of Moses:

Matthew 5:48 “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Leviticus 11:45b. “Be holy, because I (*the LORD*) am holy.”

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<sup>4</sup> *The problem was that before the judgment seat of God he was just like every other man, a condemned sinner. Isaiah 64:6a “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.” Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”*

The Pharisee in the parable was full of sin and lacking in righteousness. However, he arrogantly thought to stand before God as sinless and righteous.

Luke 18:13 **“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’**

On the other hand, the tax collector recognized that he was a sinner and unrighteous. He called upon God for mercy, the same mercy God had on hand for the Pharisee.

Luke 18:14 **“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”**<sup>5</sup>

Only the tax collector went home justified before God. He was justified because he believed in God’s promised Atonement that Jesus would provide. Like Abraham he was credited with the righteousness that God credits to every believer in the Messiah from His Christ’s righteous life:

Genesis 15:6 **“Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”**<sup>6</sup>

### *The Little Children*

Mark 10:13a **People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them,**

Luke 18:15a **People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them.**

Matthew 19:13a **Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them.**

Luke has the Greek word βρέφος {bre'-fos} which can refer to either infants or small children. From the context, I think that it has to refer to small children who have developed at least a rudimentary understanding of language. This is indicated by the fact that Jesus later “called them” to Him. Also, in the next two verses in Luke, Jesus calls them παιδίον {pahee-dee'-on} which means “little children.” They are also called by that name in both Matthew and Mark.

Mark 10:13b **but the disciples rebuked them.**

Luke 18:15b **When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them.**

Matthew 19:13b **But the disciples rebuked those who brought them.**

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<sup>5</sup> Ezekiel 21:26b *“The lowly will be exalted and the exalted will be brought low.”*

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in James 2:23, Galatians 3:6, and Romans 4:3

The disciples seemed to think this was a waste of Jesus' time and started to send the children away.

**Mark 10:14-15** When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

**Luke 18:16-17** But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

**Matthew 19:14** Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

The disciples seemed to have forgotten what Jesus had taught them earlier about the accessibility of spiritual truth to childlike minds:

**Matthew 18:3** "And he said: 'I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.'"

Many people that I know have started their lives as believers when they were little children.

**Mark 10:16** And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

**Matthew 19:15** When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

Considering that Jesus knew that some of the adults around Him wanted to kill Him, and many of the rest would soon turn their backs on Him, Jesus must have been grateful for the unquestioning faith of these children.

### *The Parable of the Rich Young Ruler*

This incident is repeated in Luke, Matthew, and Mark. It evidently happened about this time.

**Mark 10:17-18** As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone.

**Luke 18:18-19** A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone.

Matthew 19:16-17a **Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, “*Good*<sup>7</sup> teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?” “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good.**

Luke tells us that this man was a ruler, a man of some importance. Mark tells us that this important man fell on his knees before Jesus which shows that he was in earnest. He called Jesus “good” which was true. Jesus discreetly pointed out that only God was good. He didn’t deny being good and He didn’t deny being God. This man thought he too could be “good” by doing some “good thing.” Yet only God was truly good.

Mark 10:19 **You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”<sup>8</sup>**

Luke 18:20 **You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’”**

Matthew 19:17b-19 **If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.” “Which ones?” the man inquired. Jesus replied, “‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’”**

Jesus had to bring this man to the realization that he couldn’t measure up to God’s standard of “good” which Jesus had taught was being as perfect as God the Father. Notice that in Matthew, Jesus’ answer is not framed in the same way as the question. The young man asked how to “get eternal life.” Jesus told him how to “enter into life.” Certainly, keeping those Commandments were designed to enhance the experience of human life. However, they weren’t designed to give eternal life. The list given in the Matthew account contained the command that should have given the young man pause: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Mark 10:20 **“Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”**

Luke 18:21 **“All these I have kept since I was a boy,” he said.**

Matthew 19:20 **“All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?”**

Matthew tells us by the question “What do I still lack?” that the young man was still looking for some good work to do to gain eternal life with God.

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<sup>7</sup> As usual the NIV follows the flawed Sinaitic Text which omits the Greek word ἀγαθός {ä-gä-tho's} in Matthew’s account. The word means “good.” It is in the Textus Receptus and also in Mark’s and Luke’s version of the conversation in both manuscripts.

<sup>8</sup> Exodus 20:12,14,15,16

**Mark 10:21** Jesus looked at him and loved him.<sup>9</sup> “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

**Luke 18:22** When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

**Matthew 19:21** Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

The rich young ruler thought he had kept the Law perfectly. Here Jesus proved that the man loved his riches more than he loved God. This was a clear violation of the Great Commandment:

Deuteronomy 6:5 “Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”

It was also a violation of the First Commandment:

Exodus 20:3-4 “You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol <sup>10</sup> in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.”

It is important to notice that Jesus Himself had done what He said was necessary to fulfill the righteousness of God. He had left heaven and came to the earth and then sold everything he had to give to “the poor” (the whole human race).

**Mark 10:22** At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

**Luke 18:23** When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth.

**Matthew 19:22** When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Hopefully, eventually the man realized he could never rely on his own human works. He needed to rely on the redeeming work of God which Jesus had come to “finish.”

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<sup>9</sup> See 2 Samuel 12:24-25 where the name of Solomon was supposed to be “Jedidiah”, which means “Beloved of the LORD.” All of mankind is loved by the LORD.

<sup>10</sup> Idolatry is also encompassed in greed and arrogance: Colossians 3:5 “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.” Also the connection of greed and idolatry are made plain again in Ephesians 5:5 “For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”

**Mark 10:23-25** Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!” The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is *for those that trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!* <sup>11</sup> It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

**Luke 18:24-25** Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

**Matthew 19:23-24** Then Jesus said to his disciples, “I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

Some have taught that the term “the eye of a needle” referred to a small security gate in the wall of Jerusalem that was about the size of a single man. The idea being that if a camel was brought through, all the cargo it was carrying had to be unloaded just as a rich man had to unload his trust in his riches.

However, I think this was intended to refer to the eye of a literal sewing needle. Actually, getting a camel through the eye of a literal sewing needle would have been considerably easier for God than what it took to get any of us, rich or poor, into heaven. After all, He created the universe with a word. To save us, He had to become a man, and die on the cross while bearing the sins of the world.

**Mark 10:26** The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?”

**Luke 18:26** Those who heard this asked, “Who then can be saved?”

**Matthew 19:25** When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, “Who then can be saved?”

It is worthy of note that although eleven of the disciples were saved by faith at this time, they were still carrying legalistic baggage around in their souls from their background. They still had a lingering thought that salvation was somehow related to the amount of time that one could devote to pious acts. A rich man, it was believed, had the leisure and ability to perform pious acts like studying the Torah, attending the Feasts, and giving to the poor. Such a man, it was thought, had an advantage over everybody else in pleasing God and being good.

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<sup>11</sup> I have used the *Textus Receptus* here. It reads “How hard it is for those that trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!” As usual the NIV had used the flawed *Textus Sinaiticus*.

It is really amazing that the disciples had heard the Gospel preached for so long and still couldn't shake the idea that somehow salvation required works. However, considering that the organized Church is still struggling with that concept almost two thousand years later, perhaps it isn't so surprising.

**Mark 10:27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."**

**Luke 18:27 Jesus replied, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."**

**Matthew 19:26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."**

If it was up to the works of man, nobody would be saved. However, it was the God Man, Jesus Christ, who was speaking, who was going to make the impossible, possible.

**Mark 10:28 Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!"**

**Luke 18:28 Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!"**

**Matthew 19:27 Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?"**

Peter, always the master of the inappropriate comment, followed on Jesus' challenge to the rich man to follow Him. He seemed to say, "Well, where the rich man failed to do the works to be saved, we have earned our way into heaven by following you." He seemed to have forgotten that he was saved by faith:

**Matthew 16:15-16** "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

**Mark 10:29-30** "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life.

**Luke 18:29-30** "I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."

**Matthew 19:28-29** Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things,<sup>12</sup> when the

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<sup>12</sup> *At the end of the Tribulation the surface of the earth and the sky around it will be renewed.*

**Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.<sup>13</sup> And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.**

Jesus graciously ignored Peter's implication that by leaving everything and following Jesus they had earned the eternal life of which the rich man had fallen short. Remember, one of those twelve, who were included in Peter's "we," had done all that the other eleven had done, but he had never trusted Jesus Christ. That was Judas Iscariot and he would receive nothing but condemnation.<sup>14</sup>

Instead, Jesus pointed out that while the works hadn't saved them, as believers they would be rewarded both in this life and in heaven.

**Mark 10:31** **But many who are first will be last, and the last first."**

**Matthew 19:30** **But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first**

Here again, Jesus pointed to the mystery of the Church Age which would supersede the Age of Israel. In that age many Jews, who had heard the Gospel first, would be superseded by many Gentiles who wouldn't hear the Gospel until much later.

At this point Jesus told another related parable. It was only related by Matthew:

**Matthew 20:1-2** **"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day<sup>15</sup> and sent them into his vineyard.**

The New International Bible Commentary has the following comment: "In a time of underemployment they should have been thankful that they had had a full day's work. Tobit

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<sup>13</sup> *This supports the belief of Peter in Acts 1 that there must be twelve disciples or apostles who will receive this honor. Since Judas was an unbeliever who betrayed the Lord, who is the twelfth? I believe it is Paul.*

<sup>14</sup> *Jesus' statement at the Last Supper leaves no doubt of Judas Iscariot's fate: Mark 14:21 "The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."*

<sup>15</sup> *A denarius (plural denarii) was an ancient Roman coin made of silver. It was originally equal to 10 "asses." That gave the denarius its name which translates to "containing ten," although its value and silver content decreased through the centuries of Rome's existence. The denarius was originally struck from approximately 211 BC to 270 AD. The denarius is believed by scholars to have been a Roman soldier's daily pay.*

5:14 and various rabbinic passages show that a denarius for the day was a good day's wages; many earned less."

It should be understood that on a farm in those days, the workday started at dawn (about 6 AM), and ended at dusk (about 6 PM). It was at least twelve of our hours long. In the summer, it could be longer.

**Matthew 20:3-5a** "About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went.

The third hour would have been equivalent to our nine o'clock.

**Matthew 20:5b** "He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing.

He went out again at noon and then at mid-afternoon.

**Matthew 20:6-7** About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?' "Because no one has hired us,' they answered. "He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'

Finally, he went out just before the last hour of work and hired what was left.

**Matthew 20:8** "When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'

Because the last hired were paid first, the first hired knew what they were paid.

**Matthew 20:9-10** "The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. So, when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius.

The earlier workers reasoned among themselves that they would get more. All they got was what they had been promised. They got the same as the later workers.

**Matthew 20:11-12** When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. 'These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'

Instead of admiring the generosity of the landowner, they grumbled that they weren't given more.

**Matthew 20:13-15** “**But he answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’**

The landlord made the point that it was his right to be generous to the later workers. He had met his promise to the first workers. To me, the timing of the parable is important. The landlord in the parable represented God. The Age of Israel was in its last days. God had made a promise to Israel as regards the Kingdom. It would be kept. However, the Age of the Church was about to begin in just under two months. They were the later workers in God's plan, but they would receive an equal share in God's Kingdom. It took the believing Jews of the early 1st Century AD a few years to digest that.

**Matthew 20:16** “**So the last will be first, and the first will be last.**”

Actually, the Church will fulfill its destiny seven years before Israel. The destiny of Israel won't actually be completed until the end of the Great Tribulation, the last week of years (seven years) in the prophecy given to Daniel of Israel's final seventy weeks (490 years) which began with the restoration of Jerusalem in the time of Ezra. Those years ran for 483 years until the beginning of the Church Age. The last seven years will be finished during the Great Tribulation.

### ***Jesus Again tells the Disciples of His Suffering and Death***

This next incident recorded occurred shortly after this, It happened about a week before Passover, probably about 3/26/30 AD. Here the disciples were warned about what was to happen in Jerusalem.

**Luke 18:31a** **Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them,**

**Matthew 20:17** **Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them,**

**Mark 10:32** **They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him.**

Thomas had recorded his feelings about travelling to Jerusalem two months earlier when he said: John 11:16b “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” Here, in Mark's account, the same reluctance to return to Jerusalem is present. It even implies that Jesus had to lead them

down the road, whereas usually He was in the middle of the crowd. This statement of Mark tells us that the disciples were aware of the dangers to themselves, although they seemed to have been oblivious to what Jesus prophesied about His death on the cross. This wasn't the first time He had told them what was going to happen to Him. He told them about it six months earlier in Galilee, just after they had left the Mount of Transfiguration.<sup>16</sup>

**Luke 18:31b-34** “We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles.<sup>17</sup> They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. ~~On~~<sup>18</sup> The third day he will rise again.” The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.

**Matthew 20:18-19** “We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief-priests *high priests* and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. ~~On~~<sup>19</sup> The third day he will be raised to life!”

**Mark 10:33-34** “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief-priests *high priests* and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. *And the third day He will rise.*”<sup>20</sup>

The phrase “the third day” causes some confusion as to the chronology of the last week. In the account where Jesus challenged His disciples to say who they thought He was, Matthew, and Luke wrote (Matthew 16:21, Luke 9:22) that Jesus said He would rise “the third day”, while Mark reported (Mark 8:31) that Jesus said He would rise “after three days.” On the other hand, in our passage Mark also says that Jesus said He would rise “the third day.” The Gospel of Matthew has three statements about when Jesus said He would rise. In Matthew 12:40, Jesus made it clear that He would spend “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” In Matthew 20:19 He said He would rise “the third day.” In Matthew 27:63 the Pharisees remembered that Jesus said “After three days I will rise again.” Clearly, Matthew and Mark understood the phrase “the third day” and “after three days” to mean the same.

Evidently, the phrase, “the third day” can be understood somewhat like the English sentence, “It is three days and he hasn’t come.” We would understand that to mean that all three days have passed.

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<sup>16</sup> *Matthew 17:22-23, Mark 9:31-32, Luke 9:44.*

<sup>17</sup> *Lamentations 4:20*

<sup>18</sup> *There is no preposition “on.”*

<sup>19</sup> *There is no preposition “on.”*

<sup>20</sup> *I have substituted the Textus Receptus here for the Textus Sinaiticus which says “After three days.”*

In all the passages of Scripture that speak about the “third day,” in the Greek there is no preposition “on” as in “on the third day,” although the NIV supplies an “on” for every “third day” passage. The “on” was omitted from the King James translation, which can be depended on to be literal. However, in the passages which speak about “after three days” (Matthew 27:63, Mark 9:31, Mark 8:31, Mark 10:34) there is always the preposition μετά {meta} which means “after.”

Also comparing Esther 4:16 with Esther 5:1 seems to indicate that this was the way the phrase was understood in Israel. I will go into more detail on this in a later lesson on Jesus’ resurrection. However, for now it will have to suffice you for me to say that in all cases the original text means “after three full days and nights have been completed.”

Matthew doesn’t describe the spitting on Jesus which Mark and Luke do. Matthew specifies crucifixion as the form of death while Mark and Luke only say that Jesus would die. It must always be understood that none of the Gospel accounts of Jesus Christ are a full account of what happened, or what was said. If they were they would run to thousands of pages at least. They are a condensation of what happened. The facts recorded are perfectly accurate, but they are not complete.

### *A Request for Favoritism and True Christian Greatness*

**Matthew 20:20** **Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.**

**Mark 10:35** **Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”**

We know that Salome was wife of Zebedee and the sister of Jesus’ mother Mary. She was the also mother of James and John, and thus was the aunt of Jesus. We know from Matthew’s account that she was the one who initiated the conversation. We can’t be sure if she was the one who persuaded her sons to join her in making this request, or if they persuaded her to be their mediator. Clearly, all three were present although Mark only mentions James and John.

**Matthew 20:21** **“What is it you (plural) want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.”**

**Mark 10:36-37** **“What do you (plural) want me to do for you?” he asked. They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”**

Evidently, James and John acquiesced in the request of their mother. At that point, she retired from the conversation. They evidently reiterated the request that they have the seats of honor when Jesus reigned.

Matthew 20:22-23a **“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to about to <sup>21</sup> drink and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”<sup>22</sup> “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink from my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with <sup>23</sup>**

Mark 10:38-39 **“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?” “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with,**

There is a dual meaning of the word “cup” here in Matthew and the rest of the Gospels. First, there was the cup of judgment that Jesus would drink for the human race (Matthew 26:39-42). Only Jesus could drink that. Second, there was the cup of communion that every believer is invited to drink (Matthew 26:27-28, 1 Corinthians 11:25-26) which signifies our identification with His death for the forgiveness of sin.

The distinction is the same with “Baptism” as with “Cup.” Jesus’ Baptism was to be identified with our sin and have the judgment we deserved poured out on Him instead. The believer’s Baptism (which James and John underwent) was to be identified by the Holy Spirit with Jesus’ finished work on the Cross.

Jesus was telling James and John that they would partake of this cup and baptism through the act of faith not through their own works. However, He was stating it in a mysterious way that they would only understand later. Of course, they would also drink of the symbolic cup of communion at the last supper in about a week.

Some have suggested that the cup was referring to martyrdom. That would have applied to James who was executed by Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:1-20). However, the passage says that “you (plural) <sup>24</sup> will drink of the cup” which would have to mean both James and John drank of the cup of martyrdom. As far as we know, John was the only disciple that wasn’t martyred.

Matthew 20:23b **but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.”**

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<sup>21</sup> The Greek word is μέλλω {mel'-lo} which means “about to.”

<sup>22</sup> The Textus Receptus has here “and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

<sup>23</sup> The Textus Receptus also has here “and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.”

<sup>24</sup> The Greek word is πίεσθε which is the future, middle, 2nd person, plural of πίνω {pē'-nō} which means “to drink.”

**Mark 10:40** but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

To whom do these places belong? The Lord later revealed it to John in Revelation 3:21 “To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.” Who is He who overcomes? As John recorded in 1 John 5:4 “Everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.” In other words, all believers alike will share the right to sit with Him on his throne because we are “in Him.”

Jesus understood that both James and John had a misapprehension about the function of greatness in God’s kingdom. They thought it meant that they could lord it over everybody else but Jesus. Jesus would address this misapprehension immediately.

**Matthew 20:24** When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers.

**Mark 10:41** When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John.

Understandably, because the disciples understood that James and John were trying to get a more prestigious place than they, they were upset.

**Matthew 20:25** Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

**Mark 10:42** Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

All the disciples still seemed to be laboring under the delusion that heavenly greatness was like the worldly idea of greatness. Indeed, it is also Satan’s idea of greatness. God’s true glory does not lie in His power, but in His love. In Satan’s famous statement of his ambition, it never occurred to him to emulate God’s love:

Isaiah 14:13-14 “You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”

The Greek word translated “lord it over” in both Matthew and Mark is κατακυριεύω {kā-tä-kü-rē-yü'-ō} which means “to hold under subjection.” In Acts 19:16 it was used to describe the activity of a man who is astride another and beating him.

Jesus called them all together to correct their misunderstanding. Leadership in the body of Christ meant something different than leadership in the world.

**Matthew 20:26-28** **Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."**

**Mark 10:43-45** **Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."**

Leadership in the body of Christ meant imitating Jesus in His servanthood and sacrifice.