

# A Study of the Christ Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Pre-existence of Christ				1:1-18
Genealogy of Jesus	1:1-17		3:23-38	
Gabriel announces John's birth			1:1-25	
Gabriel visits Mary			1:26-38	
Mary visits Elizabeth			1:39-56	
Birth of John the Baptist			1:57-80	

## Overriding Principles

- Jesus needed to be from the tribe of Judah and of the family of David both in the flesh, and in line to reign as king (Gen. 49:10; II Sam. 7:12-19; Acts 2:29-35).
- It is commonly thought, therefore, that Luke has the genealogy of Mary with Eli (3:23) being her father.
- Additionally, the regal side of David's family is thus thought by many to be represented by Matthew in giving the genealogy of Joseph, Jesus' *legal* father.
- Jesus also had to have been God as well as man to fully satisfy the need for a fully suitable mediator—a virgin birth (cf. Job 9:30-35; I Tim. 2:5; I Jn. 2:1-2).
- God had also determined that a *forerunner* would precede Jesus to prepare the way for Him (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1; 4:5-6; cf. Matt. 11:14; Mk. 9:11-13; Lk. 1:17).

## Main Point

- Jesus was the only solution to the ultimate problem of mankind—sin.
- The time just before His arrival was an awakening from about 400 years of silence from when God ceased speaking to man at the completion of Old Covenant revelation (about the time of Malachi c. 425 BC).

## Secondary Points

- In addition to salvation, Jesus also brought to men and women the clearest possible light of knowledge (Jn. 1:4, 17).
- Grace was both fully realized and fully understood only in Jesus, not through Moses (Jn. 1:17).
- The full concept of God includes the Father and the Son (Jn. 1:1).

- The greatness of Mary's faith as contrasted to Zacharias wavering (Lk. 1:18-20, 38).
- Possibly, John the Baptizer was to be a Nazirite for life, like Samuel and Samson (Lk. 1:15; cf. Num. 6:3).

### **Historical /Cultural Matters**

- **Alleged Discrepancies between Matthew and Luke's Genealogies.**  
A discussion of the genealogies would be incomplete without considering some of the apparent discrepancies between the records.
  - 1. Matthew's genealogy is inconsistent with Old Testament records, that show Matthew skipped generations.**  
This is a common objection, which a cursory look at Matthew 1:17 would seem to justify. However, careful examination shows that Matthew broke the genealogy down into three historic divisions, each of which contained fourteen generations. Matthew used the significance of the number 7 to construct a *literary* genealogy that was accurate for his purpose to show Jesus as both the son of Abraham and the son of David. In this way Jesus is linked to the two major covenants of promise in the Old Testament (Gen. 12:1-3; 22:18; II Sam. 7:12-16). Matthew's genealogy was deliberately abridged. This may have been to aid in memorization of the tables. Old Testament writers also abridged their genealogical records, so Matthew had scriptural precedent to do so (compare Ezra 7:3 with I Chronicles 6:7-10).
  - 2. Comparison shows that Matthew and Luke did not record the same names in their genealogies. Since they are not in harmony with each other, one or both of them must be erroneous.**  
Matthew and Luke traced two family histories. Matthew recorded the ancestors of Joseph, the legal father of Jesus. Luke recorded the ancestors of Mary, the biological mother of Jesus. The divergence of names is natural, given the fact that both authors presented two different family trees.
  - 3. Luke stated that Joseph was the son of Heli, while Matthew stated he was the son of Jacob.**  
The Jerusalem Talmud shows that Joseph was the son-in-law of Heli. Joseph's father was Jacob. It was customary to refer to a son-in-law as a son in the first century. So Luke's statement was culturally correct.
- **The "Division of Abijah" (Lk. 1:5).**
  - 1.** The announcement of John's birth comes at a high moment in Zechariah's career. As one of about eighteen thousand priests, Zechariah serves in the temple twice a year (I Chron. 24:7-18), but only once in his life does he get to assist in the daily offering by

going into the holy place. This honor had fallen to him by *lot*. His job was to offer *incense*, a picture of intercession rising to God (Ps 141:2; Rev 5:8; 8:3-4). Everything about the announcement's timing points to a moment of high piety. Zechariah goes in while the people are praying. A later prayer from the Targum of Canticles 4:6 may well express their thoughts: "May the merciful God enter the Holy Place and accept with favor the offering of his people."

2. With the Babylonian destruction of Solomon's Temple in 586 BCE the priestly service ceased, and the cycle count with it. After the Babylonian captivity the Temple was rebuilt, "and this temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar; it was the sixth year of the reign of King Darius . . . Then they appointed the priests to their divisions and the Levites in their orders for the service of God in Jerusalem." (Ezra 6:15, 18) This was March 12, 515 BCE. Josephus noted there were "four courses of the priests." (*Against Apion* 2:8; cf. Ezra 2:36-39) The Talmud also notes at that time many Levites were missing, and "Four mishmaroth (divisions) returned from the [Babylonian] exile, and they were Jedaiah, Harim, Pashhur and Immer. The prophets amongst them arose and divided them and increased them to twenty-four. [Lots were prepared] and mixed and placed in an urn. First came Jedaiah . . . and Jehoiarib should be subordinate [to him.]" The original divisions were reestablished from the four priestly families, and the cycle count began anew.

### Words and Grammar

- **Word**, ? ? ? ? ? ? ? Jn. 1:1, 14)? ? In addition to simply meaning a "word," this Greek term, as here, can refer to the thought or "mind" behind a word. Words are the representations of thoughts (cf. I Cor. 2:10-12); Jesus is the fleshly representation of God's mind (Jn. 1:18; 14:7-9).
- **Comprehend/Overpower**, ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? Jn. 1:5)? ? A word that means "to grasp" and here could mean either that Jesus was not *understood*, or that He was not *held back*. Context seems to favor that the problem centered on a lack of understanding.
- **Explained**, ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? (Jn. 1:18): The Greek word behind our word *exegesis*(to extract from a text its true meaning). Jesus brings out the true meaning of God (Jn. 14:7-9).
- **Whom**, ? ? ? ? Matt. 1:16): The feminine form of the word, showing that Jesus was born to Mary, not Joseph. Complementing this is Luke 3:23b where Jesus is only *supposedly* the son of Joseph.
- **Came/Realized**, ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? (Jn. 1:17):? Commonly meaning *came*, but in this context meaning the One from Whom grace and truth were given their full realization—their fulfillment.

- **Gabriel**, ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? (Lk. 1:19): Meaning, God is powerful. (Dan. 8:16; 9:21).

### **Relationship to the Church**

- The worship of God is to follow the order He reveals (Lk. 1:5, 8; cf. II Chron. 29:25; Heb. 8:5; I Cor. 14:33, 40).
- Jesus was made head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:19-23; I Cor. 15:20-28; Acts 2:29-36).
- The church has a perfect human object lesson to draw from—this is huge (Jn. 13:34-35; 14:7-9)!
- Through Jesus we can enter into God's mind as never before (I Cor. 2:10-16).

### **Who is Jesus?**

- God with us.
- Light.
- The realization of truth and grace.
- The Maker of all things.
- He who gives us the right to become a child of God.
- The ruler over all things.
- The fulfillment of God's mercy.
- The fulfillment of God's Promise.

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Angel appears to Joseph in a dream	1:18-24			
Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem	1:25		2:1-7	
Shepherds visit Jesus at the manger			2:8-20	
Circumcision of Jesus			2:21	
Jesus presented in the Temple			2:22-38	
Wise men present gifts in house	2:1-12			
Joseph's family escapes to Egypt	2:13-15			
Herod's wrath on Bethlehem's children	2:16-18			
Herod dies in Spring of 4 B.C.	2:19			
Joseph's family settles in Nazareth	2:20-23		2:39	
Childhood of Jesus			2:40-52	

## Overriding Principles

- Jesus had to have been God as well as man to completely satisfy the need for a fully suitable mediator—a virgin birth (cf. Job 9:30-35; I T im. 2:5; I Jn. 2:1-2).
- God's justice and His mercy meet in the Christ (Rom. 3:21-26).
- Nothing could stop the plan of God from being realized in Jesus (Heb. 6:13-20).

## Main Point

- "And she will bear a Son; and you will call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins. Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which translated means, God with us.'" (Matt. 1:21-23).

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- A virgin who conceived through fornication was subject to the death penalty (Matt. 1:18-19; Deut. 22:23-28).
- Mary remained a virgin only until after the birth of Jesus, not for her entire life (Matt. 1:25).

- Augustus reigned from 31 BC-AD 14; Quirinius was in Syria 10-7 BC for the first time, Acts 5:37 speaks of a second census in AD 6. The cycle for Roman censuses was often at fourteen year intervals, making it likely that the first census was begun about 8 BC and brought Joseph to Bethlehem in about 6 BC. (**Lk. 2:1-2**).
- Bethlehem was the city predicted as the birth place of the child from the "days of eternity" (**Lk. 2:5**; Mic. 5:2-5).
- Though God sent angels to shepherds to announce the birth of Jesus, the Jews would not allow shepherds to testify in court, due to their unsavory reputations (**Lk. 2:8**).
- The Romans were enamored with the Pax Romana (the Roman Peace), but this peace imposed by Roman armies was not to be compared to the peace Jesus would bring (cf. Jn. 14:27; 16:33). The Roman writer E. Pictetos summed up the inadequacies of the Roman Peace by writing, "... while the emperor may give peace from war on land and sea, he is unable to give peace from passion, grief, and envy. He cannot give peace of heart for which man yearns more than even for outward peace" (**Lk. 2:14**).
- Jesus was born into very humble circumstances, an animal feeding trough for a crib and rags for clothes. Greatness is not about outward finery (**Lk. 2:7, 12, 16**).
- On the eighth day the blood's ability to coagulate is higher than at any other time (**Lk. 2:21**; Lev. 12:1-3).
- While most of the Jews looked for a military Messiah, a few, a "Righteous Remnant," looked for a Savior (**Lk. 2:22-38**; Isa. 10:22; Rom. 2:28-29; 9:27).
- The time for purification after the birth of a male child was forty days (**Lk. 2:22**; **Lev. 12:1-5**).
- The poor could offer for purification turtledoves instead of a lamb (**Lk. 2:24**; Lev. 12:1-8).
- Jesus would be opposed (**Lk. 2:34**; Rom. 9:30-33; I Pet. 2:7-8).
- Herod the Great reigned from 37-4 BC (**Matt. 2:1**).
- Magi were astrologers who also specialized in medicine and natural sciences. Astrology was condemned in the Old Covenant, but God sometimes worked through forbidden practices to convict people to turn to Him (**Matt. 2:1**; **Isa. 47:13**; **li Kg. 17:6**; **cf. I Sam. 28:1-20**).

- Herod's figuring to determine Jesus' birth date make it possible to determine that Jesus was born about 6 B C, since the year of Herod's death was 4 B C, the year the Magi arrived (**Matt. 2:7, 16**).
- Matthew often uses the word "fulfilled" to address the *typical* value of an Old T estament prophecy and show that Old T estament history had a number of events that prefigured the life of Jesus (**Matt. 2:15, 17, 23; 1:228:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 26:54, 56; 27:9**).
- T hough no Old T estament verse says that Jesus will be called a "Nazarene," the Hebrew word netser means branch, Nazareth was the "place of the branch," and Jesus was thus the man from branch, as the title Nazarene implied (**Matt. 2:23**; Isa. 11:1).
- Jesus realized even as a youth that He had a Father other than Joseph (**Lk. 2:49**).

### Relationship to the Church

- T he church is not about beautiful trappings such as buildings and furnishings—the church is to be an institution of character and integrity, like the nature of the Christ (Jn. 13:34-35; Matt. 11:28-30; Jn. 17:21-23; Rom. 8:29; E ph. 4:15-16).
- Jesus' coming into the world is the product of God's hand—so must the church be. We are not of men, but of God (Mk. 7:1-13; I T im. 4:1-5).

### Who is Jesus?

- He is the one Man among all men who showed us that dignity, grace, power, authority, loyalty, and mercy are compatible and best seen in sacrificial service to God and men. Greatness is not found where we as mere men so often choose to look.

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Ministry of John the Baptist	3:1-12	1:1-8	3:1-20	
John baptizes Jesus	3:13-17	1:9-11	3:21-23	
Temptation of Jesus	4:1-11	1:12-13	4:1-13	
John's testimony about Christ				1:19-28
John recounts Christ's baptism				1:29-34

## Overriding Principles

- The beginning of Jesus' public ministry introduces us to the greatest earthly example of the highly effective "show and tell" principle (cf. Acts 1:1; Jn. 1:1, 14, 18; 14:7-9).
- Prior to embarking on His preaching journey, Jesus first will face and overcome a temptation in the wilderness that in principle mirrored the temptations that overcame Israel (Deut. 10-19; 8:1-10).

## Main Point

- As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matt. 3:11).

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- Although the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar (AD 14-37) would have been AD 28/29, Tiberius was appointed as Augustus' (30BC-14AD) co-ruler in AD 12. This would allow for the beginning of Jesus' ministry in AD 26/27 and would square better with His being about 30 at the time (Lk. 3:23). Remember Jesus was born in 6/5 BC (Lk. 1:1-2).
- The Jews were familiar with washings for ceremonial cleansing (Lev. 11-15), but not with water as a factor in the forgiveness of sins (Lk. 3:3).
- John came in the role of an Eastern courier who would precede a king's coming and make proper preparations for him (Lk. 3:4-6; Isa. 30:3-5).



- John would call out a *Righteous Remnant* of Israel (Isa. 10:22) to be the first followers of Jesus (**Lk. 3:7-14**).
- Genuine repentance produces evidence to confirm its reality (**Lk. 3:8-14**).
- John was *like* Elijah even in his dress (**Matt. 3:4**; II Kg. 1:7-8).
- The Religion of Moses had not been enough to complete God's plan of redemption (**Matt. 3:6**; Heb. 8:6-13).
- The Jews trusted in their heritage rather than in a faithful relationship with God (**Matt. 3:9**; cf. Jn. 8:33, 39).
- Judgment was at the doorstep of the Jews as they would soon pay a terrible price for centuries of rejecting God (**Matt. 3:10**; 23:29-39; Lk. 23:27-31).
- Jesus would baptize with the *Holy Spirit* and with *Fire*. The baptism of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles would, through their work, benefit all who would respond to the Christ. The baptism of fire would be the judgment to come on all who rejected Jesus. Hearts would be sifted (**Matt. 3:11-13**; Acts 1:5, 8, 13, 26; 2:1, 4, 7, 14, 42-43; 4:33; 11:15-17; Eph. 1:3, 10, 22-23; 2:5-6, 13-18; 4:16; I Thess. 4:17; II Thess. 1:6-10; II Pet. 3:8-18)!
- John recognized Jesus as a better man than he through his personal knowledge of Him. John would learn that Jesus was the Messiah by the testimony of the Father and the Holy Spirit (**Matt. 3:13-14**; Jn. 1:29-34; Ps. 2:7; Isa. 42:1).
- Jesus was the only accountable person whose baptism could not have been for the remission of sins (**Matt. 3:15**; Heb. 4:14-16).
- A *Beloved Son* would be one who could claim the entire household (**Lk. 3:22**; Matt. 28:18; I Cor. 15:20-28; Eph. 1:20-23).
- Jesus succeeds in the wilderness where Israel had failed (**Matt. 4:4, 7, 10**; Deut. 8:3; 6:16, 13).
- Jesus was not motivated by bread, showmanship, or political power, but by God's word, trust in God, and respect for God. He did not come to defeat Rome, but to defeat evil. The realm where evil abides is the heart—that is where Jesus would reign (**Matt. 4:1-11**; I Jn. 2:15-16; Mk. 7:14-23; Heb. 2:5-9; 10:22; Ps. 8:4-6; I Pet. 3:15).
- Satan is the master of the *opportune* time (**Lk. 4:13**; cf. I Cor. 10:13; Jas. 4:7).
- When the Gospel of John uses the word *Jew(s)*, it does not mean the ethnic group, but rather the *religious establishment* (**Jn. 1:19**; cf. **1:24**).

- John was not the Christ (Lk. 3:15-16; Jn. 3:28); he was not E lijah (Matt. 11:14; 17:10-13; Mal. 4:5; Lk, 1:17); and he was not the Prophet (Deut. 18:15, 18; Acts 3:22; 7:37); he was a servant of the Christ. In that he found great dignity (**Jn. 1:19-23**; Matt. 11;11).
- T he Jews did at least recognize that religious innovation did require authority (**Jn. 1:25**; Matt. 21:23-27).
- Clearly John *knew* Jesus (Matt. 3:13-15), but he did not *know* Him as the Christ until God revealed it to him (**Jn. 1:31, 33**).
- Jesus did indeed exist before John, even though John was born before Jesus (**Jn. 1:30**; Lk. 1:35-36; cf. 8:56-58).

### Relationship to the Church

- Repentance is still demanding (Acts 26:20).
- Authority is still required in religion (II T im 2:15; 3:16-17; Ii Pet. 1:2-4).
- Satan is still active (I Pet. 5:8).
- Jesus is still more powerful than Satan (Rom. 16:20).
- Jesus came not only to save us, but to show us God and transform our lives into conformity with Him (Rom. 8:29; 12:1-2; II Cor. 3:18).
- S piritual relationships and values are still superior to whatever S atan offers as their rivals (Matt. 16:24-27).

### Who is Jesus?

- He is the One who put S atan to flight.
- He stands where we often fall.
- He is not "too good" to do what is needed.
- He is the focus, core, and interpreter of all that is God!

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The 1st disciples				1:35-51
The 1st miracle - Water to wine				2:1-12
The 1st temple cleansing				2:13-25
Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night				3:1-21
Disciples baptize many in Judea				3:22-24
Disciples ask John about Jesus				3:25-36

## Overriding Principles

- As Jesus begins His public ministry, we immediately see that He is to be well connected with people—all kinds of people.
- He has come to “seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:10).

## Main Point

- Nathanael said to him, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see: (Jn. 1:46).
- God’s most powerful revelation of Himself is in the Christ (Jn. 14:7-9).

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- Jesus is God’s sacrificial lamb (**Jn. 1:36**; cf. 1:29; Ex. 12:1-13; Isa. 53:6-7; Acts 8:32; I Pet. 1:19; Rev. 5:6, 6, 8, 12-13; 6:1; Gen. 22:8).
- John’s ministry begins to wane as two of his disciples follow Jesus (**Jn. 1:37**; cf. Jn. 3:30).
- To see in Jesus our only hope of salvation is to want to share our great discovery with others (**Jn. 1:41, 45**; cf. Matt. 13:44-46; II Cor. 4:13).
- Nathanael is probably the disciple known in the Synoptics as Bartholomew (**Jn. 1:45**; Matt. 10:3).
- The *best* thing we can do evangelistically is to help people see Jesus (**Jn. 1:46**).
- Jesus is both the *Son of God* and the *Son of Man*—He is both God and man (**Jn. 1:49, 51**; cf. Job 9:30-35).

- The water to wine miracle at Cana is often obscured by debate about whether or not the wine was fermented. The Greek word, οἶνος, can mean either fermented or unfermented grape juice (cf. Matt. 9:17). The question about the nature of the wine can surely be answered by looking to Proverbs 23:29-35 and I Peter 4:3. Jesus would not have encouraged an alcoholic drinking party. The remarks of the waiter in John 1:10 do not take away from the conclusion that the wine was unfermented. First, there are many quotes from ancient writers that speak of the superiority of non-intoxicating wine (unfermented or with the alcohol filtered out) see McGuigan's *The Bible, the Saint and the Liquor Industry*. Additionally, the Greek word μεθύω, translated, "drunk freely," in the NASB or "well drunk" in the KJV, can carry the meaning of "filled or sated", rather than "drunk," see I Corinthians 11:21 where being filled with food and drink in contrast to those who were empty is clearly the meaning in context (**Jn. 2:6-10**).
- The main teaching of the Cana miracle centers on two concerns. The first is the most obvious, the power Jesus had to do what could not be done without power from God. The second is more subtle, but more telling—with the working of the first miracle, Jesus began walking on the road that lead to the cross—note the use of the word "hour" by Jesus, v.4; cf. Jn. 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20 (**Jn. 2:1-11**).
- Jesus response to His mother, "Woman, what have I to do with you," has somewhat of an edge to it. He shows a distance between His ultimate concerns and her concerns as a wedding hostess (**Jn. 2:4**).
- John will use the word "sign," σημεῖον: a signal, to develop the presentation of his Gospel. In the signs Jesus performs, John is more concerned with what they point to or signify beyond themselves; the Synoptic writers prefer "miracle" from δυνάμις: an act of power (**Jn. 2:11**; 2:23; 3:2; 4:54; 6:2,14, 26, 30; 7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37; 20:30).
- John finds the Passover to be the most noteworthy of the Jewish feasts in relationship to Jesus' ministry. Jesus' is the true Passover lamb (**Jn. 2:13**; 6:4; 11:55; and 5:3 in some manuscripts; cf. Jn. 1:29, 36; 19:31-37).
- The Jews had taken away the Court of the Gentiles to make merchandise. They had developed a very profitable money changing operation to allow Jews to use coinage that did not bear the "unclean" marks of Caesar. Additionally, they just happened to have unblemished lambs on hand in case their inspections found fault with those brought by the worshippers. When money becomes more important

than the worship of the Father, Jesus is very displeased. It is interesting that Jesus begins and ends His ministry in Jerusalem by cleansing the temple at the time of Passover (**Jn. 2:14-16**; Matt. 12:16; Mk. 11:15-18; Lk. 19:45-47).

- The concerns of the Father could not be dispassionately overlooked by Jesus (**Jn. 2:17**).
- We get some indication of the year of the first cleansing of the temple as the Jews point out that the refurbishing of the temple had been going on for forty-six years. The project began in 20/19 BC, thus making the year about AD 26/27 (**Jn. 2:20**).
- Jesus is the true fulfillment of the temple as He was, in the most absolute sense, *God with us* (**Jn. 2:19**; cf. Jn. 1:1, 14; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:21-23).
- Jesus, like the Father, does not deal primarily in outward appearances, but in matters of the heart (**Jn. 2:24-25**; I Sam. 16:7).
- Miraculous manifestations got attention among the people and among the religious establishment. Nicodemus, a leader among the Pharisees, came to check Jesus out. His coming by night is especially mentioned, undoubtedly indicating that he did not want to be seen with Jesus until He passed the muster of the Jewish leaders (**Jn. 2:23; 3:1-2**; cf. Jn. 7:50; 19:39).
- The pride of Nicodemus came between Jesus and access to his heart. When Jesus tells him that he, a notable Rabbi (v. 10), must undergo a fundamental change if he is to be saved, he balks and gives a silly response. Nicodemus was accustomed to telling, not to being told (**Jn. 3:1-9**; cf. Rom. 2:17-24).
- The word "again" in *born again* comes from *ανωθεν*, which more properly means "from above," which would refer to being born spiritually by God's grace. The word could also be used to mean born *again*. Jesus almost surely refers to the former, while Nicodemus decides to be evasive by injecting the absurd idea of entering again into his mother's womb. Spiritual rebirth, as Jews saw it, was for Gentiles, not for them. When we do not like to go where God directs us, we can become ridiculous (**Jn. 3:1-9**).
- I believe Jesus is referring to either the water of John's baptism or to Jewish ceremonial washings in His comments to Nicodemus, since he was expected to know what Jesus meant (cf. v. 10-12). I favor the latter since, in the Jewish context of Jesus' day, ceremony was often given in place of the heart. The heart or spirit must be engaged in a life of service to God. As a Pharisee, Nicodemus

would have relied heavily on the outward things and neglected spiritual concerns (Matt. 23:1-39). Whether or not I am correct on this one, people today must be baptized by the authority of Christ or they cannot be saved (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4). And in Christian conversion, the water of baptism is a necessity (Acts 8:36; Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5; I Pet. 3:21; Acts 22:16; I Cor. 6:11).

- Jesus attempts to turn Nicodemus to spiritual things by using an analogy between how the spirit works and how the wind works (the Greek word for *spirit* and *wind* are the same, πνευμα. As the wind is invisible, but its work is visible, so the invisible work of the spirit on the heart is visible in the changed actions of a converted person (**Jn. 3:8**).
- Jesus refers to the nature of His atoning death by referencing Moses' lifting up the bronze serpent in the wilderness (**Jn. 3:14**; Num. 21:9; cf. Jn. 8:28; 12:34).
- It is a very costly thing for God to love us. It should be noted that belief requires a response. Almost everybody believes that (cf. Rom. 10:9-10; Lk. 24:47; Jas 2:14-26; Mk. 16:16). The only real question is, "What is required?" The giving of Jesus gives believers a "right" to be saved that "should not" be refused (**Jn. 3:16**; cf. Jn. 1:12).
- The phrase "only begotten" links Jesus to Abraham's son of promise, Isaac, who was a type of Christ (**Jn. 3:16-18**; Gen. 22:1-12; Heb. 11:17-19).
- God is *far more* desirous of salvation than of condemnation (**Jn. 3:17**; I Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9).
- Evil hates light. It exposes it for what it is, removing its disguise to reveal its ugliness (**Jn. 3:19-21**; cf. Matt. 7:15; Eph. 5:11-12).
- Note that John chose where he baptized because "much" water was required. A testimony to immersion (**Jn. 3:23**; cf. Acts 8:38-39; Rom. 6:3-4).
- John the Baptizer shows his greatness by willingly stepping back from a very popular ministry to clear the way for Jesus (**Jn. 26-30**; cf. Matt. 11:7-11).
- It is interesting to note that inspiration links belief with obedience (**Jn. 3:36**).

## Relationship to the Church

- God will not accept outward correction without inward conversion any more than He will accept that genuine inner conversion does not show its fruit in obedience.

- Jesus will still be very upset if the nature of true worship and service to the Father is obscured by selfish men and women.
- Passion is an indispensable manifestation of devotion to God.
- Standing up for what is right will be opposed by those who seek to do according to their own will rather than God's.
- Shallow faith requires a show.
- It still remains easier to deal with the sins of others than with our own sins.
- True greatness steps back to allow Jesus to be on center stage.
- We bring others to what we appreciate the most.
- Jesus is His own best marketer.

## **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the One with the courage to do what is right, because it is right, no excuses, for God's sake.
- He is the One who tells the heart what it needs to hear, not what it prefers.
- He is the One who works hard to bring salvation to everyone as an individual.
- For reasons I cannot begin to understand, He died that I might live.

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
Herod imprisons John the Baptist	4:12	1:14	(3:19-20)	4:1-4
Samaritan woman at Jacob's well				4:5-26
Disciples question Jesus				4:27-38
Samaritans come to Jesus				4:39-42
Jesus continues toward Galilee			4:14-15	4:43
1st rejection in Nazareth			4:16-30	
Arrival in Cana of Galilee				4:43-45
The 2nd miracle - Official's son healed				4:46-54
Jesus settles in Capernaum	4:13-17	1:14-15	4:31-32	
Fishermen called to be disciples	4:18-22	1:16-20		

## Overriding Principles

- Jesus "had" to do what is right, regardless of custom or tradition.
- Jesus did not come to fit the mold men made to define a Messiah; He came to be God's man!

## Main Point

- The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes He will declare all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He" (Jn. 4:25-26).
- All things that have to do with truth are personified and declared by Jesus.

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- While certain "righteous" Jews in going to Galilee felt the need to cross over to the other side of the Jordan and thus avoid Samaria; Jesus was not such a little or uncaring man as to be guided by such pious prejudices (**Jn. 4:4**).
- Samaria was composed of a mixed race of people, part Jew and part Gentile. This mixture occurred in the days following the captivity of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The name "Samaritan" came from the name of the capital city of the Northern Kingdom. During the days of Nehemiah a rival temple was built



on Mt. Gerizim. During the time of the Maccabean Revolt, John Hyrcanus destroyed it, but worship continued on the mountain even to Jesus' day (**Jn. 4:4**; I Kg. 16:21-24; II Kg. 18:9; 17:24-33; Neh. 4:7-8; 6:1-9; 13:23-28; Ezra 4:1-16).

- Women did not normally go to the well alone, but this woman's past had caused her to be avoided –but Jesus spoke to her anyway (**Jn. 4:7**).
- Jews and Samaritans did not “use the same things,” i.e. they did not drink out of the same bucket. Rabbi Shebi had said, “To eat Samaritan bread was to eat swine flesh” Jesus was unimpressed with such foolishness (**Jn. 4:9**).
- John, in characteristic fashion, uses a word, ζῶν (zon), that, though literally meaning “life,” was also used colloquially to mean running water as opposed to stagnant. Both meanings have a contribution to make to an understanding of the exchange (**Jn. 4:10**).
- Jesus overcame the cynicism of the woman by showing that He truly cared. He was able to get into her heart by simply letting her know that He had time for her. He could comment on the deepest embarrassments of her personal life and take issue with her on the most emotionally charged religious question of the day, because He cared (**Jn. 4:6-26**).
- While an hour of change was coming regarding certain external aspects of worship, the essential principles of “spirit and truth” were and are always necessary. The place of worship today is “in Christ” (**Jn. 4:21-24**; cf. Eph. 1:1-14).
- Jesus gave the most direct and clear declaration of His Messianic identity to someone tradition said He should not have spoken to—a woman, a sinner, and a Samaritan. Jesus is letting us see something here about principles at the heart of true religion—we would do well to learn the lesson (**Jn. 4:25-26**).
- The disciples of Christ, as was common, got lost in the concerns of the day, the shallowest of things, and failed to see the concerns of the Christ (**Jn. 4:27-38**).
- A woman that the good citizens of Sychar had no use for, listened to her when she returned from the well—she had been with Jesus (**Jn. 4:39-42**)!
- Jesus message of “repent for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” has, at times, been misunderstood. “At hand,” from ηγγικεν, means “has drawn near.” In Greek it is a perfect tense idea, an event from the past that is influencing the present. Jesus having come into the world, the kingdom (βασιλεια, the rule and reign of God), had come near. This is not, therefore, speaking of the Messianic Kingdom

of the Church Age, but of the closeness of God to the people of Jesus' day (**Matt. 4:17**).

- Even early in Jesus' ministry, the miracles necessary to establish His true identity were problematic. Consequently, the miracles of Jesus virtually ended after Peter's good confession. Similarly, they lasted only for a short time at the beginning of the Church Age (**Jn. 4:48**; Matt. 16:13-17; I Cor. 13:8b-13; Eph. 4:11-16).
- Honesty can quickly turn those who have a religion of selfishness from "gracious words" to "rage" (**Lk. 4:16-31**; cf. Jn. 5:38-44).
- Zebulun and Naphtali were the first tribes to feel the weight of invaders from the north, and were the first tribes to fall captive to Assyria. Their darkness became light when Jesus spent much of His ministry in that area (**Matt. 4:13-16**).
- The first call of the Peter, Andrew, James, and John came after they had been earlier introduced to Jesus by the work of John the Baptizer and its influence (**Matt. 4:18-22**; **Mk. 1:16-20**; Jn. 1:35-42).

## Relationship to the Church

- The body of Christ must reach out to the world as Christ did while in His body (Jn. 1:14; Eph. 4:15-16).
- Love and compassion still open hearts, but it must be a compassion and love that work in harmony with uncompromised truth (Eph. 4:15).
- Traditions of men and the pride that creates and sustains them are the most dangerous enemies of true Christianity (cf. Mk. 7:1-23).

## Who is Jesus?

- He is the man who brings God near in His very person.
- He is the man uncompromised by pride, prejudice, traditions of men, or the judgments of men.
- He is the man who loves with such a passionate, honest, practical, expression that He both invites and exasperates as He challenges us to become as He is.
- He does truth and has no place for games.
- He how I most perfectly know that God loves me!

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Demoniac in Capernaum Synagogue		1:21-28	4:33-37	
Peter's mother-in-law healed	8:14-17	1:29-31	4:38-39	
Many healed at sunset		1:32-34	4:40-41	
Disciples seek Jesus		1:35-38	4:42-43	
Jesus preaches in Synagogues	4:23-25	1:39	4:44	
Jesus preaches from Simon's boat			5:1-3	
Miraculous catch of fish			5:4-11	
Jesus heals a leper	8:2-4	10:40-45	5:12-16	
Jesus cures a paralytic	9:2-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	

## Overriding Principles

- When we see the Man that could only be God, we are undone and overtaken by amazement!
- The personal and the powerful character of God are both seen in Jesus in the clearest possible light.

## Main Point

- But when Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man O Lord" (Lk. 5:8)!

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- An important aspect of Jesus' ministry was to establish His authority over Satan and all his forces (**Mk. 1:21-28**; Matt. 8:29; cf. Matt. 12:22-30).
- His miracles were generating considerable public amazement. This aspect of His ministry would recede to the point where after the *Good Confession* of Peter (Matt. 16:13-20), He worked only a very few miracles (**Mk. 1:27**).
- Disease was an indirect result of sin, i.e. its consequences. Jesus' victory over disease showed His power over the consequences of sin even as His casting out

of demons dealt with His power over the one who tempted Eve to sin (**Mk. 8:14-17**).

- Jesus regularly found time to be alone with the Father (**Mk. 1:35**; Lk. 5:16; 6:14; Matt. 14:23).
- The heart of Jesus' mission was to preach and teach (**Mk. 1:38**; cf. Matt. 19:16).
- When we compare **Luke 5:1-11** with Isaiah 6:1-8 some parallels emerge that are of considerable significance.
  - o We must see God before we can truly see ourselves.
  - o When we see our true need, we understand that only God can solve the problem of sin.
  - o When we are forgiven in such a context of understanding, we are thankful and eager to serve.
- The fact that Jesus *touched* a leper was something the leper would have treasured perhaps even more than his being healed (**Matt. 8:2-4**; Lev. 13:45-46; cf. 14:2-9).
- The roofs of many ancient houses were made of dried mud and could have sections rather easily removed (**Mk. 4:4**).
- In most cases, faith can and should be seen (**Mk. 2:5**; cf. Hebrews 11:1-31; Jas. 2:14-26).
- Jesus takes a significant step in His ministry when He demonstrates that He has the power to forgive sins (**Matt. 9:2**).
- The reaction of the scribes was understandable, for who but God can forgive sins (**Mk. 2:7**)?
- The part of the Christ's identity that the Jews had the most difficulty believing was that Jesus was God in the flesh (**Mk. 2:6-8**; Isa. 43:25; Jn. 5:18; Mk. 12:35-37; Jn. 1:14).
- Jesus repeatedly shows His superior wisdom and understanding over His detractors (**Matt. 9:4-8**).
- Jesus was truly an amazing man (**Matt. 9:8**; **Mk. 2:12**; **Lk. 5:26**)!

## Relationship to the Church

- The holiness of God needs to be seen in the man Jesus (Col. 2:9).

- We need to have a reverential understanding about what is involved in God being God while we most certainly are not (Ps. 100:1-3).
- We need to be still and find quiet times with God (Ps. 46:10).
- Thankful service is the key to personal and church growth (Jn. 14:15; 23).
- Jesus, in solving the sin problem, solves all other problems we might have.
- As Jesus loved, so we must love (Jn. 13:34-35).
- We are more than conquerors because Jesus conquered Satan and sin (Rom. 8:31-39).
- Our faith must not just be about the words we speak (I Jn 3:18).
- We are to be fishers of men (I Pet. 2:9; 3:15).
- We should continually marvel at the Christ!

## **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the man who conquered Satan and all who serve him.
- He is the *Holy One of God*.
- He has authority over sin.
- He deeply cares for people.
- He is willing to work with us, though we are no worthy.
- He is amazing!
- He cares for me!

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Matthew (Levi) called to be a disciple	9:9	2:13-14	5:27-28	
Parables at Levi's reception	9:10-17	2:15-22	5:29-39	
Jesus in Jerusalem 2nd Passover				5:1
Man healed at pools of Bethesda				5:2-15
Sabbath healing challenged				5:16-47
Disciples pick grain on the Sabbath	12:1-8	2:23-28	6:1-5	

## Overriding Principles

- God's compassionate intentions are often overlooked by men in their self-centered, self-righteous blindness.
- Mercy does not negate law, it does, however, give us a proper focus for interpreting how God wants His law to be employed.

## Main Point

- But go and learn what this means, "I desire compassion and not sacrifice," for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners (Matt. 9:13; Hos. 6:4). But if you had known what this means, "I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice," you would not have condemned the innocent (Matt. 12:7; Hos. 6:4).

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- Tax collectors were the worst of the worst to most Jews—traitors (**Matt. 9:9**).
- Matthew's topical arrangement of material may reflect his accounting background (**Matt. 9:9**).
- The Pharisees forgot that they were sinners and also that God loves to save lost men and women. Their question in **Matthew 9:11** is a monument to their clueless foolishness.

- Those who admit to being sick can be helped by a physician, those in denial will die (**Matt. 9:12**; cf. Jn. 8:24).
- Following the call of Matthew Levi, the persecution phase of Jesus' ministry begins. Jesus gives three reasons behind this change in how He was perceived (**Lk. 5:33-39**).
  - o His message was new and did not match the traditional way the Jews practiced religion. Rather than patching the old practices with something that did not match and would cause considerable disruption, a new garment was needed. Although in different ways, Jesus' remarks applied both to the way of Moses and to the way of Jewish traditions (**v. 36**; Heb. 8:1-13; Mk. 7:1-13).
  - o Neither the patterns and forms Moses nor the structures of rabbinic traditions could hold the new way of the Christ. He would burst them wide open (**vv. 37-38**; Matt. 23:28; 24:1-2).
  - o When people are accustomed to a certain way of doing things, they commonly prefer to hold to those things, even if a better way comes along (**v. 39**; Matt. 23:37).
- The "feast" of **John 5:1** was most likely either Passover or Tabernacles. If Passover, His ministry lasted about 3 1/2 years, if Tabernacles, about 2 1/2.
- As noted in an earlier lesson, John will use the word "sign," **σημειον**: a signal, to organize the development of his Gospel. In the signs Jesus performs, John is more concerned with what they point to or signify beyond themselves; the Synoptic writers prefer "miracle" from **δυναμις**: an act of power (Jn. 2:11; 2:23; 3:2; 4:54; 6:2,14, 26, 30; 7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37; 20:30).
- The *sign* of **John five** is one of a related trio—chapters five, nine, and eleven. The signs of these three chapters: the lame man, the man born blind, and dead Lazarus, betray the heart of the rejection of Jesus. The first appears to break the Sabbath, the second, while on the Sabbath, has less appearance of a problem, the last has no connection with the Sabbath at all. Nevertheless, the anger of the Jews grew with each sign. The problem was never really about the Sabbath, it was about Jesus winning the hearts of those who had followed the Sadducees and Pharisees. They were losing their perverse grip on the people (cf. Jn. 11:47).

- The various Sabbath controversies in Jesus' ministry are the most persistent aspect of the anger of the establishment. They illustrate the lengths self-centered people are willing to go to when they seek to justify what cannot be justified, and, conversely, condemn what is innocent (**Jn. 5:9-10**; cf. Jn. 7:23-24; 9:16; Matt. 12:1-8; 9-14; Mk. 2:27; Lk. 13:10-17; 14:1-6; Ex. 20:8-11; 23:12; 31:12-17; 35:1-3; Num. 15:32-36; Deut. 5:14; Jer. 17:21-23).
- Jesus' question to the paralytic "Do you wish to get well?" may well reveal something about the man. He proves, after all, to be an unpleasant betrayer of Jesus; he may have enjoyed his ill health as one who took pleasure in being able to complain (**Jn. 5:6, 10-15**).
- The religious establishment correctly inferred that Jesus implied that He was God. The Jews were after Jesus' life because of this (**Jn. 5:17-18**; cf. Jn. 7:19, 30, 32, 44; 8:59; 10:39; 11:8, 53; 12:10-11).
- The Jews would face a judgment based on whether or not they had overcome spiritual death by being reborn in the Christ (**Jn. 5:19-29**).
- The Jews studied Scripture not to find truth, but to reinforce their preferences for the teaching of men (**Jn. 5:39-47**).
- The lesson of Matthew twelve that referenced Hosea 6:4 was not learned; for the Jews religion was not about compassion, it was about self-righteous judgment (**Matt. 12:1-8**; cf. Matt. 7:1-1-5).
- In saying that He was Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus did not mean that he could do as He pleased (cf. Matt. 5:17-20), rather He meant that He was the accurate interpreter of Sabbath law—after all, He was the Creator of the days (**Matt. 12:8**; Jn. 1:1-3).
- In the case of David and the "consecrated bread," Jesus shows that God did not make the rule about the bread to keep starving men from food (**Matt. 12:4**; 1 Sam. 21:7).
- Regarding priests serving on the Sabbath, Jesus was teaching with another illustration that some things take precedence over others (**Matt. 12:5**).
- Jesus was greater than the Sabbath or the temple—He was the very fulfillment of both (**Matt. 12:6, 8**; cf. Heb. 4:1-11; Matt. 11:28-30; Jn. 2:18-22).

## Relationship to the Church



- Compassion must be remembered as a driving force in God's work among men (cf. Jn. 3:17).
- It is not that compassion undoes law; compassion properly defines its overall intent.
- Self-righteousness, the product of pride, can look God in the eye and call Him the Devil--BE WARE (cf. Matt. 12:24)!
- Laws must be related to the principles that give them meaning and life (cf. Matt. 23:23-24; Rom. 3:31).
- The proper interpretation of all that God has revealed is a matter of seeing Scripture through the eyes of Jesus, as we come to know Him and become like Him (cf. Rom. 8:29; Eph. 3:16-21).

## **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the man who stands up for truth and against everything false.
- He is the compassionate lover of fallen men.
- He is patiently, yet firmly, there for all who would see their true needs.
- He is the man who rejects pride and exalts humility.
- He is the One who loves me the sinner!

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Man's hand healed on Sabbath	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11	
Jesus withdraws to the sea	12:14-21	3:7		
Many follow Jesus to be healed	4:23-25	3:7-12		
Jesus prays on a mountain			6:12	
Jesus selects 12 disciples		3:13-19	6:13-16	
Jesus descends & heals multitude			6:17-19	
Jesus ascends to preach	5:1			

## Overriding Principles

- God is in the people business.
- The rules God gives are to rescue us and give us abundant life, not to embitter and oppress.

## Main Point

- A battered reed He will not break off, and a smoldering wick He will not put out, until He leads justice to victory (Matt. 12:20).

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- Jesus challenges head-on the Sabbath traditions of the Jews by exposing the hypocrisy of the religious establishment. They valued sheep more than men (**Matt. 12:9-13**)!
- Rather than repent, men commonly shift the blame from themselves to others who are not to blame (**Matt. 12:14**).
- The Pharisees and the Herodians were normally enemies, they were brought together out of a common fear and hatred for the Christ (**Mk. 3:6**; cf. Mk. 12:13).
- Jesus' ministry was becoming extremely popular among the common people (**Matt. 4:25**; **Mk. 3:7-12**).

- The ministry of Jesus was one of gentle recovery for all who would come to Him with a willingness to be healed (**Matt. 12:17-21**; cf. Isa. 42:1-4; Matt. 11:28-30).
- The twelve men Jesus chose to be disciples were, to say the least, not exactly what would have been expected. They were largely common men rather than men of distinction, not to mention that a tax collector, a zealot, and several fishermen should never have worked (**Mk. 3:13-19; Lk. 6:12-16**; cf. I Sam. 16:7).
  - o Zealots were sworn to kill Roman soldiers—they were terrorists.
  - o Tax collectors were regarded as traitors, worse even than the Roman conquerors.
  - o Among the fishermen were two “sons of thunder”—men of explosive temperament (Lk. 9:54-56).
  - o And there was the very impetuous Simon.
  - o An amazing collection that nevertheless worked because they found in Jesus something far bigger than their petty differences.
  - o The leopard did lie down with the kid (Isa. 10:6-10; cf. Rom. 15:10).
- And there was also the traitor, Judas Iscariot (**Mk. 3:19**; cf. Lk. 22:3; Jn. 6:71; 13:2, 26; Matt. 26:14).

## **Relationship to the Church**

- The work of the church is to rescue the perishing and bring them to maturity in Jesus (Col. 1:24-29; Eph. 4:15-16).
- Weakness is allowed, but not indifference, irresponsibility, or rebellion—men sometimes reverse this (II Thess. 3:10; I Thess. 5:14).
- We must care more for men than for possessions—Jesus didn’t die for things.
- We must find a way to patiently, yet uncompromisingly bring all brethren together in harmony (I Cor. 1:10; Jn. 17:21-23).
- The way is found in loving Jesus above everything else, most especially including self (II Cor. 5:14-15; Jn. 14:15, 23; Lk. 14:33-35).

## **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the man who cut through self-centered traditions to stand up for God’s will.
- He is the One who will work with us, no matter how weak we are, as long as we will faithfully work with Him.

- He is the man who perfectly combines justice and mercy to bring salvation.

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Sermon on the Mount	7:1-29		6:37-42, 31, 43-49	

## Overriding Principles

- A kingdom citizen is to demonstrate responsibility, discernment, initiative, and diligence.
- Involvement in real life with all its difficulties and challenges is unavoidable and must therefore be embraced.

## Main Points

- Do not judge lest you be judged (Matt 7:1).
- Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you (Matt. 7:7).
- Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets (Matt. 7:12).
- Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it (Matt. 7:13).
- Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves (Matt. 7:15).
- Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord" will enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- One of the most misapplied verses of the New Testament is **Matthew 7:1**. The warning is not against any and all kinds of judgment (cf. Jn. 7:24), but against self-righteous, unloving judgments. In fact, **Matthew 7:6** demands very severe judgment— withholding the word of God from certain people.

- Luke gives an expansion of the thoughts of Matthew 7:1-5 by showing that the judgments we make lead to the actions we take. We are to live positive, helpful lives. We can neither teach nor live what we do not first know. Luke additionally shows that applied judgment centers on the fact that we are to be about the business of imitating Jesus, not seeking our own way (**Lk. 6:37-42**; cf. Matt. 10:24; Jn. 13:16; 15:20; Lk. 22:27).
- Jesus' admonition to "ask, seek, and knock" is recorded in the Greek present tense, indicating a continuous action. Note additionally the relationship between Matthew 7:7 and 7:13-14. Finding a place off the beaten path requires inquiry, searching, and finally requesting access (**Matt. 7:7**).
- Matthew **7:11-12** shows us something very important about God and His love for us—He deals with us from the context a loving Father with beloved children (cf. Jn. 3:16-17).
- Note the "therefore" at the beginning of *The Golden Rule*. Matthew 7:7-11 provides the context for the proper understanding of the idea. Those who want God's truth for their own lives will want only to give that truth to others (**Matt. 7:12**).
- **Matthew 7:13-14** shows that truth is not something you stumble into or acquire by following the majority; it must be desired and pursued (cf. I Cor. 1:18-2:2).
- False prophets are a dangerous reality that must be recognized and rejected. Their fruits or work will betray their feigned kindness. Error is not made truth through mere pretense or by "smooth, flattering speech" (**Matt. 7:15-20**; **Lk. 6:43-45**; cf. Rom. 16:17-18; Lk. 7:1; Jn. 15:1-10; Rom. 7:4).
- There is a practicality to Jesus' teachings that cuts through any attempt to reduce it to mere philosophy. **Matthew 7:21** and **Luke 6:46** are classic examples of this truth—what could be more practical than to hear and do?
- Judgment Day will reveal the both the blinding nature and the complete failure of religious self-deception. We must be very careful what we choose to believe, not because truth is tricky, but because pride and selfishness are so strong (**Matt. 7:22**).
- To be "known" by Jesus we must know Him in the keeping of His word (**Matt. 7:23**; cf. Jn. 17:3).

- Jesus expands the practicality of Matthew 7:21 in the simple, but profound analogy of the two builders. Hearing and doing, while not the whole of relationship is nevertheless a core ingredient of it (**Matt. 7:24-27; Lk. 6:47-49**).
- The result of Jesus' teaching was that a sense of amazement was created among the people. They were accustomed to hearing what the great Rabbis had taught on a given matter. Jesus showed them that Scripture, not men, is the source of true authority (**Matt. 7:28-29**).

### **Relationship to the Church**

- Christianity is realistic, not in reducing the standards of the Christ, but in seeing how religion addresses reality rather than a manufactured, nonexistent world.
- As attractive as are self-righteous judgments, and as unattractive as are truthful judgments, we must refrain from the former and practice the latter.
- The church must go forward with engaged brains, learning, seeing, discerning, and taking all appropriate action.
- We must not be a church of men, but of Christ.

### **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the One who speaks of how things ought to be, never of how men want them to be.
- He is not "politically correct," but He is correct.
- He "dialed direct," what could mere men contribute to the Father's truth?

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

Sermon on the Mount

**Matthew**

**Mark**

**Luke**

**John**

6:1-34

## Overriding Principles

- The heart, not outward show, is the place God looks to find who we really are.
- God will provide.
- Be careful what choices you make, they determine whether we are God's or Satan's.

## Main Points

- Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in Heaven (Matt. 6:1).
- But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you (Matt. 6:33).

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- A true test of our religion is whether we must be seen by men practicing it to find satisfaction. Is our motivation God or pride (**Matt. 6:1**; Matt. 23:5)?
- Alms are gifts of charity, not to be confused with regular offerings which were often public in nature. This verse does not prohibit all forms of public giving any more than the instruction on prayer (Matt. 6:5-6) prohibits public prayer (cf. 1 Tim. 2:1-8). The instruction here and through verse 18 deals primarily with the need for worship and service to be rooted in our personal relationship to God—if He is pleased, we should be pleased (**Matt. 6:2**; Mk. 12:41-44).
- The rewards of a prideful exhibition are no greater than the momentary adulation they might bring; the rewards of true devotion are incalculable. The word for "to be seen" is *qeaqhnai* (theathanai), from which we get the word *theatrical* (**Matt. 6:1**; Matt. 23:1-12).



- The instruction Jesus gives on prayer has to do primarily with our private prayer life. Content, not length, is the important factor. The Christ stresses the importance of: the Fatherhood and holiness of God; the importance of God's kingdom (His rule) both for our lives and in the world, the ability to be satisfied with needs rather than wants, the absolute necessity of practicing forgiveness, and the need for God's help in times of temptation (**Matt. 6:7-15**; Lk. 11:2-4; II Cor. 1:3; Lev. 19:2; Rom. 14:7; Lk. 22:42; Prov. 30:8; Matt. 18:21-35; I Cor. 10:13).
- Fasting was a longstanding cultural expression among the Jews and many other peoples. It centers on the principle that there are times when normal life needs to be suspended for the sake of more holy priorities. In the case of fasting, food would be the thing given up to allow one to address needs of a more spiritual nature. Holy undertakings, distress, mourning and repentance were four common reasons for fasting (Ex. 34:28; Dan. 9:3; Jud. 20:26; Ps. 35:13; I Sam. 31:13; Neh. 9:1). The Jews had only one prescribed fast, and it, the Day of Atonement, is even somewhat doubtful (Lev. 16:29; 23:27; cf. Ps. 35:13; Isa. 58:3). Jesus is here, as with alms giving and prayer, prescribing for private expressions of religion. Such fasting is not to be broadcast; it is to be between a person and their God. Should we fast today? Undoubtedly with regard to food and other otherwise needful things, there should be times when more holy activities gain our undivided attention. Nevertheless, such practices are between a person and his God (**Matt. 6:16-18**).
- Jesus' teaching on earthly versus heavenly treasure can easily be misunderstood. Wealth per se is not evil, but the priority of amassing wealth is. This is a matter of priority. That being said, it is still important to note that wealth very often carries a heavy load of temptations—beware (**Matt. 6:19-21**; Matt. 19:23-24)!
- The "eye" as the lamp of the body does not refer to the physical eye. Jesus has in mind our spiritual perception. If our view of the world around us does not see from God's point of view, we are in great darkness. We are doomed to fail eternally with such a distorted sense of things as comes with our own sight (**Matt. 6:22-23**; I Cor. 1:18-2:2; II Cor. 5:7; Matt. 15:14).
- Jesus boils service down to its lowest common denominator with the remarks about service to a master. We will either choose God or we will choose something temporal, "mammon" standing for material possessions. We fool ourselves if we think otherwise—to not serve God is to serve mammon. The point is reinforced

with great strength as Jesus uses birds of the air and lilies of the field to portray God's care for the creation. If He cares so for birds and flowers, how much more does He care for us. God's people must, therefore, be different from worldly people—with us God and His will (the meaning of "kingdom") must be first. We are to take life one day at a time rather than fretting over all manner of woes that our lack of faith magnifies into monsters (**Matt. 6:24-34**).

- The word seek, *zhteite* (zeteite), is in a form that indicates continued action in this context (**Matt. 6:33**).
- Care for tomorrow, such as a farmer's preparations for future crops, etc., is expected, anxiety, however, is soundly forbidden (**Matt. 6:34**).

## Relationship to the Church

- Christianity is not about putting up a good front, neither is it about selfish gratification; it is about heartfelt devotion that will express itself for God's sake.
- Avoiding improper outward demonstrations of righteousness does not mean, however, that we are to live in secret—we have already seen otherwise (Matt. 5:13-16). An important key to life is to find the balance between Matthew 5:16 and Matthew 6:1.
- Every Christian should have a rich life of private devotion to God.
- God must be revered, but as a Father, not as a dictator.
- God's will must be a thing the Christian desires above anything to do with self.
- Forgiveness from God will, among other things, be based on our forgiveness toward others.
- Temptations are powerful things; we need God if we are to overcome.
- There are times when our normal way of life needs to be interrupted for things more high and holy.
- If our spiritual perception is not shaped by God, we walk in a darkness that is most terrible!
- True treasures are things of an eternal nature; our actions and decisions should show that we know this to be the true.
- We will serve something, either God or something else.
- God first, God always first!
- Anxiety is but practical atheism.

## Who is Jesus?

- He is the One who sees through our selfishness and points us to a life of integrity.
- He is the Son of God who must give preference to His Father even as we must.
- He shows us where we can find true value and true meaning.
- He would have our lives blessed richly in truth; He must have a great love for us!

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Sermon on the Mount	5:1-48		6:17-26	

## Overriding Principles

- Spirituality is often understood quite differently from the way God sees it.
- Jesus is the ultimate interpreter of God (cf. Jn. 1:18).

## Main Point

- Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill (Matt. 5:17).

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- Spirituality (kingdom living) is centered in attitudes (**Matt. 5:3-12; Lk. 6:20-26**).
- Though sounding like the word "attitude," the word "beatitude" comes from a Latin word, *beatus*, meaning *blessed or happy*. The Greek word introducing each attitude of heart is μακάριος, which also means *blessed or happy*.
- Each of the beatitudes relates to an Old Covenant teaching dealing with the values God cherishes. They also describe those who would participate in the Messianic Kingdom (cf. Ps. 40:17; 26:1; 109:16; Isa. 61:1-3; Ps. 37:11; Isa. 55:1; Ps. 51:1; Ps. 24:4; II Chron. 36:16).
- The *poor in spirit* represent those who come to God in humility, not in pride; those who come to receive because they have nothing to offer. They have the courage to admit their spiritual bankruptcy. The Old Testament often spoke of the poor not to emphasize their economic woes, but to emphasize their confidence in God regardless deprivations. These would be the people who found the true value of God's kingdom (**Matt. 5:3**; cf. Lk. 18:9-14; Isa. 64:6; Ps. 37:14; 40:17; 69:28-33; Prov. 16:19; 29:23; Isa. 61:1).

- *Those who mourn* are those who can be touched by the consequences of their own sins as well as the sins of others. Comfort comes to such (**Matt. 5:4**; cf. Ps. 51; 119:136; Isa. 61:1-3; E zek. 9:4).
- *The meek or gentle* represent those with no pretence about them, men and women who are strong enough to be gentle when the flesh would be otherwise. The *earth* they would *inherit* refers to a spiritual enrichment, as with Isaiah 32:13-20; Acts 3:19-21 (**Matt. 5:5**; cf. I Pet. 3:4, 14-15; Matt. 11:29; Jas. 3:13; Ps. 37:9, 11, 29).
- *Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness* are the passionate searchers who can only be satisfied by God. To seek what is right is to seek God Himself. Augustine said, "Our souls are restless until they find rest in You" (**Matt. 5:6**; cf. Ps. 42:2; 63:1; Amos 8:11-14; Matt. 7:7-11).
- *The merciful* are believers who practice both forgiveness and compassion. God shows no mercy to those who do not practice it (**Matt. 5:7**; cf. Matt. 6:12, 14-15; 18:21-35; Lk. 17:3-5; Matt. 9:36-38).
- *The pure in heart* are people who possess two critical attributes; they have an inner moral purity as well as a singleminded, undivided loyalty. Wholeness and purity cannot exist except that they exist together. The pure heart is the heart that sees God (**Matt. 5:8**; Deut. 10:16; 30:6; I Sam 15:22; Ps. 24:3-4; 5:4-17; Gen. 50:5-6; Prov. 22:11; Matt. 7:24).
- *Peacemakers* are those who bring troubled souls to God. In the Messianic Age; the Prince of Peace can accept nothing short of the peace that God alone can give. In the days of the Christ, the Romans prided themselves on the peace maintained by their mighty armies. The Roman writer E p i c t e t o s, however, summed up the inadequacies of the Roman Peace by writing, "... while the emperor may give peace from war on land and sea, he is unable to give peace from passion, grief, and envy. He cannot give peace of heart for which man yearns more than even for outward peace" (**Matt. 5:9**; Jn. 14; 27; 16:33; Prov. 15:1; Isa. 52:7; Lk. 24:36; Rom. 10:15; 12:18; I Cor. 7:15; E p h. 2:11-22; Heb. 12:14; I Pet. 3:11).
- All the attitudes of heart Jesus covers in the preceding beatitudes, culminating in the peacemaker who uses them all, paradoxically find themselves faced with persecution! What a shame it is that the virtues the world often claims to love, it actually hates. Know this; opposition is the normal condition of those who would follow Jesus. And yet, there is joy even here (**Matt. 5:10-12**; cf. Jn. 15:18-25; Acts 14:22; II T im. 3:12; I Pet. 4:13-14; esp. **Lk. 6:26**; Col. 1:24; Jas. 1:2-4; I Pet.

- 1:6, 8; 4:13; Rev. 19:7; Lk. 1:47; 10:21; Jn. 5:35; 8:56; Acts 2:26; 16:34; II Chron. 24:21; Neh. 9:26; Jer. 20:2; Matt. 21:35; 23:32-37; Acts 7:52; I Thess. 2:15).
- The three woes of **Luke 6:24-26** show the other side of the persecution coin. God's people will suffer opposition and persecution from those who choose worldly, selfish values, but woe to those who choose such values (Gen 12:1-3; I Thess. 1:5-12).
  - Attitudes of heart are required if we are to have the kind of influence that will preserve, enrich, and enlighten the world. Salt preserves and gives taste, light reveals and clarifies. If we are not salt and light we are worthless in the most profound way. If our saltiness and illumination are not according to kingdom values, they are ineffective and valueless (**Matt. 5:13-16**; cf. Mk. 4:21; 9:50; Lk. 8:16; 11:33; 14:34-35).
  - We will do well to listen carefully to what Jesus says about His purpose in the Sermon on the Mount. In the words of **Matthew 5:17-20** we find that Jesus is not opposing Moses; He is rather giving the fullness of Moses in contrast to the narrow, self-serving interpretations of the Pharisees (cf. Deut. 1:5; 10:10; II Chron. 19:1-11).
  - The NASB translation has "abolish" in **Matthew 5:17**. This is an unfortunate rendering, "destroy" being the intent. Jesus did abolish the Law and the Prophets (Eph. 2:14-15) as being part of a binding covenant by fulfilling them. He did not destroy them; they continue to have value today as the inspired word of God. They still show us God and they still reflect the eternal values inherent in His holy nature (Heb. 8:1-13; Rom. 15:4; II Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17; Heb. 13:8).
  - An additional emphasis of **Matt. 5:17-20** is the uncompromising loyalty Jesus had to the word of God. No part of it was negotiable. All of it was pertinent. Even the least law of a binding covenant is never to be rejected or amended. While Jesus often demonstrated that there was more to a given passage than had been understood in its full biblical context, He never discounted any passage as being without value in its proper context (Matt. 23:23; Heb. 2:1-3; Matt. 4:4; Gal. 3:15).
  - In **Matthew 5:21-48** Jesus offers six contrasts between the way God's law was traditionally understood and the way God intended it to be understood.
  - Murder—it's more than you think! Murder does not generally occur in a vacuum, it is the conclusion of a series of steps. Therefore, any step taken in its direction,

regardless of whether it actually results in murder, is a step too far away from God (**Matt. 5:21-26**; Ex. 20:13; cf. Deut. 16:18).

- Adultery—it too is more than you think! The act of adultery begins in the mind. Sexual sins require the mind to give inappropriate attention to hormones. The opposite sex is designed to be appealing, that is not the problem—it is an unlawful thought or action that is a sin. The fact that Jesus deals with the thoughts of men rather than those of women does not mean women cannot sin in their thoughts—men, however, must be more on guard. Modesty of dress, movement, and language are all significant factors in this concern. The literalness of dismemberment is a hyperbole to emphasize the seriousness of the matter (**Matt. 5:27-30**; Ex. 20:14; cf. Gal. 3:19; I Cor. 6:9).
- Divorce—God hates it! From the beginning God has never endorsed divorce and He has given only one exception to allow it. The “and’ introducing this two verse section links it to the adultery introduced in **verse 27**. Marriage is God’s designated place for sexual activity, and only an unlawful sexual expression can legally break a marriage. If anyone accepts the validity of a divorce not for fornication and then remarries, it is sin. The only acceptable remarriage for a divorced person is a remarriage where sexual misconduct was engaged in by ones mate. The Old Testament passage in question here, Deuteronomy 24:1-4, did not actually prescribe divorce. It, when properly translated, simply mentions divorce in a rather involved “if—then” scenario. Hence Moses did not command, but merely permitted divorce (did not deal actively with it) because of the hardness of the people’s hearts (**Matt. 5:31-32**; Deut. 24:1-4 cf. Matt. 19:1-12; Mal. 2:13-16; Gen. 1:27; 2:24; 5:2).
- False vows—taken where God did not intend! Vows were to be between an individual and God or for legal agreements that would affect parties beyond the individuals involved in a transaction, not for interpersonal relationships. Not only had the Pharisees taken the idea of vows from their proper expression, they had distorted them into a dishonest game designed to defraud. They chose some things that would bind a vow while they allowed other things to not be of binding force. To swear by the temple was not binding, to swear by the gold of the temple was—how foolish and dishonest! Regarding vows, the courts cannot take one litigants word over another’s, hence vows were in order to establish legal matters. Additionally, God’s exalted nature made a more solemn commitment to Him by men altogether

appropriate. In interpersonal relationships, however, our word is to be our bond (**Matt. 5:33-37**; Lev. 19:12; Num. 30:2; Deut. 5:11; 6:3; 23:21-23; cf. Num. 6:1-8; Matt. 23:16-22; 26:63-64; Gen. 21:22-34).

- Eye for eye, tooth for tooth—another teaching taken from its context! The standard of justice for Hebrew courts was that the punishment fit the crime; this was not a standard for personal vengeance. We are to do what we can to diffuse and settle matters short of the court. Government, and those it duly authorizes as its agents, are the vehicle for punishment in God's system of things. We are to actually go farther than duty demands so as to encourage good. Rome could compel a Jew to carry baggage for a soldier the distance of a mile. The Jews hated this and did it most grudgingly; Jesus said go two miles. A backhanded slap was a supreme insult; Jesus said, turn the other cheek. (**Matt. 5:38-42**; Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21; cf. Rom. 12:17-13:5; consider the influence of the "good man" Rom. 5:7; the good man does more than he is duty bound to do, the righteous man, in this comparison, does his duty, but not beyond).
- Love your neighbor and hate your enemy—a hateful addition! God had indeed said, "love your neighbor," but He had not said "hate your enemy." The Pharisees had even restricted the meaning of neighbor to mean Jews, and Jews that met their approval at that (cf. Lk. 10:25-37; Matt. 9:10-13). Much to the contrary of the hatred of the Pharisees, Jesus taught love of enemies and prayer for those who persecute us. Otherwise, what have we done more than express a common selfish greeting to those who are just like us? Our standard for true completeness and holiness is no less than God Himself. This is a fitting close to this section of the Sermon on the Mount. The standard is God, and the interpreter of God is Jesus (Jn. 1:18; 14:7-9). As God is well rounded in His character, so must we be (**Matt. 5:43-48**; Lev. 19:18; cf. Lev. 19:9-10, 33-34; Lev. 19:2).

## Relationship to the Church

- The heart is the place God first considers.
- Attitudes define who we really are.
- Acceptable influence is impossible apart from being a godly person.
- Christian virtues are quite different from the "virtues" the world practices.
- Persecution will follow Christlikeness.



- We should not try to minimize God's will to suit a checklist mentality; we should try to explore the full implications of God's intentions.
- As the noted theologian, Barney Fife so eloquently put it, "Nip it in the bud."
- Marriage remains sacred in God's eyes.
- Our integrity ought to seal the validity of our words.
- Vengeance is for God and government.
- Love is for all.
- God, as best seen in Jesus, is the only acceptable standard for our conduct.

## **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the Master Teacher!
- In Jesus we see a man of complete integrity.
- He neither played games nor accommodated them when played by others.
- He is our best friend who would have us reach our full potential and thus derive our greatest joy.

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
Jesus heals a Centurion's servant	8:5-13		7:1-10	
Widow of Nain's son is raised			7:11-17	
2 of John's disciples question Jesus	11:2-6		7:18-23	
Jesus commends John the Baptist	11:7-19		7:24-35	

## Overriding Principles

- Faith is best illustrated in trustful obedience, but human faith is never without its moments of doubt.
- The great enemy, death, lacks its finality when confronted by the Christ.

## Main Points

- Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled, and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel" (Matt. 8:10).
- And He came up and touched the coffin and said, "Young man, I say to you arise!" And the dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him back to his mother (Lk. 7:14-15).
- And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard; the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the Gospel preached to them" (Lk. 7:22).

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- Centurions play a variety of important roles in the New Testament (i.e. Lk. 23:47; Acts 10:22; 22:26; 22:17-23; 24:23; 27:1, 43).

- A centurion was a somewhat like a cross between a captain and a sergeant, the most important practical position in the officer's core of the Roman army.
- A difference between Matthew and Luke's account of the centurion is that Matthew pictures him as speaking directly to Jesus while Luke has him speaking through Jewish elders. There is no contradiction, but rather an interesting contrast of cultures. In Hebrew culture, one representing another was often spoken of in terms that apply to one who sent the representative (i.e. Ex. 3:1-6; 20:1-17; Heb. 2:1-5; Acts 7:53; Heb. 1:1-2). Western culture, Luke wrote to a Greek audience, is more literal in such matters.
- In addition to the centurion, it is interesting to study the people Jesus especially noticed and called attention to (i.e. Matt. 9:20-22; 15:21-28; Mk. 12:41-44).
- Faith trusts (**Matt. 8:8-10**)!
- The Jews did not have a corner on the market of Godliness, a relationship with God is first a matter of the heart, mere outward ceremony cannot substitute for true faith (**Matt. 8:11-12**).
- Jesus is not, as God, an impersonal, untouchable man. He can be touched by our sorrows and He wants to touch us with His comfort (**Lk. 7:11-15**; cf. Heb. 4:14-16; Lk. 19:41-43).
- *Fear*, perhaps best understood as being like the loving respect or reverence a child has for a parent, is a necessary component if we are to sincerely give God glory (**Lk. 7:16**; cf. Isa. 6:1-8; Lk. 5:1-11; Eccl. 12:13).
- John had come to know that Jesus was the Messiah on the day that Jesus came to him to be baptized (Jn. 1:29-34). Yet, even John had moments while under duress when he needed reassurance (**Matt. 11:2-3**).
- Jesus' deeds and words speak for themselves; He can be none other than God in flesh (**Matt. 11:4-5**).
- Jesus is not always what we expect, we must therefore be careful that in our weakness we do not find offense in the things He represents and demands (**Matt. 11:6**; **Lk. 7:23**).
- Gospel preaching is not for soft men (**Matt. 11:7-11**)!
- How is it that John the Baptist had no man born of woman that excelled him, yet those *least* in the kingdom of heaven were greater than John? Commonly it is said that those in the church, the Messianic expression of kingdom, since they have a better situation, are superior to John (i.e. (Heb. 8:1-13, etc.). This may well be

true, however, might Jesus be contrasting the *born of woman* aspect of humanity with the *kingdom* citizenship possibility for humanity? The saved are always in God's kingdom, be it pre-messianic or the Kingdom of Christ (cf. I Cor. 15:20-28). Might Jesus be making a point about not trusting in personal goodness, but realizing that men have hope only in their being accepted by God in grace? Perhaps this explains **Matthew 11:12-13** by showing that a person cannot force his way into the kingdom, rather he must enter it by grace?

- John fulfilled the prophecies about the coming of E lijah, not that he was a reincarnated E lijah, but that both in prophetic simile and metaphor, he came as a man of E lijah's makeup (**Matt. 11:14**; Mal. 4:5; Matt. 17:10-13; Mk. 9:11-13; Lk. 1:7; Jn. 1:21).
- How revealing it is to know that the religious leaders of Jesus' day were the very ones to most completely reject God's saving message, while the common people were most prone to give God heed (**Lk. 7:29-30**).
- It is a sad fact that men, though created in God's image, are notorious for not listening to God, regardless of how He speaks (**Matt. 11:16-19**; note **Lk. 7:35**). The externals are often used as an excuse for why God is not entertained, but when externals change, the rejection continues. When all is considered, it is God who is clearly vindicated.

## Relationship to the Church

- Christianity is a religion that both exists and thrives through faith, a trust in God that is clearly seen in the deeds of the saved.
- Among the people of God, comfort for those in distress is not an option.
- We must grow to feel the joys and sorrows of one another.
- Doubt is unavoidable, but it will, through faith, always find that God will provide.
- Greatness is in God, not in self.
- The tactics of men used to gain place and power in the church are unacceptable to God.
- Let us be on our guard that we do not require of God that He caters to our foolishness—He will not.
- Let us have a heart to accept God however He chooses to present the truths of His word.

- God's words and deeds speak for themselves; let them bring us comfort in time of doubt and distress.
- A realization of our sinfulness as opposed to an inflated sense of our importance is needed if we are to hear when God speaks.

## Who is Jesus?

- He is the one who notices and complements the people who are in keeping with the holy character of God.
- **He cares!**
- He calls things what they are.
- He bids death to depart, and it does.
- He transformed everyday life into something special by bringing God into the work-a-day world of men and women.

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
Jesus rebukes 3 cities	11:20-30			
Jesus eats with Simon the Pharisee			7:36-50	
Generous women			8:1-3	
Jesus heals demon-possessed man	12:22-23	3:20-22		
Pharisees rebuked	12:24-37	3:22-30		
The sign of Jonah	12:38-45			
Family seeks Jesus	12:46-50	3:31-35	8:19-21	

## Overriding Principles

- There is no excuse for rejecting Jesus, once He has been encountered.
- Jesus invites us to a relationship of friends so we might learn of Him.
- Humility and thanksgiving bring acceptance, pride and smugness prevent it.
- Beware! Self-manufactured religion will make us think God is the Devil!
- Blood is thicker than water, and Jesus' blood is thicker than ours.

## Main Points

- Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest; Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me ... (Matt. 11:28-29a).
- ... He who is forgiven little, loves little. (Lk. 7:47).
- ... An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; ... (Matt. 12:39).
- For whoever does the will of My Father who is in Heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother (Matt. 12:50).

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- To whom much is given, much is expected (Matt. 11:20-24; Lk. 12:48b).
- Jesus' use of "wise and intelligent" in **Matthew 11:25-26**, is certainly not given to speak against true wisdom and intelligence. Jesus is dealing with worldly wisdom

and intelligence that inflate pride and blind men and women to their need for God (cf. I Cor. 1:20).

- The knowledge of God is necessary for salvation (**Matt. 11:27**; Jn. 17:3).
- It is a loving relationship Jesus would establish as the basis from which we might be taught in the ways of His nature (**Matt. 11:28-30**; compare with Matt. 10:34-39).
- Jesus is invited to dine with Pharisees on three occasions in Luke (**7:36-50**; 11:37-50; 14:1-24). On each occasion, they come to regret that they extended the invitation. The games people play are not games played by Jesus.
- Smug self-righteousness is as evil as anything we might imagine—it distorts the very essence of religion and bends the truth into the most offensive of errors (**Lk. 7:39-50**).
- Conversely, Humble, thankful hearts are precious in God's sight. "Politically correct" behavior is insufficient for the expressions of true love (**Lk. 7:44-50**).
- The Pharisee, Simon, questioned both the knowledge and the holiness of Jesus. The way of self-righteousness is grounded in a pride that will see all others, even Jesus, in an inferior light. Those who differ with the self-righteous must be discredited, whatever measures must be employed (**Lk. 7:39**).
- Women are highlighted by Luke as playing a significant role in the life of Christ (**Lk. 8:1-3**).
- True religious conviction and the life produced by such convictions are mistaken by the unenlightened for being craziness (**Mk. 3:20-21**; cf. I Cor. 1:18ff. ; 2:14).
- "Son of David" was a Messianic title. This undoubtedly set the religious establishment off (**Matt. 12:23**; cf. Mk. 12:35; Isa. 11:1-5; Jer. 23:5).
- Jesus knows our thoughts. This often proved embarrassing to those who were deceitful about speaking their true thoughts (**Matt. 12:25**; cf. Matt. 9:4).
- Jesus' miracles could not be denied or dismissed as not actually being what they seemed, what a contrast with the so called miracles of today (**Matt. 12:24**).
- Jesus' ability to use logic in a practical, common sense manner is a faith building characteristic of the Messiah (**Matt. 12:25-27**; cf. Mk. 12:35-37).
- The meaning of the word "kingdom" is essentially that of "the rule of God." While often referring to the church as the earthly manifestation of the Messianic Reign of Jesus, it can mean many things, depending on context. In **Matthew 12:28** the word "kingdom" is used to indicate that the Jesus' ability to work miracles by the

“S pirit of God” was a testimony to His acceptance by the Father. He could not have wielded God’s power if He were in league with Satan.

- Jesus had access to God’s power so as to be able bind Satan, the “strong man” and loot his house of its possessions (**Matt. 12:29**).
- There are two choices we can make regarding what we will do with Jesus; we can either serve Him or reject Him. To try to avoid making a decision is, in fact, to choose not to be for Him (**Matt. 12:30**).
- What is the sin against the Holy Spirit (**Matt. 12:31-37**)?
  - o Blasphemy against the “S on of Man” is forgivable.
  - o All *blasphemies* (bl as fhmejw: “to injure one’s reputation”), are forgivable save one—that which is against the Holy Spirit.
  - o The Holy Spirit had the role of verifying and authenticating that Jesus was the Messiah (cf. Matt. 12:28; Heb. 2:3-4).
  - o To reject such clear testimony would indicate a heart that was incapable of acknowledging God (**Matt. 12:33-35**; cf. II T im. 4:1-2; Matt. 7:15-20; Lk. 6:43-45).
  - o Thus, the unpardonable sin is the one that rejects the irrefutable evidence given by the Spirit to the identity of Jesus (cf. Jn. 10:25, 37-38; 14:11; 15:24; Matt. 16:13-17).
  - o The particular sin Jesus references here might be one that was possible to commit only during the time of overwhelming miraculous activity attending the ministry of God’s Christ. The discussion of Matthew 11:20-24 might lend support to this conclusion.
  - o Anyone who seeks to repent of any sin need not be concerned that they may have committed the unforgivable sin; a heart that can be reached can be forgiven.
- Words reflect the heart (E ph. 5:3-4, 12; Col. 3:17; Jas. 1:19; 3:1-12). Therefore, even words carelessly spoken and thought to be of little consequence are in fact of great significance because they reveal the heart. Windows into the heart are never small things (**Matt. 12:36-37**).
- The craving for signs that Jesus condemns in **Matthew 12:39** is not to be taken as a condemnation of the legitimate place for signs. Rather, He is speaking against those who can never see enough to convince them of God’s truth. For some life is one excuse after another, one demand for more evidence after another,



one "almost, but not quite" after another. Such people will not be accommodated by God.

- The Resurrection from the dead would be the last and best sign for belief (cf. I Cor. 15:12-19; Acts 2:22-37).
- The term "three days and three nights" is a Jewish expression that need not be taken literally. Rabbinical thought taught that a day and a night made up an "onah." Additionally, a part of an "onah" was to be considered as the whole (Strack and Billerbeck: *Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Midrash*, 1:649; cf. I Sam. 30:12-13; II Chron. 10:5, 12; Esth. 4:16; 5:1). This point shows that God has allowed colloquial and idiomatic wording to be part of the inspired text. He expects us to view the text of the Bible as being in keeping with the way people commonly communicated. The very type of Greek used in the New Testament is technically known as *Koine*, meaning, "common" (**Matt. 12:40**).
- The crux of the Pharisees' problem, and indeed the largest part of Judaism, was that of a heart void of God's spirit. They had been obsessive about cleaning up the cosmetic side of religion and of casting out the overt sins of life, but they had missed the point. They cleaned out the bad, but did not fill up the void with true good (cf. Eph. 4:17-32; Col. 3:1-17). A void will not long remain in its empty condition. If God's heart does not find place in a swept-clean-heart, things counter to God will soon arrive. The Jews became self-righteous and arrogant. A negative based religion is bound to end up that way (**Matt. 12:43-45**; cf. Matt.25:31-46).
- The ultimate family relationship is a spiritual one (**Matt. 12:46-50**).
  - o Jesus is graphic in His declaration of this truth (Matt. 10:34-39; Lk. 12:51-53).
  - o Kingdom ties are paramount (Matt. 6:33).
  - o Christianity is not a religion of convenience, or of compromise, or of rationalization, it is, at its heart, a religion of sacrifice and self-denial (Lk. 9:23; Rom. 12:1-2).
  - o God remains a jealous God (Ex. 20:4-6).

## **Relationship to the Church**

- Christianity is a religion for those who will receive truth, no matter what.
- The church is a haven for the humble who, in their thanksgiving, wish to draw closer to Jesus.
- 

## **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the one who seek out the meek for fellowship and life.
- He

BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER AND HIS BLOOD IS THICKER THAN  
OURS  
MATTHEW 12:46-50

INTRODUCTION

- THE BIBLE SPEAKS WITH GREAT CLARITY ON A NUMBER OF DIFFICULT TRUTHS.
- ONE SUCH OCCASION IS FOUND IN MATTHEW 12:46-50.
  - IT IS SAID, "BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER."
  - THE BLOOD OF THE CHRIST BINDS HIS PEOPLE TOGETHER IN A BOND STRONGER THAN THE BLOOD OF FAMILY.
  - MORE IMPORTANT EVEN THAN FAMILY, AND FAMILY IS VERY IMPORTANT, IS THE RELATIONSHIP FORGED IN BLOOD BY THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH.

AN EAR GIVEN TO THE SCRIPTURES

- MATTHEW 12:46-50; MARK 3:31-35; LUKE 8:19-21
- MATTHEW 10:34-39; LUKE 12:51-53 (MATT. 10:39; 16:25; MK. 8:35; LK. 9:24; 17:33; JN. 12:25)
- MATTHEW 7:21-23; LUKE 6:46

BOUGHT WITH BLOOD

- I CORINTHIANS 6:19-20
- LUKE 22:20
- JOHN 19:1-5, 17-18, 31-34; 20:26-28
- ACTS 20:28
- ROMANS 3:25; 5:9
- I CORINTHIANS 10:16; 11:27
- EPHESIANS 1:7
- HEBREWS 9:22
- I PETER 1:19
- REVELATION 7:14; 12:11

THEREFORE

- ROMANS 6:3-4
- I JOHN 1:7
- I CORINTHIANS 11:26-27.
- ROMANS 8:31-39

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
Parables by the Sea	13:1-35	4:1-34	8:4-18	
Parables explained in private	13:36-53			
Disciples ordered to cross sea	8:18	4:35	8:22	
Jesus calms a stormy sea	8:23-27	4:36-41	8:23-25	
Legion cast out of violent man	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39	
Jesus sails to Capernaum	9:1	5:21	8:40	

## Overriding Principles

- Those who want to understand the mysteries of the Kingdom will search them out in a selfless enterprise of true faith and love.
- The law of spiritual growth is the same as that of the physical world; we are either growing or dying.
- Hearts provide the soil for God's garden of spiritual produce.
- The Kingdom of God is to be viewed through other than the eyes of flesh.
- God rules over the seen—He thus proves His rule over the unseen.
- Wind, waves, demons, or whatever may be, it cannot stand against God.

## Main Points

- To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 13:11).
- Therefore I speak to them in parables: because while seeing they do not see and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand (Matt. 13:13).
- And the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear much fruit with perseverance (Lk. 8:15).
- And the men marveled, saying, "What kind of a man is this that even the winds and the sea obey Him" (Matt. 8:27)?

- And behold, they cried out, saying, "What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come to torment us before the time" (Matt. 8:29)?

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- The word "parable" comes from the Greek word *parabolē* meaning: "throwing or setting beside." A simple way to remember the meaning of the word parable is to see it as an earthly story with a spiritual application (note Ps. 78:1-2).
- Jesus used parables, as well as other teaching methods to both reveal mysteries to the faithful and keep kingdom secrets from those who did not have honest and good hearts (**Matt. 13:10-17**).
- The Parable of the Soils (**Matt. 13:4-9, 18-23**), drives home the point that the condition of the heart has everything to do with whether or not we will receive the word of God.
- The seed that fell "beside the road" has a point that drew upon the gardening practices of the day. Jews living in the city walked to garden places outside the city walls. The paths to and from these garden plots became as hard as rock—the seed could not get into the ground. People with hearts hardened to spiritual things do not understand the Scriptures; they do not let the word inside. It never has a chance (**Matt. 13:4, 19**; cf. I Cor. 2:14; Jn 14:17, 22-23).
- The seed that fell on the "rocky places" spoke to occasions when seed fell on a shallow layer of soil just over the surface of a slab of rock. The shallowness of the soil allowed for quick initial growth, but dry weather would quickly evaporate all the moisture from the soil. Some hearts allow no depth of growth; they allow only a shallow relationship with God. When difficulties arise, immediately there results an abandonment of the truth. No commitment (**Matt. 13:5-6, 20-21**; cf. Jn. 6:60, 66).
- The seed that fell "among thorns" would be challenged by the weeds that would spring up as competition for nourishment. Worry, the deceitfulness of wealth, various pleasures, and the desire for other things will choke the life from the word. God must have no rivals if He is to have His way in the heart of a believer (**Matt. 13:7, 22**; cf. Matt. 6:33; Jn. 6:68).
- The seed that came to rest on the "good soil" was the only seed that actually would bear fruit. The characteristics of such a heart include: listening,

understanding, acceptance, honesty, goodness, and perseverance. Self denial and love are indispensable commodities for a heart that would belong to the Christ. The values of God are to be the values of each disciple (**Matt. 13:8, 23**; cf. Lk. 9:23; Jn. 14:15; Matt. 5:3-16).

- The disciple of Jesus will share the treasures of his heart with others (**Mk. 4:21-22**; cf. I Pet. 2:9).
- The phrase "If any man has ears to hear, let him hear," is a colloquial expression designed to address the serious nature of listening to the word of God (**Mk. 4:23**; **Matt. 13:9**).
- The importance of our hearing is further emphasized as we are told to, "take care what you listen to," and "take care how you listen" (**Mk. 4:24**; **Lk. 8:18**).
- The parables grouped in the verses we are presently studying are styled "Kingdom Parables." The Greek word for 'kingdom' is *basileia*, meaning: "rule or reign." These parables introduce us into the way God administers His will in the world and in His special rule over the saved (cf. Eph. 1:18-23).
- In the Parable of Rapid Growth (**Mk. 4:26-29**), we are introduced to the amazing way God's word can take hold and prosper. The farmer of the parable does not understand the "how" of the growth, but he does know what he is supposed to do to take advantage of the harvest (cf. Jn. 4:35-42). God's ways can be rather mysterious to our earthly sensitivities and lack of understanding—we need, however, to take advantage of our opportunities and work as God instructs. His ways are best and will bring God-approved results.
- The Parable of the Tares (**Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43**), demonstrates that Satan also sows seed. He disguises the results to give the appearance of a godly product. To unduly seek out Satan's handiwork would be very disruptive to the kingdom. This is obviously not speaking against corrective church discipline; the kingdom here is the world, not the church (i.e. I Cor. 5:1-13). This particular parable is designed to alert us to Satan's wiles and to caution us not to act until we are sure—wait until the fruit is obvious. A tare looks like wheat early in its development. To try to get them out of a wheat field early in the growing cycle would result in our mistakenly uprooting much wheat (Cf. Matt. 7:15-23). We know that God will judge those whose sins are not as obvious as those that we are to judge (cf. Ps. 73). Judgment will vindicate the saints and destroy the wicked (II Thess. 1:6-10).

- The Parable of the Mustard Seed (**Matt. 13:31-32**; cf. Matt. 17:20) makes a powerful point about the amazing things God can accomplish from small beginnings. We must believe (Eph. 3:20-21)!
- The Parable of the Leaven (**Matt. 13:33-35**), similar to the previous parable, demonstrates the power God has to change big things with small things. Never underestimate what God can do with a willing heart (cf. Rev. 3:7-8)!
- The Parable of the Hidden Treasure (**Matt. 13:44**), and the Parable of the Pearl of Great Price (**Matt. 13:45-46**), both show that finding salvation is worth more than anything else we might otherwise acquire. When we understand the value of the Kingdom, all else seems worthless (cf. Phil. 3:7-14).
- The Parable of the Dragnet (**Matt. 13:47-50**), shows that while the Gospel is for all, not all find acceptability with God (cf. Matt. 22:14; Acts 17:32-33; II Tim. 2:14-21).
- The Parable of the Wise Scribe (**Matt. 13:51-52**) shows that previous understandings are to both serve as foundations and also grow as we encounter new truths.
- After the extended time spent on parables about the nature of the Kingdom. Jesus powerfully demonstrated His power over the elements by calming a storm (**Matt. 8:18, 23-27**). The faith of the Apostles is exposed as being "little." Trials reveal things about us we need to know. Trials build character (Jas. 1:2-4).
- Consider the difference between the "small" faith that is likened to a mustard seed (Matt. 13:31-32) and the "little" faith Jesus condemned during the storm.
- What immaturity we show when we think Jesus doesn't care (**Mk. 4:38**).
- The Question, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the winds and the sea obey Him," is one like many others concerning Jesus that has only one reasonable answer (cf. Matt. 16:13-17).
- Jesus healing of the two demon possessed men of the Gadarenes makes a number of points about Jesus identity and the reactions it brought (**Matt. 8:28-34**). Jesus was well known to the demons (cf. Jas. 2:19). The tormented men, one of whom was dominant and thus mentioned exclusively by Mark and Luke, knew Jesus was their only hope. The town's people were more concerned with their merchandising endeavors than they were with the only hope they had for eternal life. Jesus is who He is regardless of circumstances or how He is perceived

(cf. Mk. 12:14), but those He encounters see Him in keeping with the quality of their own hearts (cf. Matt. 11:6).

- It is most amazing that materialistic concerns would cause people to be fearful of Jesus and ask Him to leave.
- There has been much discussion about the appropriateness of Jesus casting the demons into swine, an act that led to their death. First of all, Jesus didn't ever do anything wrong. Secondly, whether we understand all the particulars of this account really does not matter, its message of Jesus' sovereignty is clear.
- The demons preferred inhabiting swine to having no body at all. This may help us to define demons as spirits of evil dead people. They were allowed to possess men so Jesus could demonstrate His power over the unseen world of evil (**Matt. 8:31**).
- Unlike on many other occasions, Jesus here does not suppress one of the men He healed from proclaiming what Jesus had done for him (**Mk. 5:18-20**; cf. Matt. 8:4). This might be explained by noting that Jesus was in a Gentile area and the news about Him would not fuel the fire of those Jews who sought to destroy Him.

## Relationship to the Church

- Christianity is a powerful expression of God's Kingdom.
- We must not think that we fail when hearts are not receptive to the Gospel. Each heart is different and not all are receptive.
- God rules not only in the church but also in all the creation.
- Justice will prevail.
- Let us beware lest our hold on the world causes us to bid Jesus to leave us.
- God can do amazing things through the church!

## Who is Jesus?

- He is the one whose wisdom we need to appreciate as we live before a watching world of doubters.
- He knows how the Kingdom is to operate and we don't—we need His wisdom.
- He speaks, and what He says is done (cf. Gen 1:3).



# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Jairus asks Jesus to heal his daughter	9:18-19	5:22-23	8:41-42	
Ill woman is healed touching Jesus	9:20-22	5:24-34	8:42-48	
Daughter's death reported to Jairus		5:35-36	8:49-50	
Jesus raises Jairus' daughter to life	9:23-26	5:37-43	8:51-56	
Jesus heals two blind men	9:27-31			
Jesus heals a mute demoniac	9:32-34			
2nd rejection in Nazareth	13:54-58	6:1-6		
12 sent out to preach	9:35-11:1	6:7-13	9:1-6	

## Overriding Principles

- Jesus can be trusted to overcome death.
- He especially appreciates the humble.
- He cares for all our true concerns.
- Jesus has the power to overcome all obstacles.
- The goodness of God hardens the hearts of the prideful.
- To follow Jesus requires undivided loyalty.
- To follow Jesus requires the acceptance of grave responsibilities.

## Main Points

- Daughter, take courage, your faith has made you well (Matt. 9:22).
- Do not be afraid any longer, only keep on believing (Mk. 5:36).
- Nothing like this was ever seen in Israel (Matt. 9:33)!
- And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were harassed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd (Matt. 9:36).
- He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has found his life for My sake has found it (Matt. 10:39).

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- For a synagogue ruler to fall at Jesus' feet would have been a telling admission of Jairus' respect for the status of Jesus (**Mk. 5:22**).

- If Jesus is still in Capernaum (Matt. 9:1), this may have been an official at Jesus' local synagogue.
- Matthew says the daughter of Jairus had just died; Mark, however, says that she was at the point of death (**Matt. 9:18; Mk. 5:23**). This seeming discrepancy is explained by the fact that Matthew gives us condensed version that eliminates two thirds of the details supplied by Mark. When the report of the people from Jairus' house that his daughter has died is removed, her death comes to the forefront. In Eastern thought, this is not the problem it is in the more analytic way of Western thinking.
- Mark's longer account (**5:23-43**), places a particular emphasis on faith (**vv. 35-36**) as does **Luke 8:49-50**.
- In Jewish culture, professional weepers were hired to mourn a loss (**Matt. 5:23; Mk. 5:38**).
- For Jesus, raising someone from death is as easy as awaking someone from sleep (**Matt. 9:24**).
- Laughter at God's declarations is a response of great ignorance (**Matt. 9:24**; cf. Gen. 17:17; 18:12).
- One of the most powerful and touching scenes of Jesus ministry surrounds His words, "Little girl, I say to you arise" (Mk. 5:41)! The Aramaic phrase "Talitha kum," would have been a common morning greeting from a parent to a small daughter.
- Jesus commonly worked to suppress news of His miracles getting to those who would exploit them, though obviously the news could not be completely suppressed. (**Mk. 5:43**).
- Consider how Jesus did what He alone could do, yet He expected the parents to do what they could do. Additionally, see how Jesus was concerned for the ordinary and extraordinary concerns of life (**Mk. 5:43**).
- The woman with a hemorrhage serves as an interesting interlude in Jesus journey to the little girl (**Mk. 5:24-34**). Her condition would have left her unclean, unable to participate in the outward ceremonies of the Law of Moses. Additionally, since she would have made unclean any one she touched, she would have been a very unpopular woman (cf. Lev. 15:26-27).
- Her great faith is seen in her not wanting to trouble Jesus (**Mk. 5:27-28**). Jesus finds such humble faith to be very refreshing in the midst of a prideful, demanding Judaism (**Mk. 5:34**).
- Next, Jesus heals two blind men and man who could not speak due to demon possession (**Matt. 9:27-34**).

- Clearly, the things Jesus did were amazing. Those who saw them as acts of the Devil were suffering from acute spiritual disorientation (**Matt. 9:33-34**).
- Jesus was judged to be simply the product of His earthly circumstances, rather than by His deeds and character (**Matt. 13:54-58**).
- Jesus now selects and sends the **A** postles on a "Limited Commission" (**Matt. 10:1-15**); Matthew's topical agenda then projects ahead to the "Great Commission" (**v. 16-42**).
- An "apostle" was a special type of messenger who would have the full authority of the sender, in this case, Jesus (cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).
- The twelve men Jesus chose to be His **A** postles were an unlikely group. Largely "unlearned" men they were, and that was far from the end of the curiosities. A tax collector and a Zealot—who would have guessed it? A known traitor, how could He have done so? Brothers of fierce disposition, and a man of compulsive, often reckless behavior—how, why?
- We might have insisted on the "rich young ruler" as a sure candidate for such a work of exalted responsibility. But we would have been wrong (Matt. 19:16-22).
- Perhaps we should remember the unpretentious way Jesus came into the world, as well as the way He chose to live. There are messages there (cf. I Sam. 16:7; Lk. 2:1-20; Matt. 8:20; I Cor. 1:26-27).
- Additionally, we must remember that Jesus came to bring different people together in oneness (Isa. 11:6-10; cf. Rom. 15:12; Gal. 3:26-28; Jn. 17:21-23).
- In the Limited Commission they would rely of people to supply their needs, in the Great Commission, often people would be trying to kill them (**v. 9-10**, Lk. 10:35-36).
- Receptivity is very important to God (**Matt. 10:12-15**; cf. Matt. 7:6).
- The Holy Spirit would be with them in a more significant way when it was time for the Great Commission (**Matt. 10:19**; cf. Jn. 14:26; 16:13).
- Jesus was very honest with the Twelve, as He would be treated, so they would be treated (**Matt. 10:24-25**; cf. Jn. 15:18-25).
- But there was much more to the story—victory in Jesus (**Matt. 10:26-31**; cf. Rom. 8:31-39).
- Confession and absolute loyalty would be a must (**Matt. 10:32-39**).
- The literal translation of **Matthew 10:32** shows that this "confession" is for Christians, not those who seek to become Christians, "Everyone therefore who shall confess *in* Me before men, I will also confess *in* him before My Father who is in Heaven."

- Jesus saying in **Matthew 10:39** reflects His most repeated challenge in the Gospels (Matt. 16:25; Mk. 8:35; Lk. 9:24; 17:33; Jn. 12:25).
- Those who side with Jesus representatives side with Jesus Himself (**Matt. 10:40-42**).

## **Relationship to the Church**

- Christianity bows before the Christ in humility and trust.
- The church must minister to the world.
- Christians must be prepared to suffer, and yet not lose heart.
- The church of Jesus must lose earthly allegiances to find life in Christ.

## **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the one who care as none other cares.
- He is the one who offers an escape from self and death to find life in Him.

# A Study of the Christ Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Death of the Baptist	14:1-12	6:14-29	9:7-9	
The 12 return and they withdraw	14:13	6:30-32	9:10	6:1
Jesus teaches and heals multitude	14:14	6:33-34	9:11	6:2
Jesus feeds 5,000	14:15-21	6:35-44	9:12-17	6:3-14
Jesus prays alone	14:22-23	6:45-47		6:15
Jesus walks on water	14:24-27	6:48-52		6:16-21
Peter walks on water, then sinks	14:28-33			
Healings in Gennesaret	14:34-36	6:53-56		
Bread of Life discourse				6:22-7:1

## Overriding Principles

- Serving Jesus is very serious business—so much so that we are to be faithful unto death.
- We cannot be friends with the world and with God at the same time.
- Pride is an extremely dangerous thing.
- Fear cripples and distorts us.
- God cares.
- People are commonly interested in common things.
- To the uncommitted, there are never enough “signs.”
- The only way to follow Christ is totally.

## Main Points

- For John had been saying to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her” (Matt. 14:4).
- Now when Jesus heard it, He withdrew from there in a boat, to a lonely place by Himself (Matt. 14:13).

- Jesus, therefore, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone (Jn. 6:15).
- O you of little faith, why did you doubt (Matt. 14:31)?
- Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me not because you saw signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled (Jn. 6:26).
- What then do you do for a sign (Jn. 6:30)?
- Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me (Jn. 6:45).
- Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died (Jn. 6:49).
- It is the Spirit who gives life, the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life (Jn. 6:63).
- Jesus said therefore to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also do you?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn. 6:67-68).

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- Guilt and pride are heavy burdens to bear, they can make a person mentally unstable and miserable, but they are not easily abandoned (**Matt. 14:1-2**; consider King Saul in I Samuel 18:6-24:22).
- Courage isn't merely saying what needs to be said, it is saying it when saying it brings heavy consequences (**Mk. 6:17-18**; cf. Mk. 14:60-64).
- The talk about Jesus' identity had risen to lofty heights, but not high enough (**Lk. 9:7-8**; cf. Matt. 16:13-16).
- John's opposition to Herod's marriage to his brother Philip's wife was probably centered in the teachings of Leviticus 18:16 and 20:21. The sanctity of the family is of considerable importance to God (**Matt. 14:3-4**).
- John had been in prison about a year and a half before his death (**Mk. 6:17**).
- Beginning in **Matthew 14:13-14**; **Mark 6:31-34**; **Luke 9:10b-11**; and **John 6:1-3**, Jesus shifts from a very public ministry to a primarily private one. Factors involved in the change would include:
  - The preaching tour of the twelve in Galilee had happened about the time of John the Baptist's death—these things would have aroused Herod Antipas' suspicion and fear of Jesus (Mk. 6:30; Matt. 14:1-2,13).

- Jesus' followers were pressing Him to take over Judea as a king (Jn. 6:15).
- The hostility of the Jewish leaders was growing (Matt. 12:22-24; cf. Mk. 7:1-23).
- His disciples were tired (Mk. 6:31).
- He needed more time to privately instruct His followers, especially the twelve.
- The Feeding of the Five Thousand is rare in that all four of the gospel writers mention it. Commonly, John goes a separate path, emphasizing the Judean aspects of Jesus' ministry. Here, however, although they converge, John takes the account in a different direction. The Synoptics emphasize Jesus' power (*miracles*: *δυναμις*, from which we get the word dynamite) John emphasizes the meaning behind the power (sign: *σημεῖον*, that which signifies something).
- Jesus identifies Himself once again with His Father, in this case as the provider of man's physical needs (cf. Matt. 6:25-34).
- Again, compassion is emphasized as one of Jesus' core values (**Matt. 14:14; Mk. 6:34; Jn. 6:4-6**).
- Two hundred denarii would have been about two hundred day's wages, far more than Jesus and the Apostles had in their group treasury (**Jn. 6:7**).
- Odd, isn't it, that the very thing most men covet, a large following, is the very thing that Jesus so often discouraged. He only wanted followers who wanted God's will to rule their lives (**Jn. 6:14-15**; cf. vv. 44-45).
- Jesus' separation from His followers, after withdrawing from the multitude, leads to the interesting reunion on the Sea of Galilee. Matthew records not only Jesus' walking on the water, but Simon Peter's ill-fated attempt to join Him. The message is a simple one, take your eyes off Jesus and you sink (**Matt. 14:24-33**; cf. Col. 3:1-3).
- Mark points out that the twelve's failure to gain insight from the feeding of the five thousand was a roadblock keeping them from having sufficient faith to avoid fear on the sea (**Mk. 6:51-52**). Spiritual sensitivity is required to truly come to know God and benefit from His power (I Cor. 10:10-16; cf. Jn. 17:3; Matt. 11:27-30).
- **John 6:22-71** relates one of the most telling accounts of Jesus' ministry. It is an excellent commentary on Matthew 7:13-14 and the difference between the broad and narrow roads. It also makes similar commentary on Matthew 7:21-27). Talk alone just simply will not do (cf. I Jn. 3:18).

- Remember that John uses the word "Jew" to mean the religious establishment, not just any group of Jewish people (**Jn. 6:41**).
- It is decision time for those who follow Jesus. The Christ represents His Father's agenda perfectly; only those who recognize God's will and sacrificially submit to it can follow Him (**Jn. 6:44-45**).
- The peoples' thinly veiled demand for more signs, like those Moses worked, only betrays their desire for a meal ticket, not a Messiah (**Jn. 6:26, 30-31**).
- Jesus puts the meal issue in stark perspective (**Jn. 6:49**).
- The contrasts of John chapter six center on the difference in quality between the temporal and spiritual, between God's will and man's will.
- Jesus metaphor of "eating His flesh and drinking His blood," was not beyond their grasp. The Rabbi's said a similar thing about what their disciples would need to do if their learning was to be successful (**Jn. 6:48-59**). They didn't want to accept the implications of self-denial, so they feigned ignorance (cf. Jn. 3:4 where Jesus again used a rabbinic metaphor).
- This chapter is not about the Lord's Supper, but about discipleship. The imagery Jesus uses here to indicate feeding on Him as a teacher really relates to internalizing Him through digesting His words (**Jn. 6:44-45, 63**). The Lord's Supper uses the same imagery to represent His sacrifice and atoning blood.
- In this pivotal meeting with a large crowd of Israelites, Jesus deals with the *multitude* (masses, vv. 22, 24), the *Jews* (religious leaders, vv. 41, 52), *disciples* (followers, vv. 60, 66), and the *twelve* (closest followers, v. 67). All depart, except the twelve, and one of them is a devil (**Jn. 6:70**).
- In the turmoil of disbelief and failing faith, Simon Peter gets it right. Whether we always understand Jesus, or even like what He says, there is nowhere else to go (**Jn. 6:68**)!
- The Greek of the way Jesus forms His question to the twelve is instructive. There are three ways to ask a question in Greek:
  - No indication of the expected answer.
  - If the question begins with a form of the word οὐ>, the speaker expects an affirmative answer (cf. Mk. 4:38).
  - If the question begins with a form of μή>, the speaker expects a negative answer (cf. I Cor. 12:29).



- When Jesus asks the twelve if they want to go, He expects that they will say "no."
- The narrow road will be traveled by those who realize that there is no other road available to get where they want to go.
- Questions that arise about Judas being known as the betrayer even before the deed was done do not at all demand accepting Calvinistic predestination. Just remember, the order of God's operation is foreknowledge before predestination (Rom. 8:29). Foreknowledge does not overrule the will of man; it simply knows how it will be expressed.

### **Relationship to the Church**

- Christianity is genuine to the extent that it listens only to God.
- The church must not be formed and maintained out of personal desires.
- Christianity cannot be a religion of convenience.
- When we do not have receptive hearts, our hearts harden—there is no middle ground!
- Marriage is still sacred.
- There is a price to pay to be a Christian, but only for a little while. The price we cannot pay has already been paid on the cross.

### **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the one who inspires a godly loyalty that makes all others loyalties pale in quality and substance.
- He is the Savior who will never agree with us that error is somehow the truth.
- He is the one who wants our attention, our hearts, and our sincere discipleship.
- He rejects all that is false and temporary, accepting only that which is real and lasting.
- Again we are compelled to say, He cares!

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
Jesus rebukes traditions of men	15:1-11	7:1-16		
Parable explained in private	15:12-20	7:17-23		
Gentile woman's faith	15:21-28	7:24-30		
Jesus heals a deaf man		7:31-37		
Many healed on a mountain	15:29-31			
Jesus feeds 4,000	15:32-38	8:1-9		

## Overriding Principles

- Traditions cannot substitute for God's will.
- Service to God begins in the heart.
- Faith sees the value of the unseen and will not be stopped.
- God can and will provide.

## Main Points

- This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men (Matt. 15:8-9).
- And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man" (Mk. 7:20).
- Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; ..." (Matt. 15:28).
- I feel compassion for the multitude ... (Matt. 15:32).

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- The religious establishment had failed to stop Jesus with their accusations of His breaking the Sabbath, now they would resort to other traditions of the elders (Matt. 15:1-2; cf. Gal. 1:13-14).

- The **Pharisees** controlled the synagogues and were the greatest influence on the religious thinking of the common people. The **scribes** were the lawyers who used Moses and traditions of the elders to argue their cases. All of the Jewish sects had their own set of lawyers.
- The complaint against Jesus' disciples for eating with **impure, unwashed** hands had nothing to do with hygiene, but everything to do with ceremonial or outward purity (cf. Mk. 7:14-23).
- **Observing the traditions of the elders** had become more important than obeying God's word (cf. Gal. 1:13-14). An entire division of the *Mishnah* was devoted to ceremonial cleanliness (The Talmud, which included the Mishnah, was the collected traditions of the Jews written down from about A D 500-1000, but reflecting oral teachings often much older than Jesus' day. The *Mishnah* section of the Talmud was the actual recording of those oral traditions. The Gemarah division of the Talmud was a commentary on the Mishnah).
- The **many other things** Mark refers to show how their obsession with the traditions of men went well beyond ceremonial cleanliness.
- So great was the Jewish hatred for non-Jews, that they insisted on a large number of washings to clean them from the dirt of the infidels (**Mk. 7:1-5**).
  - Koinos: v. 2, **impure** "Having come to mean 'ritually unclean,' as also in 7:5.
  - Pugme: v.3, **carefully** "literally, 'with fist,' most likely referring to the way one fist was clenched to wash the palm of the other hand—the "correct" way to wash the hands if you were truly religious.
  - Kratountes: v. 3, **observing**; kratein: v. 4, **observe** "to hold fast, seize," (**Mk. 7:8** has another form of this word, krateite: **hold to**).
- Jesus sharply confronted them with how they had transgressed God's law by preferring their own traditions of men to the truth of the Bible (**Mk. 7:6-16**).
- Hypokrites: v. 6, **hypocrites** "though 'playing a role, as an actor,' thus meaning 'insincere' was a common use of this word, but with the Pharisees it seemed they had gone as far as deceiving themselves, an even more dangerous sin," (cf. Matt. 12:30-37).
- Gegraptai: v. 6, **it is written** "in the perfect tense (past event that influences the present), the force is a strong 'it stands written!'"

- Porro apechei: (**Mk. 7:6**) *far away* "a combination of words meaning 'far, far away' from God." elegen: (**Mk. 7:9**), *saying* "the imperfect tense (continuing action in the past) shows that Jesus kept on saying these things; He was getting on their case."
- Kalos: (**Mk. 7:9**), *nicely* "literally the word for 'good,' here used in a sense of irony commenting on how skillfully they annulled God's word.
- "But you say" (**Mk. 7:11**), sums up the problem well.
- Korban: (**Mk. 7:11**), *Corban* "a word used in a formula to remove something from profane or common use and devote it to God, to be placed under a ban from human use" (cf. Lev. 1:2; Josh. 6:15-19; 7:10-11).
- Traditions of men invalidate God's word (**Matt. 15:6**).
- The multitude, separate from the religious leaders, needed a lesson on what truly defiled a person (**Matt. 15:10-20; Mk. 7:14-23**).
  - Ceremonial defilement and the other outward aspects of Judaism had always been merely outward signs, unable to solve the sin problem (cf. I Pet. 1:18; 3:21).
  - The heart is the key (I Sam. 16:7; Acts 13:22).
- A Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman showed Jesus more faith than did the Jews (**Matt. 15:21-28**).
  - Faith in a silent, seemingly unconcerned Christ (**vv. 22-23**).
  - Faith in a Christ whose followers would have her sent away (**v. 23**).
  - Faith in a Christ who rebuked her (**v. 24**).
  - Faith in a Christ who likened her to a dog (**v. 26**).
  - O for such a faith!
  - Kunariois (**v. 26**), refers to puppies—still not very flattering, however.
  - Christ knew the Canaanite woman's heart; He revealed her heart to show true faith (**Matt. 15:28**).
- Jesus continued to demonstrate His power in compassionate actions. The Christlike spirit uses advantage and privilege to help others (**Matt. 15:29-31; Mk. 7:31-37**).
- Similar to the previous feeding of the 5000 is the feeding of the 4000 (**Mk. 8:1-9**).
  - Though following relatively soon after the feeding of the 5000, the disciples show no remembrance of the previous event or any indication that they learned anything from it.

- The negative outcome of the previous event (Jn. 6:15-26, 41, 52, 60, 66), may have caused them to think that Jesus was not going to perform a similar miracle.
- The hearts of the 4000 were different from the 5000; similarity of outward circumstances does not mean that the inner circumstances are the same.

## **Relationship to the Church**

- Christianity must not be based on the teachings of men.
- The church will worship in vain if it looks to men rather than to God for its direction.
- The heart remains the key.
- Jesus was compassionate, so must be His church.
- God provides.

## **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the one who uncompromisingly demands that the Father's will be followed.
- He cuts through the games and distractions of life to stand for what is from God.
- He expects us to pay attention and learn as we walk with Him.

## **Rabbinic Judaism and Religious Liberalism**

1. The religion practiced by first-century Jews was not the religion of the Torah (the Five Books of Moses).
2. The biblical passages that deal with the subject of law must be "harmonized" rather than put in conflict one against another.

The first observation orients us to the necessary historical setting for evaluating the religious conditions faced by Jesus. Without this knowledge, we will be apt to conclude the Jewish religion of the first century was identical with the Jewish religion intended by God under Moses. Such a mistake leads to confusion and contradiction rather than understanding and harmony. The Jews had corrupted their law to such an extent in Jesus' day that the nature of the Torah had been lost and a legalistic, self-righteous, traditionalism had come into existence.

From Jesus' statements in such passages as Matthew 15:1-14 and 23:1-4, we can clearly see the problem created by the traditions and commandments of men. While the Law of Moses was still read and in some measure practiced, the additions and distortions had created heavy burdens never intended by God. The situation was much like that of the more tradition-bound denominations of today. The Bible is still present, but its true intent has become subverted beyond significant recognition.

The nature of the numerous conflicts Jesus had with the religious establishment of His day dispels all doubt but that the Jews had missed the point of their law. The Sermon on the Mount is a classic example of how Moses had been misrepresented by the self-righteous misunderstandings of the Scribes and the Pharisees (Matt. 5:20). Thus, Jesus was not in the Sermon on the Mount giving a new law prior to its time (Matt. 5:17-20) as is the commonly voiced explanation of Matthew 5:21-48. To think that Jesus was contrasting Himself to Moses simply will not stand. By His own words Jesus not only forbade the changing of even a part of a letter of the Law of Moses (Matt. 5:18), He clearly stated that it was the self-righteousness of the religious teachers of Israel that must be surpassed (Matt. 5:20). No, Jesus was not teaching against Moses. He was teaching that the true intent and full meaning of Moses had been lost by the teachings of the Pharisees.

The problem was a difficult one for both Jesus and the Apostles to correct. The name of Moses was still "honored" and the words of the Torah were still were spoken

by the Jews, but the point was missed (Jn. 5:39-47). Bibles were still in pulpits, but the nature of true religion had been lost. Since the Torah was still cited, the situation existed that when the distorted understandings of the Law were spoken against, it might appear that the Torah itself was under attack. In much the same way that today to speak against the abuses of John 3:16 might appear to the uninformed as a repudiation of John 3:16. In the first century to speak against legalism might cause someone to conclude that the Law of Moses was, by its very nature, legalistic.

Such a situation helps to explain some seemingly contradictory terminology in the New Testament (i.e. Rom. 7:12, 14 and II Cor. 3:7). The "spiritual" nature of the law must not be thought to create an unsolvable dilemma with statements that mention the law in the context of legalism. It was the misunderstood, distorted, and veiled Torah that brought death rather than life (Rom. 7:11, 13; II Cor. 3:13-14). Law had become an end in itself to most first-century Jews. It was seen as the basis for earning salvation rather than as the basis for an expression of obedient faith. The attitude of self-trust rather than faith had caused the Jews to find death rather than life in the law (Lk. 18:9-14).

The first-century Jews had taken an element of the Torah, the principle of Halakah (literally: "Walking," but in a derived sense: "a set of rules"), and created a legalistic understanding of the Torah as a whole. The Jews became so "rule" conscious in their distortion of the Law of Moses that they developed what came to be called the "Oral Torah." This was the sum of their traditional interpretations and were said to have originated from Moses himself. This Oral Torah of traditionalism born out of legalism came to overthrow the true intent of even the written Torah (Mk. 7:1-13; Gal. 1:14).

To better put the process of traditionalism in perspective, a brief historical overview of "Judaism" would be useful. In a technical sense scholars often distinguish between the religion of Moses and "Judaism." Here Judaism is defined as a distortion of the Torah that began in the Babylonian Captivity and led to modifications and reinterpretations of the Five Books of Moses.

No doubt aided by the rapid arrival of legalistic Persian influences (cf. Dan. 6:15; Esth. 8:8), the captives and later the returnees soon developed an entirely different emphasis. This led to many changes in the Jews' religious understandings and practices. The study of the Torah and good deeds became rivals to the temple and to the various priestly functions. The problem was not that these rivals were wrong in themselves, but that they became ends in themselves. Through this distortion, once well-intended efforts led to many legalistic interpretations.

The "Oral Torah" was the name given to the traditional legalistic interpretations of the Torah. The Jews claimed that the Oral Torah contained what Moses taught but did not write. Soon these traditions came to be regarded even more highly than the Books of Moses since they interpreted and applied religion to the contemporary life of the Jews (Mk. 7:8-13).

These traditions that comprised the Oral Torah initially were probably attempts to keep the Jews from falling into the ways of their captors. However, these "hedges around the Torah" grew so great in number that they actually took men farther and farther away from the real meaning of the law. The hedges designed to keep men from breaking the law soon became barriers that prevented them from keeping the law. A classic example is the Jewish hedge that prevented the speaking of the name *Jehovah*. While this tradition was no doubt intended to keep Jews from taking God's name in vain, it, in effect, prevented Jews from using the name Jehovah in ways Jehovah Himself actually approved and desired.

By allowing the hedges around the Torah to crystallize into the Oral Torah, the Jews set the stage for later developments that have survived even to our age. Today the Jews have written down the Oral Torah and it is known as the "Mishnah." They have written down a commentary on the Mishnah known as the "Gemarah." These two, compiled between AD200-500 AD, are known as the "Talmud." The Talmud was then joined by the "Midrashim" (rabbinic devotional literature) to graphically demonstrate the unending path of digression men take when first they substitute man's rules for God's law.

Understanding something of the nature of the Jewish religion in Jesus' day, we can now better understand the nature of the conflicts Jesus had with His fellow Jews. The debates were not about the failings of Moses, but over the distortions to Moses that traditionalism had produced. Further, we can see how this created a situation where Jesus, in addressing the abuses of the Torah, could sometimes *seem* to be attacking the true teaching of the Torah.

This brings us to our second necessary understanding for the study of law and liberalism. The teaching of the Bible as a whole must be harmonized if we are to understand the place of law in general and the Law of Moses in particular. For example, if we compare Galatians 3:10-22, Romans 7:8-14 and 9:30-33 we can see two different types of comments made relative to the Law of Moses. We could choose one passage and build a distorted covenant theology or we can use these and other Scriptures to develop a complete biblical covenant understanding.



In view of what we have already discussed, we should be able to see that we do not need to think that a hopeless contradiction exists in the way the New Testament views the Law of Moses. Romans 9:30-33 shows that the basic problem was not at all with the Law of Moses, but with the way the Jews chose to keep the Law. Rather than choosing to keep the Law "out of faith", they chose to keep it "out of works."

The law was designed to be kept in faith. Habakkuk 2:14 shows clearly that the place of faith was understood as the way of life to those who saw the Law without a veil (cf. II Cor. 3:12-16). Hebrews 11:32-40 gives examples of those who died under the Law of Moses and yet found life through faith. Jesus, Himself is bold to declare that not only was faith a part of the Law of Moses, but that it was one of the "weightier" parts of the Law (Matt. 23:23).

A word of caution is very appropriate at this point. If we are not careful, the Law of Moses will be misunderstood to have been given by God to produce death, when in fact nothing could be further from God's intent (Rom. 7:10). To quote Galatians 3:23 without considering all of Hebrews 11 and Romans 9:30-33 can only create contradiction and confusion. When the Law of Moses was served in faith, as God intended, grace abounded (Rom. 5:20). However, when the Torah was kept in a self-righteous manner, trusting in self rather than God (Lk. 18:9-14), death was the sure result.

The system known today as Rabbinic Judaism represents the same principle that was at work in the first century. If good deeds significantly outweighed the bad—if the basic tenor of life was good, a man would win acceptance before God. This is the way of thinking that Jesus and the Apostles condemned. Nothing we can do of and by ourselves can earn our salvation. To trust in self is to be doomed to death no matter what the prevailing law might be. To trust God through an obedient faith to the prevailing standard of law always allows the gift of God's grace through the Cross (Rom. 3:24-25).

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Pharisees seek a sign	16:1-4	8:11-13		
Leaven of the Pharisees	16:5-12	8:13-21		
Blind man cured in Bethsaida		8:22-26		
Peter's great confession	16:13-20	8:27-30		
Jesus rebukes Peter	16:21-28	8:31-9:1	9:18-27	

## Overriding Principles

- There are never enough signs for those who base their commitment on signs (cf. I Cor. 1:22-23).
- We can easily be so caught up in seeing that we do not ever see (cf. the irony of Isa. 6:10).
- Sometimes partial seeing stops short of fully seeing.
- Jesus is the Christ, God's Son.
- We do not always see from God's point of view.
- Death precedes life in God's spiritual plan; loss comes before gain.

## Main Points

- "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign ..." (Matt. 16:4).
- "Do you not yet understand or remember...?" (Matt. 16:9); "Do you have a hardened heart?" (Mk. 8:13-21).
- "... he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly" (Mk. 8:25).
- "But who do you say that I am" (Matt. 16:15)?
- "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16).
- "Upon this rock I will build My church; ..." (Matt. 16:18).
- "Get behind Me, Satan" (Matt. 16:23)!

- "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25).

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- The Pharisees and Sadducees (Mark includes the Herodians) begin their curious alliance to stop a common enemy (**Matt. 16:1**).
  - Pharisees: formalism, traditionalism, hypocrisy, legalism.
  - Sadducees: liberalism, detached elitism, worldliness.
  - Herodians: political opportunists, civil corruption.
- The signs that deal with physical life are mastered by many more people than ever understand the signs of spiritual truth (**Matt. 16:2-3**; cf. Lk. 16:8).
- A reliance on signs shows the carnal emphasis that can so easily govern our direction in life (**Matt. 16:4**; cf. Jn. 20:26-29).
- The Resurrection would be the ultimate sign; if it would not work, nothing would (**Matt. 16:4**; cf. Matt. 12:39; Jn. 12:32; I Cor. 15:14-19).
- Jesus commonly saw connections between the world of sight and the world of faith; His disciples were often bound by sight (Matt. 16:5-12; cf. II Cor. 5:7).
  - Ideas are far more powerful than any merely physical, temporal concern (**Matt. 16:12**).
  - Words can kill or give life to our spirits (cf. Matt. 23:15; Jn. 6:63).
- The only *two phase* miracle in Jesus' ministry comes at a time when He illustrates the inadequacy of incomplete understanding and the need for completeness in spiritual appraisal (**Mk. 8:22-26**; cf. Mk. 8:27-30).
- Jesus had caused quite a stir by the miracles He worked and the things He taught—everybody had their opinion of who He was (**Matt. 16:14**).
  - Herod Antipas' fear generated the supposition that Jesus was John the Baptizer come back from the dead (Matt. 14:2).
  - Some saw Him as Elijah, misunderstood to be the literal forerunner of the Messiah (Matt. 3:1-3; 11:9-10; 17:10-13; Mal. 4:5-6).
  - Late Jewish traditions probably caused some to think Jesus might be Jeremiah, a man of sorrow (II Macc. 2:1-12; 15:14-15)
- In questions about Jesus' identity, the only belief that matters is our own (**Matt. 16:15**).

- Simon has correctly read the signs given by the Father—Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God (**Matt. 16:16-17**). The evidence is more than sufficient.
- Jesus commends Simon for arriving at this watershed truth, the only correct answer to the most fundamental question, “Who is Jesus?” (**Matt. 16:17**).
- Based on the truth of Simon’s confession, Jesus speaks of the church that He will build (**Matt. 16:18-19**).
  - Peter, petros in Greek, was a piece of loose stone. Jesus, as the Christ, was a petra, a large foundation stone, the foundation for the church (cf. E ph. 2:19-22; Gal. 2:9; I Pet. 2:3-8; I Cor. 3:11; 12:28).
  - Jesus’ play on words, common to Semitic culture, shows the relationship and contrast to the foundation of the church and those who build on that foundation.
  - Additionally, there may well be in this play on Peter’s Greek name a reference to his preaching the first gospel sermon (Acts 2:14).
  - The church would replace Israel as the people God would call His own (Phil. 3:3; Rom. 2:29; Gal. 6:16).
- Jesus did not build *many* churches, only **one**. We are not to “attend the church of our choice,” the choice has already been made (**Matt. 16:18**; E ph. 1:22-23; 4:4; Jn. 17:21-23; Matt. 28:20a).
- The “keys to the kingdom” would represent the entrance into the Messianic Kingdom, the church. Peter made these keys available in Acts 2:38, cf. v.47. (**Matt. 16:19**).
- The proper translation of **Matthew 16:19** is, “... whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”
  - This translation shows that heaven, not Peter or the Apostles, made the rules for the church.
  - This means that the church has no authority in itself—all authority comes from Jesus (Matt. 28:18; E ph. 1:21-23).
- All the Apostles as well as the church had binding and loosing authority in keeping with heaven’s standard, not just Simon (Jn. 20:23; Matt. 18:18).
- “From that time,” Jesus began to speak of His upcoming death and resurrection (**Matt. 16:21**; 17:9, 12, 22-23; 20:18-19; 27:63). With Matthew 4:17, the most general divisions of Matthew’s gospel are marked.

- Peter, looking at things from a limited earthly point of view, could not see past Jesus' death and see the Resurrection (**Matt. 16:21-23**).
  - The heavenly perspective is different from our limited earthly view (cf. Rev. chs. 2 and 3 in contrast to chs. 4 and 5).
  - Overcoming temporal, carnal perceptions is essential (I Cor. 3:2-3; Heb. 5:12-14).
- Self-denial is the non-negotiable starting point of a life with God, the profound negative that must precede the positive of Christ-likeness (**Matt. 16:24; Lk. 9:23**; cf. I Pet. 2:19-25).
- The most repeated teaching of Jesus is found in **Matthew 16:25**; there is a message in that repetition (Matt. 10:39; 16:25; Mk. 8:35; Lk. 9:24; 17:33; Jn. 12:25).
- Nothing offsets the loss of our soul (**Matt. 16:26**; cf. Matt. 19:16-22; Lk. 12:13-21).
- It would seem that context favors taking **Matthew 16:27-28; Mark 8:38-9:1; and Luke 9:26-26** as referring to the Lord's coming in Judgment on Jerusalem, rather than in referring to the beginning of the church on Pentecost.
  - The "shame" of God's judgment on the rebellious would be felt in Jerusalem's fall, not in the events of Pentecost (cf. Matt. 24:29-30; Joel 2:31-32; Mal. 4:5-6; Acts 2:19-20).
  - "Kingdom" can mean any manifestation of God's rule, context determines the specific expression.

## Relationship to the Church

- The church needs to look above (Col. 3:1-3), fixing its sight on Jesus (Heb. 12:1-2) if it is to see with a clear eye (Matt. 6:22-23).
- Only complete vision will see truth (Col. 1:24-29).
- The greatest truth of all is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God!
- If the church does not judge all things through the filter of Jesus, it will fall short of its glorious potential (Col. 3:17).
- If the church does not do all things as service to Jesus rather than to men, it fails to project the image of the Christ (Col. 3:23; Rom. 8:29).
- Self-denial is not to be confused with convenience.

- Completeness is not to be confused with personal preference.
- Loss is gain; death is life; Jesus is coming back!

## **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the Christ.
- He brings us to completeness as we die to self to live to Him.
- He died that we might live.
- It is His cross we are to bear daily.
- He will be back!

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
The Transfiguration	17:1-8	9:2-8	9:28-36	
Elijah discussed while descending	17:9-13	9:9-13		
Demon is cast out of boy	17:14-18	9:14-27	9:37-43	
Disciples ask about the miracle	17:19-21	9:28-29		
Jesus discusses his death	17:22-23	9:30-32	9:44-45	
Jesus pays tax with a miracle	17:24-27			

## Overriding Principles

- Jesus is the one voice that we are to hear in the Messianic Age.
- The Bible teaches with metaphorical imagery that requires us to be mindful of how literature works to accomplish its purposes.
- A lack of faith blinds us and distorts spiritual realities; faith sees clearly the unseen.
- Our faith must be willing to grow.
- Jesus must die.
- Jesus was God's Son and yet He sacrificed privilege to live under the responsibilities of a mere man.

## Main Points

- "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased, listen to Him" (Matt. 17:5b).
- Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptizer" (Matt. 17:13).
- "O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you" (Matt. 17:17)?
- "I do believe; help my unbelief" (Mk. 9:24).
- "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day" (Matt. 17:22-23).
- "But, lest we give them offense ... " (Matt. 17:27a)

## Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- The Transfiguration was an opportunity for God to reveal the changes that we soon to come. Jesus, One with the quality of a Son (Heb. 1:1-2), would replace the Law (represented by Moses) and the Prophets (represented by E lijah) as God's spokesman (**Matt. 17:1-8**; cf. Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:19-23).
- Peter evidenced the difficulty that would attend the Jew's transition from the Law and the Prophets to the Christ (**Matt. 17:4**; cf. Acts 15:1ff.).
- Messianic talk was deliberately suppressed by Jesus due to the inflammatory quality it had among the Jewish establishment (Matt. 17:9; cf. Matt. 12:22-24).
- The Apostles were intrigued with the idea of Jesus rising from the dead; yet another indication of how their upbringing in the contemporary Jewish culture had ill prepared them for the coming of the Messiah (**Mk. 9:10**; cf. Rom. 10:1-2; Jn. 5:39-47).
- Another area of misunderstanding among the Jews about the era of the Messiah was the role of E lijah. Malachi 4:5-6 had spoken of E lijah coming before the Messiah. This, we learn, was a metaphor to describe John the Baptizer (cf. Lk. 1:17; Matt. 11:12-15). John knew he was not E lijah (Jn. 1:21), but he was nevertheless the fulfillment of the prophecy, in a figure of speech (**Matt. 17:10-13**).
- While Jesus and three of the Apostles were on the mountain during the Transfiguration, the remainder of the Apostles were at the base of the mountain experiencing an embarrassing failure (**Mk. 9:14-29**).
- The nine Apostles, unfortunately, had too much of the unfaithfulness of their Age to believe that God's power could work in them to heal the distraught father's son (**Matt. 17:17, 19-20**).
- **Mark 9:29** shows that a lack of prayer was part of the problem; **Matthew 17:21** is a verse with very poor textual support and it is thus omitted in a number of translations.
- The boy's father had a more acceptable faith than did most of the Apostles (**Mk. 9:23-24**). This is a powerful illustration of how saving faith works. God will go with us as long as we will take the next step.
- The forces of Satan were powerful, but they stand no chance against God (**Matt. 17:25**; cf. **Mk. 9:29**).



- The Apostles demonstrate a persistent inclination to not deal with Jesus' instruction about His death (**Mk. 9:30-32**; cf. Matt. 16:21; 17:9, 12, 22; 20:18-19; 27:63). Selfishness, fear, denial, grief, etc., undoubtedly all played a part; faith was the solution. **Luke 9:44** is particularly pointed, "Let these words sink into your ears; ...."
- The tax mentioned in Matthew **17:24-27** would have been the temple tax (cf. Ex. 30:13; 38:26).
- Jesus uses the incident to show that while He is indeed God's Son and thus exempt, He is also a man who will accept the obligations men must receive. His solution is interesting; He pays, but in a way He does not pay (**Matt. 17:25-27**; cf. Phil. 2:5-8).

### Relationship to the Church

- The church has but one true Master (Lk. 6:46).
- Cross bearing is not optional; there must be an identification with the sufferings and death of Jesus (I Pet. 2:19-25).
- Bible study is not an intuitive undertaking, it requires diligent study (II Tim. 2:15).

### Who is Jesus?

- He is God's only Son.
- He is God's last, best earthly communication.
- He is the One who was willing to live and die as one of us so that we might find salvation.
- He chastens those He loves (Heb. 12:)
- He has emotions and feelings that He dared to forcefully express. Let us not think that Christianity domesticates men and women so as to make them bereft of passion for the cause—it does not!

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
Disciples argue about greatness	18:1-6	9:33-37	9:46-48	
John's zeal without understanding		9:38-42	9:49-50	
Warnings about stumbling blocks	18:7-11	9:43-50		
Parable of the lost sheep	18:12-14			
Instructions on church discipline	18:15-20			
Peter's question about forgiveness	18:21-35			

## Overriding Principles

- True greatness is found in the unpretentious attitude of a child.
- False teachers are subject to the wrath of God.
- God has a strong emotional tie to His children!
- Both repentance and forgiveness are to be respected by God's people.

## Key Verses

- "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:4).
- "... but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18:6).
- "What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go search for the one that is straying? And if it turns out that he finds it, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray" (Matt. 18:12-13).
- "And if your brother sin, go and reprove him between you and him alone, if he listens to you, you have won your brother (Matt. 18:15).
- Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:21-22).

## Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

### Rivalry among the Disciples

- The disciples had been arguing about which of them was the greatest (**Lk. 9:46**); they inquired concerning Jesus' standard of greatness (**Matt. 18:1**); but when He asked them what they had been discussing, they were embarrassed and would not speak (**Mk. 9:33-34**). It is best not to have a hidden agenda with the Christ—it isn't hidden to Him.
- The culture Jesus lived in was very conscious of status, class, and rank; Jesus would have none of it (**Matt. 18:1-5**).
- A small child is commonly most uninterested in rank. They do not think in terms of "who is the greatest?" Small children are often eager to serve. As they age they tend to want to be served. Let us never "grow" out of the eager, humble attitude of a child.
- Humility is the key to greatness (**Matt. 18:4**; cf. Lk. 18:9-14; Matt. 20:20-28).
- People with humble, childlike attitudes are to be received and appreciated. To fail to do so is to fail to receive Jesus and the Father (**Lk. 9:48**).

### Warnings against Stumbling Blocks

- People who work for Christ in the truth of His word are not stumbling blocks, even if they are not in our immediate group. A sectarian spirit must not accompany zeal for the truth (**Mk. 9:38-40**). A sectarian spirit causes "little ones" to stumble (**Mk. 9:42**).
- **Mark 9:40**, "For he who is not against us is for us," may seem somewhat at odds with Matthew 12:30, "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters." They are just two ways of viewing support of the Lord's cause. Those that do not oppose are also those that support. Clearly the non-opposition context of **Mark 9:40** is that of service (**Mk. 9:38-39**).
- Even a cup of water given to a follower of Jesus will not go unrewarded. The oriental mind connected the servant with the master—to honor the servant is to honor the master (cf. Matt. 25:31-40).
- "Reward" in **Mark 9:41** is best understood as representing God's approval. The thought is that one who honors a follower of Christ will not fail to have that action approved by the Father. What God approves, we should not oppose.

- God's anger is particularly fierce toward those who cause Christians to stumble— i.e. fall from grace (**Matt. 18:6-8**; cf. Gal. 5:4; 1:6-9).
- All who hold false ideas are not viewed in the same way. Those who lead astray are held in contempt; those who are led astray are viewed with a profound sadness.
- On the personal level, if we have something that threatens to cause us to stumble, we must be willing to do whatever it takes to correct the problem (**Mk. 9:43-50**).
- Hell is real (**Mk. 9:48**)!
- Persecution will test every Christian; it will reveal the heart. No doubt an association is found in **Mark 9:49** with the salt Leviticus 2:13 that was a symbol of covenant in Jewish grain offerings (cf. II Tim. 3:12; Matt. 5:13).
- Those once saved, can be lost (**Mk. 9:50**).
- The angels that are associated with the "little ones" can be explained by understanding that angels are ministering servants to the saved (cf. Heb. 1:14). In God's providential care, the way God operates in our age, angels play a part. How they do this, I do not know. That they do this, I do know!
- As angry as God is when His children fall away, He is equally elated when they return. We must share the Father's concern and compassion; we must seek to restore the fallen. (**Matt. 18:12-14**). Some, however, are intent on leaving, we can only hope and pray that their hearts will change (cf. Lk. 15:11-32).

### **Repentance and Forgiveness**

- When sin of such a nature as to cause us to lose a brother is committed, we are to try to win our brother back (**Matt. 18:15**). This naturally follows the proactive admonition of **Matthew 18:12-14** which the contextual nature of the offense.
- Privacy is to be respected as long as it is practical (**Matt. 18:15**).
- Because of the tragedy of being lost, we are not to give up easily on a brother whose soul is in jeopardy. Witnesses are to be brought in to confirm the problem and encourage repentance. (**Matt. 18:16**). These witnesses must either know of the sin, or have the fact of the sin proved to them. A person cannot be judged on the basis of only one person's accusation (Deut. 19:15).
- If this does not work, the congregation is included that their admonition might turn the heart of the offender back to God (**Matt. 18:17**; cf. I Cor. 5:1-8; II Cor. 2:1-11; 7:8-16).
- If this fails, the unrepentant brother or sister is no longer to enjoy the fellowship that is given to faithful brethren. Jews did not share religious fellowship with tax

collectors (traitors) or Gentiles, nor did they deal with them as though they were acceptable to God (**Matt. 18:17**). Wisdom must be used in such matters. We must keep sight of the purpose of all this—to restore the lost.

- **Matthew 18:18**, when properly translated, establishes that when we conduct God's business in His way, He supports our actions: "... whatever you shall bind on earth *shall have been bound* in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth, *shall have been loosed* in heaven." The Creator, not the creation, makes the rules.
- It is also important to note that **Matthew 18:20** is within the context of discipline, not God's general presence with believers. A single Christian worshipping on the Lord's Day need have no fear that God is elsewhere!
- Peter was no doubt thinking that he was very liberal in his suggestion that seven might be the limit of forgiving a brother who sinned against him. The Rabbis taught that three was the limit. Needless to say, Peter's "generous" standard didn't come close to God's merciful provisions (**Matt. 18:21-22**).
- To reinforce the truth about forgiveness, Jesus used a parable (**Matthew 18:23-35**). God forgives great debts in His merciful outreach; men are more apt to hold sin against their brethren.
- And yet, we must remember that repentance is to precede forgiveness (Lk. 17:3; 23:34 and Acts 2:36-38).
- In the parable, the amount forgiven was about ten million dollars, the amount refused forgiveness was about eighteen dollars (**Matt. 18:24, 28**).
- The consequences of an unforgiving heart are personally disastrous (**Matt. 18:33-35**; cf. Matt. 6:12, 14-15)!

## Application to the Church

- Humility must reign among us.
- Service to others must be seen as the way of greatness.
- God cares deeply for His children.
- We dare not be a stumbling block to each other by selfish actions and words.
- Yet, truth cannot be compromised; sin must be faced and sinners must repent.
- Forgiveness brings a sweet savor to the throne room of the Father.
- The unforgiving heart will be punished.
- Lost brethren are to be aggressively sought to the extent that they will allow.

## Who is Jesus?

- He, the King of kings and Lord of lords, demonstrated greatness through humble service.
- He passionately cares about issues that deal with salvation.
- He shows both the goodness and the severity of God as He displays both mercy on the repentant and judgment on the false teachers.
- He wants His church working together in humble service to the cause for which He went to the cross.

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Feast of Booths is at hand				7:2
Brothers advise Jesus to go to Judea				7:3-8
Jesus stays in Galilee				7:9
Jesus determines to go to Jerusalem			9:51	7:10
Messengers sent to Samaria			9:52-53	
James and John rebuked for attitudes			9:54-56	
Unfit followers	8:19-22		9:57-62	
People afraid to speak openly of Jesus				7:11-13
Jesus in the temple mid-feast				7:14-15
Jesus says some seek to kill him				7:16-19
Defense for healing on the Sabbath				7:20-24
Jesus cries out in the temple				7:25-30
Multitudes amazed at signs				7:31
Pharisees seek to seize Jesus				7:32-36
Last day of the feast of Booths				7:37
Rivers of living water				7:37-39
Division among the people				7:40-44
Pharisees question officers				7:45-47
Judgment of Nicodemus				7:48-53
Jesus goes to Mount of Olives				8:1
Morning teachings at temple				8:2
Adulterous woman brought to Jesus				8:3-11
Light of the World				8:12-20
Jesus was sent by the Father				8:21-30
Temple debate about Father Abraham				8:31-59
Jesus leaves the temple				8:59

## Overriding Principles

- Religion is not about putting on a show, neither is it interested in accommodating the misguided demands of detractors.
- Jesus appointment with death was critical to the success of His ministry.
- Commitment is serious business!
- Jesus' life speaks for itself; the evidence is conclusive.
- Self-righteous motivations are never received favorably by Jesus.

- There is only one way to receive salvation.
- Jesus is the Great I Am!

## Key Verses

- Jesus therefore said to them, "My time is not yet at hand; but your time is always opportune" (Jn. 7:6).
- And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem (Lk. 9:51).
- But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:62).
- But many of the multitudes believed in Him; and they were saying, "When the Christ shall come, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?" (Jn. 7:31).
- But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her" (Jn. 8:7).
- "I said therefore to you, that you shall all die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24).
- Jesus said to them, "truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham came into being, I Am" (Jn. 8:58).

## Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

### Jesus' Brothers Taunt Him (Jn. 7:2-9)

- The Feast of Booths would have been October 29, A.D. 29, five days after the Day of Atonement, "Yom Kippur." Jesus is about six months from His death.
- Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him until after the Resurrection (cf. Mk. 3:21).
- The challenge to Jesus is to make a public spectacle of Himself, this He would not do. Although Jesus did go to the feast, He did not go in the manner His brothers requested. His words in John 7:8 are to be taken in that context (cf. Jn. 7:10).
- Jesus' brothers had nothing to fear from the world, they were of its spirit. Jesus, on the other hand, needed to exercise caution.



### **Jesus goes to Jerusalem through Samaria (Lk. 9:51-56; Jn. 7:10)**

- Samaria was the territory just north of Jerusalem that was populated by a mixed race—Jews and Gentiles.
- The territory of Samaria took its name from the once capital city of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. After the Assyrian captivity of Israel in 722/21 BC, the Assyrians moved in other races to mix with the Jews that were left behind. This also led to a mixed religion until the time of Nehemiah when a rebel Jew became the Samaritan High Priest at a temple built on Mt. Gerizim. (Josephus gave the rebel's name as "Manasseh." He was reputed to have been offered the position by Sanballat, his father-in-law; Neh. 13:28). That temple was destroyed in 128 BC by John Hyrcanus, a key figure in the Maccabean Revolt. In Jesus' day, the worship on Mt. Gerizim probably had no formal temple (cf. I Kgs. 16:21-24; II Kgs. 18:9; 17:24-33; Ezra 4:1-16; Neh. 4:7-8; 6:1-9; 13:23-28).
- Elijah had destroyed soldiers from the Northern Kingdom of Israel (II Kgs. 1:10-12). Apparently James and John felt the Samaritan's slight of Jesus warranted a similar display of wrath. Jesus saw it otherwise. Jesus came to save, not to destroy.
- Jesus went to the feast in secret, no fanfare. In the middle of it He would speak, but even this was a fleeting, and much different display than His brothers had demanded.

### **Total Commitment Expected**

- The lesson is direct, simple, and piercing—Jesus must come first. He and His cause represent the things of truest value. Other pursuits, however noble or important they might otherwise be, are merely temporal.
- Neither comfort nor family are to come between a person and their loyalty to Jesus (cf. Matt. 10:34-39).

### **Responses to Jesus are Divided (Jn. 7:11-31)**

- There is no middle ground to take in deciding about Jesus. He is either God's Son, or He is a lying imposter.
- Remember, John uses the word "Jews" to indicate the religious establishment (cf. v. 11). Suppression of speech often evidences an inability to deal with what is might be said.
- Education comes in many forms; not always through the conventions of the establishment.

- A willing attitude is a must.
- The Jews, like people today, did not always come to proper conclusions about Bible teachings, such as matters relating to the Messiah's birth (cf. v. 27, 41-42).
- The evidence of Jesus' life allowed for only one conclusion.

#### **The Jews Fail to Arrest Jesus (Jn. 7:32-52)**

- Messianic talk about Jesus disturbed the authorities greatly. They tried to put a stop to the troubling rabbi.
- Again, Jesus' words about His departing are misunderstood. They didn't have a clue about the one thing they most needed to understand.
- The "living water" flowing from without believers speaks powerfully of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian. Christians are to be sources of life to a dying world. They are to refresh those who have come to despair.
- More Messianic talk is generated; the division of opinion over Jesus widens.
- The guards sent to arrest Jesus come back empty handed. Their reason speaks volumes about the uniqueness of the Christ, "Never did a man speak the way this man speaks."
- Nicodemus, who had been evasive and dismissive with Jesus in John three, has had time to reflect further on Jesus. He has come to realize that his first appraisal of Jesus was correct (cf. Jn. 3:2b).
- When logic and truth do not go where people want to go they delight in "shooting the messenger."

#### **A Woman taken in Adultery (Jn. 7:53-8:11)**

- While this account is located in various places in manuscripts of John, and occasionally even in manuscripts of Luke, the early insistence that it have a place in the Gospels attests to its worthiness to be included.
- Old Covenant law prescribed stoning for one taken in adultery (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22).
- Mercy, however, was part of God's Old Testament revelation.
- Here, duplicity is clearly part of the "set up"—where was the man?
- Jewish law required that tainted witnesses receive the punishment they sought for others (Ex. 20:16; 23:1; Deut. 19:16-21).
- Perhaps Jesus wrote these verses in the dirt.
- At any rate, Jesus' remarks addressed to "those without sin," surely would have struck home to those schooled in Old Testament law.

- No witnesses were left (cf. Deut. 17:6-7), Jesus dismissed the case.
- He did not, however, dismiss the seriousness of sin. The woman was clearly repentant, but she must also understand the need to get out of the sinning business.

### **Jesus Declares that He is the Light of the World (Jn. 8:12-20)**

- Jesus and the Father were the witnesses to Jesus being the light of the world.
- The Pharisees could not accept that Jesus was God's Son.
- Jesus was also of His Father in that He did the things of His Father. The Pharisees, who also claimed God as Father, actually followed another father—Satan (cf. Jn. 8:44).

### **Jesus Insists on Belief in Him (Jn. 8:21-30)**

- Yet again, Jesus words about going back to the Father are misunderstood—still no clue!
- Belief in Jesus as the Christ is absolutely necessary, there is no other way (Acts 4:12).
- The crucifixion would bring home the point, to anyone who would accept it (cf. Acts 2:36-38). This is God's drawing power in the Gospel—a Savior who died that we might live. Not gimmicks, but a cross (cf. Gal. 5:24; 6:14; I Cor. 2:2).
- Only the truth can truly convict.

### **Jesus and Abraham (Jn. 8:31-59)**

- Jewish believers had to stay with the project if they were to truly be free. They were offended at this. In their offence, they revealed their hearts and their loyalties—they served the Devil.
- Jesus is as direct in these verses as He is anywhere in Scripture.
- The misplaced, distorted, trust in their bloodline had caused them to miss the central point about Abraham—he followed God in faith.
- They followed pride and tradition.
- Jesus shocked the Jews by telling them that Abraham had rejoiced to see Jesus' day.
- And even more shocking, Jesus took on the very "I Am-ness" of God Himself (cf. Ex. 3:13-14; 6:1-3).
- Such an opportunity, an stoning seemed to the Jews to be the appropriate response!

## **Application to the Church**

- Jesus identity must not be compromised.
- Commitment is essential.
- Justice is to be tempered with mercy.
- Mercy is not without its demands.
- We must be careful not to make Christianity a thing that is of us and our traditions and not of God. To do such is to be children of Satan.

## **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the Messiah.
- He is the light.
- He is the one who must be followed.
- He died that we might live.
- He would be served from conviction, not human manipulation.

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Jesus cures a man born blind				9:1-7
Neighbors question cured man				9:8-12
Pharisees question man and his parents				9:13-34
Jesus finds the man				9:35-39
Pharisees ask if they are blind				9:40-10:6
Jesus the good shepherd				10:7-18
Division among the Jews				10:19-21

## Overriding Principles

- God's grace, among those who have a hypercritical philosophy of religion, is commonly distorted by legalism.
- Fear often keeps otherwise well meaning people from doing what is right.
- When there are no logical defenses for a treasured belief, only illogical, inadequate attempts remain.
- Those who will not see are the most blind.
- Salvation comes only through Jesus.
- Those who truly care are willing to pay a price for their concern.
- When we are unwilling to change we often seek to discredit or destroy those who point out our hypocrisy.

## Key Verses

- Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath" (Jn. 9:16a).
- His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed, that if anyone should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue (Jn. 9:22).
- They answered and said to him, "You were born entirely in your sins, and are you teaching us?" And they put him out (Jn. 9:34).

- Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains" (Jn. 9:41).
- I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture (Jn. 10:9).
- I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep (Jn. 10:11).
- The Jews took up stones to stone Him (Jn. 10:31).

## **Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar**

### **Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind (Jn. 9:1-7)**

- The Jews commonly associated physical misfortune directly with a sin the afflicted person had committed. This was the mistake of Job's "friends." Most such unfortunate occurrences, however, are only indirectly due to sin and its consequences being part of our everyday world.
- The disciples were more concerned with a discussion of theology than with the condition of the blind man.
- There was a limited time available for doing good within the context of the light of Jesus' ministry, soon He would be gone and dark days would come (cf. Lk. 22:35-38).
- The clay smeared on the blind man's eyes and the command to wash in the pool of Siloam must have seemed foolish in itself, but a deep need looks to any thing that might benefit—Jesus had not even promised sight. Need removes rationalizations; pride creates them (cf. II Kg. 5:1-14).
- The healing of a man "born blind" was a major miracle. Other blind men were healed (Matt. 9:27-31; 12:22; 15:30; 21:24; Mk. 8:22-26; 10:46-52), but not one born blind. This made Jesus more difficult to dismiss.

### **The Reaction (Jn. 9:8-34)**

- Even some who knew the former blind man found it hard to believe that a man born blind could receive his sight.
- The man revealed that a man named Jesus was the one who had brought about his healing. From this the blind man would grow in his estimation of Jesus until he came to see Him as the "Son of Man," a Messianic title, and as "Lord," one worthy of worship (Jn. 9:35-38).

- The Pharisees are made aware of the amazing healing and immediately a problem arises. The deed was done on the Sabbath. This immediately links this miracle with the one performed in John five, the healing of the lame man. The sign of healing the lame man had been less spectacular, but more problematic in appearance regarding Sabbath law. The third of a trilogy of related signs in John is found in chapter eleven with the healing of Lazarus. That miracle is not on the Sabbath, and it is the most spectacular of the three, but it draws the strongest negative reaction. The problem is thus exposed as not really being about the Sabbath, it was about Jesus' being increasingly identified as the Messiah (cf. Jn. 9:16b; 11:45-53).
- Division among the Pharisees was adding to the problem faced by the establishment over Jesus—things were getting out of hand.
- The "Jews" (John's word for the religious establishment, commonly the Pharisees) immediately tried to prove that the man healed was not really the man born blind, but his parents stop that effort in its tracks.
- The parents of the healed man feared expulsion from the synagogue and refused to comment on the identity of Jesus. Fear was allowed to be more powerful than God—it is not!
- The man Jesus healed had no reservations, however, about speaking out in defense of Jesus. He saw with the eyes of faith, the most important sight of all (cf. II Cor. 5:7). Being expelled from the synagogue was not a concern. Truth was what mattered to the man Jesus healed (cf. Matt. 10:28).
- The Pharisees were no match for the truth offered by the man born blind. A novice put to flight the theologians. Truth does not depend on the speaker; it is its own justification (cf. Mk. 12:14).

#### **The Conclusion (Jn. 9:35-41)**

- Jesus asked a man who has suffered for his relationship with Him if he would accept Him as the Messiah. Without hesitation, the man accepted Jesus as Lord and worshiped Him. Suffering does not compare to what faith sees as its reward (cf. II Cor. 4:16-18).
- The Pharisees **would not** see what only faith could reveal.
- Had they truly had an honest problem understanding Him, Jesus would have guided them to faith. However, since their pride would allow no such admissions, they remained blind.
- So close in proximity, yet so far away in understanding.

### **The Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:1-18)**

- Jesus is the only way (cf. Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12).
- Jesus is the Good Shepherd. A concept rich in its Old Covenant heritage (Ps. 23; Jer. 23:1-3; Ezek. 34:12, 15).
- He is the only one the Father has chosen (Matt. 17:5).
- A relationship with Jesus is one of spiritual intimacy and knowledge (Jn. 17:3).
- Only Jesus offers an abundant life (cf. Matt. 11:28-30).
- Jesus laid down His life, thus showing the level of His commitment (v. 11, 15, 17, 18; cf. Jn. 13:37-38; 15:13; I Jn. 3:16; Phil 2:8; Heb. 12:2).
- Hirelings cannot be shepherds (cf. I Pet. 5:2-3).
- One key to eternal life is whether or not we listen to Jesus. Do we recognize His voice?

### **More Controversy (Jn. 10:19-39)**

- Those who would accuse Jesus of lunacy because of His words had to give an explanation for His ability to open the eyes of the blind. They could not!
- Jesus' ministry was sorting out those who could see from those who were blind.
- Divisions were growing among the Jews and increasing tensions.
- The Feast of Dedication centered on the rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus, we know it today as Hanukkah. It happened on December 25, 165 B.C.
- The Jews asked Jesus to openly tell them that He is the Messiah. Perhaps they still held out some hope that He would be a political deliverer. However, this may simply be a bold attempt to force Jesus to give them another reason to do Him in.
- Jesus makes it plain that the content of His ministry has settled the matter; they did not want to accept the evidence.
- The religious leaders were not His sheep; they did not **hear** when He spoke.
- If they wanted something to hold against Jesus, He gave it to them. He declared that He gave eternal life and that He and the Father were one! The things they were most enraged to hear were the things He was not hesitant to admit.
- They tried to stone Jesus, but He temporarily brought pause to their efforts by perplexing them with Scriptures from the Old Covenant that called men by a name given to God (Ex. 21:6; 22:8, 28; Ps. 82:6).
  - o If angels and Jewish leaders could be called "gods," how much more could one like Jesus lay claim to the name (cf. Jn. 1:1).



- The Hebrew word elohim was applied to angels and men in the Old Testament as a way of commenting on those who worked under God's authority to do His will.
- The evidence allowed but one conclusion; Jesus was who He said He was (cf. Matt. 16:13-17). He did the will of God as God alone could do.
- Jesus tried to get them to see that their reaction to Him was misplaced. If they would look at his deeds, they would realize that His words must be true (cf. Matt. 9:1-7).
- The Jews, rather than taking advantage of this moment to reassess, resorted to another attempt to seize Jesus.

### **Application to the Church**

- Tradition is not sight, neither is mere religious talk the voice of the Christ.
- Legalism is as bad as liberalism.
- Philosophy is not to substitute for service.
- Our reasons for our decisions must be defensible, not merely emotional.
- Jesus sorts out all who come in contact with Him—there is no middle ground.
- Pragmatic consequences must not rule our decisions; truth must rule.
- A “no matter what” attitude is the attitude of a disciple with regard to the truth.
- Faith grows in those who stay with Jesus; it dies in those who reject His voice.
- There is only one way to get to Heaven—through Jesus.
- Jesus is the true source of abundance, and that abundance is spiritual in nature.
- The evidence of Jesus' life demands but one verdict—He is God's Son.

### **Who is Jesus?**

- He brings true meaning to the structures and rules given by God.
- He is the enemy of traditionalism.
- He brings sight through faith (cf. Jn. 8:31-32).
- He brings hope that far outweighs the trials of life.
- He never compromises truth—no matter what.
- He inspires us to stand firm when we are tempted to waver and turn away.

# A Study of the Christ Text

Matthew Mark Luke John

The Lord's Supper

26:26-30

14:22-26

22:14-20

## Overriding Principles

- God is, commonly, one who develops plans over time, such as the ultimate intent of the Passover principle and the Jewish sacrificial system.
- Grace is far from cheap.
- The Messianic Kingdom was to be the ultimate expression of God's earthly rule (cf. Eph. 3:11, 21).

## Commentary

### The Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:26-30; Mk. 14:22-26; Lk. 22:14-20)

- The first observance of Passover was while standing (Ex. 12:11), however, after the Exodus the Jews reclined at table as a celebration of freedom (slaves stood at table).
- There was an "Haggadah" (set form) for the Passover celebration that covered the Passover week.
- The Haggadah of Passover became part of the "Seder" (order) and included the liturgy and narration taken from Deuteronomy 26:5-9.
- The meal centered on three foods: unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and the Passover lamb, along with four traditional cups of fruit of the vine.
- In Jesus' time the Jews were looking for a new Moses to deliver them from the Romans, not a new lamb to deliver them from their sins.
- The bread and the cup became the completely unexpected fulfillment of the original Passover by ushering in an atonement—a passing over of sins (cf. I Cor. 5:7).
- Jesus left two visible reminders of His soon to be invisible person.
- The bread and the cup were representative of Jesus, not literally His body and blood.
  - The words spoken over the Passover bread illustrate the point.
  - "This is the bread of affliction our fathers ate when they came from Egypt."
  - Clearly, no Jew thought the bread suddenly became centuries old at the saying of the traditional words.
- The traditional four cups of the fruit of the vine each had special significance.
  - The first was a Kiddush or cup of blessing that introduced all Jewish festivals.

- At every meal a prayer was offered by the head of the house as he raised a loaf of bread over his head.
  - “Praise be You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who causes bread to come forth from the earth.”
  - When an “amen” was said by those at the table, the host broke off peaces of the loaf to distribute as a blessing to each person.
    - Jesus offered His body as a blessing!
      - After the Haggadah, just before the meal, was the second cup, followed by the singing of Psalm 113-114 (the first part of the Hallel, “praise”).
      - The third cup came after the meal and the giving of thanks.
      - The fourth cup followed the completion of the singing of the Hallel (Ps. 115-118; cf. Matt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26).
- Drinking from another’s cup symbolized, on occasion, a sharing in the destiny of the one who offered the cup (note Matt. 20:22-23; Jn. 4:7-10; Ps. 16:4-5).
- Luke mentions two cups.
  - The first was most likely the first of the four traditional cups as it was a cup of thanksgiving.
  - The second of Luke’s cups was most likely the forth traditional cup since it completed the meal.
- Included in the deeper significance of Passover revealed by Jesus in the Lord’s Supper was the coming fulfillment of the promised New Covenant and its new understanding of forgiveness (Jer. 31:31-34; cf. Isa. 53).
  - Old Testament covenants were ratified by blood (cf. Gen. 15:9-10; Ex. 24:28).
  - The traditional Passover cup was not associated with blood by the Jews as they regarded drinking blood completely revolting (cf. Jn. 6:53-58).
- A fifth traditional cup was present at the Passover meal, known as “the cup of Elijah.”
- The fifth cup was most likely the one Jesus figuratively cited when He said He would not drink of it until the establishment of the Father’s Kingdom.
- The phrase, “not drink again” was used by Jesus as a metaphor for death, with “drink it anew” implying a resurrection (such phrases of abstinence were commonly associated with vows in Jesus’ day).

## **Who is Jesus?**

- He was the fulfillment of all Old Covenant themes.
- He died that we might live.

# Passover in the Time of Jesus

By: Daniel B. Wallace , Th.M., Ph.D.

The following essay is the transcript used in a recent Seder that I conducted with some friends. With a little imagination, you can see how it was implemented.

This evening we will be celebrating the Passover as it was celebrated in the first century A.D. Our records are scanty in some places, but the majority of aspects of the evening are certifiable as authentic at that time. We will not eat gifilta fish, nor have a boiled egg or a bare lamb shank bone on our plates, since this practice does not date back to the time of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> The meal itself will be simple: hors d'oeuvres, lamb, unleavened bread, and wine; the symbolic significance of the meal, however, will be rich and complex. The Passover was a festive occasion—a celebration of the nation's release from Egyptian bondage. We should celebrate it tonight as Jesus' disciples did, for only later did they realize the irony of this joyous occasion that pointed to the death of the Messiah.

As we replicate what the Jews of Palestine did at the time of Jesus, try to reflect on what may have been going through the disciples' minds as well as our Lord's, as we partake of that last Passover before his death. At certain points we will punctuate the ceremony with references to that Thursday evening of April 2, A. D. 33.<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

## Preliminaries:

- **Nisan 10—Selection of a lamb:** A one-year-old unblemished male lamb is chosen for the Passover by a member of the household. (In A. D. 33, Nisan 10 fell on 'Palm Monday,' the day Jesus made his untriumphal entry into Jerusalem. It is evident that he was presenting himself as the unblemished sacrifice for the nation on that day.) The slaughter of the lambs would not take place until Nisan 14, the day Jesus was crucified (Friday, April 3, A. D. 33).<sup>3</sup>
- **Nisan 13—Searching for leaven:** Usually the evening before the Passover meal was eaten, the *paterfamilias* led his family through the house by candlelight, looking in nooks and crannies for any leaven in the house. No leaven was supposed to be in the home at that time. (Not infrequently, Jews would sell their leaven to their Gentile neighbors and buy it back after the eight days of unleavened bread!)

At the end of the search the father says, "All leaven that is in my possession, that which I have seen and that which I have not seen, be it null, be it accounted as the dust of the earth."<sup>4</sup>

- **Nisan 14—Footwashing:** As guests and family members entered the home to celebrate Passover, a servant or slave would often be there to wash their feet. This was the task of the lowest class of people. (That Jesus did this in John 13, even though he was the *paterfamilias* or head of the family, both symbolizes what he would later do for his disciples [cf. Mark 10: 45—"The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give my life as a ransom for many"] and embodies his principle that "If anyone wants to be **first**, he shall be **last** of all, and servant of all" [Mark 9: 35; cf. also John 13: 15].)<sup>5</sup>
- **Non-ritual wine:** Before we partake of the ritual wine, we are permitted to drink wine that has no religious significance. This non-ritual wine is also allowed between the first and second cups of ritual wine, and between the second and third cups.
- **First hand-washing:** Once all the guests arrive, we will perform the ritual hand-washing that Jews, from antiquity, have done before every meal.<sup>6</sup>
- **Table setting:** in front of each seat—four glasses for ritual wine, labeled as such (the non-ritual wine glass should not be on the table, but should be given to guests after they arrive and after their feet are washed); one plate, cutlery, napkin. Several candles on the table. Seating labels in place. *Charoseth*, unleavened bread, vegetables, and vinegar (*karpas*) should all be on the table. As well, representative bottles of wine should be there too, all labeled.

- **Reclining at table:** The ancient near eastern custom of total relaxation was not too far from our modern “couch potato with remote control” motif. They would relax around a low table (about 18” off the ground), sprawled out on pillows, being served by the help. So, take your shoes off, and prepare to have a good time!

**Seating** at Passover is **assigned**: beginning with the head of the family at one end, the guests are to wrap around the table either from the oldest to youngest, or the most important to the least important. Some of you have place names for where you should sit; the rest may sit where they please.

- **First cup:** Four ritual cups of wine are used for the Passover. The Mishnah says that even the poorest man in Israel must drink the four ritual cups, even if it means selling all his possessions! The wine used was red and warm, a custom we are continuing this evening. A prayer is uttered over each cup, and the four verbs of Exodus 6:6-7 are recited, one over each cup.

After we are seated casually, the first prayer (the *kiddush*, or prayer of sanctification) is uttered by the *paterfamilias*.

... npgh yrp arwb ml uh i l m wnyh l a yy hta i wrb

“Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who has created the fruit of the vine. . . . And you, O Lord our God, have given us festival days for joy, this feast of the unleavened bread, the time of our deliverance in remembrance of the departure from Egypt. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to enjoy this season.”

The *kiddush*: “Blessed are you, O Lord our God, . . . who has created the fruit of the vine. . . . Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to enjoy this season.”

Then the first cup of ritual wine is poured and the first verb of Exodus 6:6-7 is recited by the father:

myrxm tlbs tj tm mkta ytaxwhw hwby yna

“I am the LORD, and I **will bring you** out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.”

The wine may now be drunk. (After this cup, you may now drink non-ritual wine until the second cup is served. The non-ritual wine may be any of the previously mentioned non-ritual wines, or it may be the wine used for the first cup.)

- **The Karpas (bitter herbs and the first dipping):** The head of the house dips bitter herbs (traditionally lettuce or celery) into salt water or vinegar. He dips the bitter herb together with the chief guest of honor (the person on his right), and then the bitter herbs are passed on down the table.
- After all partake of the *karpas*, **all food** is removed from the table. This heightens the interest of the evening, prompting the questions from the youngest son.
- **Second Cup:** poured, but not yet drunk.
- **Questions from the youngest son/least significant person:**

Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights we eat leavened or unleavened bread, but this night only unleavened bread.

On all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs, but this night only bitter herbs. Why do we dip the herbs twice?

On all other nights we eat meat roasted, stewed, or boiled, but on this night why only roasted meat?

- **Answer by the father** (recounting the history of Israel from Abraham till Moses and the giving of the Law)<sup>2</sup>:

Acts 7:2-38 (with some lacunae) is read. It is interesting that Stephen's speech so closely parallels the kinds of things that the *paterfamilias* would say at the Passover (though with some interesting twists to it) that one wonders if this was indeed the message that Stephen, as head of his own home, would recite at Passover (for at 7:39 Stephen goes beyond what was to be recited and begins to pronounce his indictment against the religious leaders).

- All food and wine is returned to the table, including the lamb.
- Father now explains the significance of the lamb, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread.
- **Singing of the first half of the Hallel Psalms:** Psalms 113-114.

Done in one of two ways: father singing the lines with the family saying "Hallelujah" after each verse, or all singing the psalms together. We will do the latter. [NIV]

Psa. 113:1 Praise the LORD. Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD.

Psa. 113:2 Let the name of the LORD be praised, both now and forevermore.

Psa. 113:3 From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the LORD is to be praised.

Psa. 113:4 The LORD is exalted over all the nations, his glory above the heavens.

Psa. 113:5 Who is like the LORD our God, the One who sits enthroned on high,

Psa. 113:6 who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth?

Psa. 113:7 He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap;

Psa. 113:8 he seats them with princes, with the princes of their people.

Psa. 113:9 He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the LORD.

Psa. 114:1 When Israel came out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of foreign tongue,

Psa. 114:2 Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel his dominion.

Psa. 114:3 The sea looked and fled, the Jordan turned back;

Psa. 114:4 the mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.

Psa. 114:5 Why was it, O sea, that you fled, O Jordan, that you turned back,

Psa. 114:6 you mountains, that you skipped like rams, you hills, like lambs?

Psa. 114:7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob,

Psa. 114:8 who turned the rock into a pool, the hard rock into springs of water.

- **Prayer over the Second Cup:**

npgh yrp arwb mlwuh i l m wnyhl a yy hta i wrb

"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who has created the fruit of the vine. . . .

**Exodus 6:6b:** "I will deliver you from their bondage"

mtdbum mkta ytl xhw

- **Second hand-washing:** This hand-washing is done out of respect for the unleavened bread that is about to be eaten.
- **The Paschal Lamb, charoseth with vegetables, and two of the unleavened bread wafers are served.**
- **Prayer over the bread** (by the father):

"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with your commandments, and commanded us to eat unleavened bread."

- **Breaking of the bread:**

The host breaks the guest of honor's bread and they dip it together in the *charoseth* and bitter herbs. The guest in turn breaks his neighbor's bread and they dip it together, and so on down the line.

- **The meal may now be eaten.**

After drinking the second cup of wine, any wine that has already been drunk may now be drunk non-ritually.

- **The Third Cup: Prayer and consumption**

*After* the meal, the third cup is poured. The last of the unleavened bread wafers is blessed, broken, and eaten:

"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with your commandments, and commanded us to eat unleavened bread."

**All participants** recite the post-meal grace together, and then the prayer over the wine.

"The name of the Lord be blessed from now until eternity. Let us bless him of whose gifts we have partaken: Blessed be our God of whose gifts we have partaken, and by whose goodness we exist."

"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who has created the fruit of the vine. . . .

**Then the father** recites the third verb from Exodus 6:6:

"**I will redeem** you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments."

myl dg myf n uwrzb mkta ytl agw

Then the wine is drunk.

\*No non-ritual wine may be drunk between the third and the fourth cup.

- **The Fourth Cup and the final Hallel Psalms:**

The fourth cup of wine is poured and blessed by all:

"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who has created the fruit of the vine. . . .

**Then the father** recites the fourth verb from Exodus 6:6-7:

"Then **I will take** you as my people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."

**Psalms 115-118 are now sung** as a closing hymn [NIV, slightly modified]

Psa. 115:1 Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.

Psa. 115:2 Why do the nations say, "Where is their God?"

Psa. 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

Psa. 115:4 But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men.  
Psa. 115:5 They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see;  
Psa. 115:6 they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell;  
Psa. 115:7 they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats.  
Psa. 115:8 Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.  
Psa. 115:9 O house of Israel, trust in the LORD — he is their help and shield.  
Psa. 115:10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD — he is their help and shield.  
Psa. 115:11 You who fear him, trust in the LORD — he is their help and shield.  
Psa. 115:12 The LORD remembers us and will bless us: He will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron,  
Psa. 115:13 he will bless those who fear the LORD — small and great alike.  
Psa. 115:14 May the LORD make you increase, both you and your children.  
Psa. 115:15 May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.  
Psa. 115:16 The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man.  
Psa. 115:17 It is not the dead who praise the LORD, those who go down to silence;  
Psa. 115:18 it is we who extol the LORD, both now and forevermore. Praise the LORD.

Psa. 116:1 I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy.  
Psa. 116:2 Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live.  
Psa. 116:3 The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.  
Psa. 116:4 Then I called on the name of the LORD: "O LORD, save me!"  
Psa. 116:5 The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.  
Psa. 116:6 The LORD protects the simplehearted; when I was in great need, he saved me.  
Psa. 116:7 Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you.  
Psa. 116:8 For you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling,  
Psa. 116:9 that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living.  
Psa. 116:10 I believed; therefore I said, "I am greatly afflicted."  
Psa. 116:11 And in my dismay I said, "All men are liars."  
Psa. 116:12 How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me?  
Psa. 116:13 I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.  
Psa. 116:14 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.  
Psa. 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.  
Psa. 116:16 O LORD, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant; you have freed me from my chains.  
Psa. 116:17 I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD.  
Psa. 116:18 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people,  
Psa. 116:19 in the courts of the house of the LORD — in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD.

Psa. 117:1 Praise the LORD, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples.  
Psa. 117:2 For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD.

Psa. 118:1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.  
Psa. 118:2 Let Israel say: "His love endures forever."  
Psa. 118:3 Let the house of Aaron say: "His love endures forever."  
Psa. 118:4 Let those who fear the LORD say: "His love endures forever."  
Psa. 118:5 In my anguish I cried to the LORD, and he answered by setting me free.  
Psa. 118:6 The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?  
Psa. 118:7 The LORD is with me; he is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies.  
Psa. 118:8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.  
Psa. 118:9 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.  
Psa. 118:10 All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of the LORD I cut them off.  
Psa. 118:11 They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of the LORD I cut them off.  
Psa. 118:12 They swarmed around me like bees, but they died out as quickly as burning thorns; in the name of the LORD I cut them off.  
Psa. 118:13 I was pushed back and about to fall, but the LORD helped me.



Psa. 118:14 The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.  
Psa. 118:15 Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: "The LORD's right hand has done mighty things!  
Psa. 118:16 The LORD's right hand is lifted high; the LORD's right hand has done mighty things!"  
Psa. 118:17 I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done.  
Psa. 118:18 The LORD has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death.  
Psa. 118:19 Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.  
Psa. 118:20 This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter.  
Psa. 118:21 I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.  
Psa. 118:22 The stone the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone;  
Psa. 118:23 the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.  
Psa. 118:24 This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.  
Psa. 118:25 O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success.  
Psa. 118:26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you.  
Psa. 118:27 The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar.  
Psa. 118:28 You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you.  
Psa. 118:29 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

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1 The basic source for the ancient Passover ceremony is the tractate *Pesachim* (from which the Greek word *pascha* is derived and which is translated as 'paschal' in the RSV of 1 Cor 5:7, 'passover' in most other modern translations) in the Mishnah, a document that was written down in c. A. D. 200 by Rabbi Judah ha-Nassi. Judah had received it via oral tradition dating back to the great Rabbi Hillel, who lived in the century before Christ.

2 The date I follow has been argued for by Harold Hoehner in his *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*.

3 Passover lambs were slain between noon and 3 p.m. on Nisan 14 (recall that there were three hours of darkness, from approximately noon to 3 p.m., when Jesus was on the cross [Mark 15:33]. When Jesus died, the temple curtain was torn in two, from top to bottom [Mark 15:38]—right when the last of the lambs would be on the altar in front of the sanctuary!). In A. D. 70, the last year that the temple was still standing, 270,000 lambs were slain.

When the lambs were slain, the Levites would chant the Hallel Psalms (Psalms 113-118) repeatedly.

4 This practice apparently stems from a rabbinic interpretation of Zephaniah 1:12—"I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent." Since leaven often represents sin, Paul makes the tie between the leaven of the Passover and our commitment to Christ in 1 Cor 5:7 ("Get rid of the old leaven that you may be a new batch without leaven—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.")

5 The footwashing was not a part of the Passover per se, but was the custom in Palestine when one entered a home to eat a meal.

6 There is some dispute about when the first handwashing was performed. In modern times, it is done prior to the meal and before sitting down. In ancient times it may have been done once all reclined at table and after the first cup of wine was poured.

Cf. Matt 15:1-20 (Jesus refutes this tradition as merely "the precepts of the men," noting that the Pharisees and scribes had abandoned the commandments of God for such traditions.)

7 The command to recount Israel's history is recorded in Exod 10:2; 12:26-27; and 13:8.

# The Lord's Supper

## Matthew 26:26-29

### Introduction

1. The central element of the Christian faith is the death, burial, and resurrection of the Christ (I Cor. 15: 1-4).
2. The heart of Christian worship is the Lord's Supper, the memorial of His death until He comes again—the remembrance of Jesus' death on the day of His resurrection.
3. As we prepare to partake, let us remember *why*...

### The Beginnings of the Supper

1. Emerging from the Passover (Ex. 11-13).
  - a. The deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians by a lamb's blood.
  - b. Physical deliverance.
2. Pointing to the Cross (Matt. 26:26-29).
  - a. The deliverance of sinners from the consequences of their sins by the Lamb's blood (Rom. 1:18-3:18; Jn. 1:29, 36).
  - b. Spiritual deliverance.

### The Keeping of the Supper

1. The unity of the church in loyalty to Christ (I Cor. 10:14-22; 11:17-22).
  - a. As Israel should have been united in having but one altar, so the church is to be one in the loaf and in the cup.
  - b. Our loyalty to Jesus is not to be shared, even as Israel could not share their loyalty to God with idols.
2. Renewing the instructions of Jesus (I Cor. 11:23-34).
  - a. Christians are a people of the Christ (Lk. 6:46).
  - b. We are to be a people of oneness (Eph. 4:4-6).

### The Promise of the Supper

1. He will return (Jn. 14:1-6; I Thess. 4:13-18).
2. In that moment, that twinkling of an eye, will the time of change be the time of our change (I Cor. 15:35-58)?

### Conclusion

1. The Supper is about emblems, timing, brotherhood, and loyalty—but it is *all* about Jesus.
2. As often as we eat the Supper, let Him be remembered.

# A Study of the Christ Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Jesus comforts the disciples				14:1-6
Jesus responds to Philip				14:7-14
Jesus promises the Holy Spirit				14:15-31

## Overriding Principles

- Jesus mission was one of rescue both for this life and in the life to come.
- The Spirit would reveal all needful things for the Messianic Age.
- The Holy Spirit would allow the essence of Jesus to return through the seed of the word to live in the hearts of Christians.
- Loving obedience is at the heart of Christianity.

## Commentary

### Comfort for the Disciples (Jn. 14:1-6)

- The “heart” represented to a Jew the center of both the will and the emotions.
- Encouraging words were commonly given by God at times of trial (cf. Deut. 1:21; Josh. 1:9; II Kgs. 25:24; Isa. 10:24).
- The translation “believe” in verse one carries the idea of trust, always a vital component of believing.
- The familiar “many mansions” is actually a poor translation; literally the thought is “many rooms.”
  - As families grew in Jewish culture, rooms would commonly be added to homes to accommodate the additional family members.
  - A compound around a courtyard would have been an idea understood by most.
  - Additionally, the Greco-Roman culture had similar constructions where rooms were built within terraces and pools with beautiful flowers and trees added for additional enjoyment.
- There would be plenty of room in the Father’s house for all His children, and Jesus would personally prepare each place (cf. Deut. 1:29-33).
- Jesus would come back to gather His own (cf. Jn. 21:22-23; I Thess. 4:16-17).

- If these things were not so, Jesus would never have given such a hope (cf. Mk. 12:14).
- Jesus emphasized three important characteristics of His essential relationship to salvation: the way, the truth, and the life.
  - Early Christians were said to be followers of the “way,” indicating the manner of life that defined them (cf. Jn. 13:34-35).
  - “Truth” speaks to the point of a standard that sets Christians apart (cf. Jn. 17:17).
  - “Life” Jesus is the source of spiritual life (cf. Jn.11:25).
- As in the pluralistic climate of Jesus’ world, so also in our day, exclusivity is a stark, unpopular thing (cf. Acts 4:12).

### **Jesus Responds to Philip (Jn. 14:7-14)**

- Knowledge of God and the intimacy it allowed were highly valued among the Jews (cf. Ps. 46:10; 100:3).
- Jesus associated knowing God with eternal life (Jn. 17:3).
- Seeing God was tied to the greatest of blessings (cf. Ex. 33:18; Isa. 6:1; 40:5).
- Philip had missed the point.
  - But he was not alone; few of the disciples came to see the point quickly.
  - To imagine God standing before them as a man was astounding!
  - To define God in such a practical, earthy manner as the word that became flesh, this was amazing.
  - Such a definition demanded much—life could now be seen in an everyday reality, the application of which could hardly be ignored or avoided.
- Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment of God’s promise to Moses to raise up a prophet in whom God would place His the completeness of His word (Deut. 18:18).
- The acts Jesus preformed in His life could be interpreted no other way but that He was in the Father and the Father was in Him.
- Those who followed Jesus would, according to Jesus, do even greater works than He had done—but how could this be?
  - For one thing, following work would be based of the finished work of Christ on the cross, thus allowing advanced achievements (cf. Jn. 12:24; 15:13; 19:30).
  - Additionally, subsequent accomplishments would come within the context of the Messianic Kingdom, the most significant earthly age (cf. Matt. 11:11).
  - Jesus intercession in prayer would be another benefit.

- Also, the spiritual union Jesus speaks of in John 15: 1-11 would only be possible in the age to come.
- All of these “greater works,” we must also remember, are accomplished only by Jesus working in Christians—He remains the power (Eph. 3:19-21).

### **The Promise of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:15-31)**

- The key ingredient in all that Jesus would project into the coming age centered on the implications of love (cf. Jn. 13:34-35).
  - To love Jesus is the surest guarantee of our following His will (cf. Jn. 14:21, 23; 15:10; I Jn. 5:3; II Jn. 6).
  - Thus, if Christianity is to succeed, Jesus must be known so He can be loved so He will be obeyed.
- In addition to Himself (cf. I Jn. 2:1-2), Jesus would send another “Comforter.”
  - The term “Comforter,” could also be translated by words such as, “counselor, advocate, and helper.”
  - It comes from the Greek parakletos, literally meaning “One called beside.”
  - Commonly the word would have been used in the context of a legal assistant.
  - The verb form of the word was used in the Septuagint rendering of Isaiah 40:1 where the Messianic era is addressed.
  - The Rabbis made strong association between obedience and advocacy.
- This Comforter would also be known as the “Spirit of Truth.”
  - The words were familiar among the rabbis in first century Judaism, “Two spirits await an opportunity with humanity, the spirit of truth and the spirit of error ... (Testament of Judah 20:1-5).
  - Nevertheless, while the words had a familiar ring, the concept intended by Jesus was different in intention
    - The Jewish idea was one expressing the dualism existing between good and evil choices.
    - For Jesus, these words referred to deity, to a manifestation of God.
- A most intriguing statement is found in John 14:18, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”
  - Compare to the parting words of Moses (Deut. 31:6; cf. Josh. 1:5; Heb. 13:5).
  - The term “orphan” could actually be applied in Jesus’ culture to a disciple left without a master.
  - The followers of Socrates expressed his passing in terms of being left as orphans.

- Here, however, there is a very interesting twist.
  - Jesus is not simply speaking of His departing and sending them the Comforter.
  - Jesus said He would come back to them!
  - This could not mean His resurrection since He would stay with them but forty days.
  - His intention is to let them know that He will return to abide with them through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn. 14:23; Jn. 15:1-11).
- Unlike some of the promises made in John 14-16 that apply only to the Apostles, this one is for all believers—all who lovingly obey the words of the Spirit of Truth.
- Jesus' disclosure would be only to the people who would know, love, and obey Him—the world would never see Jesus in this way (cf. I Cor. 2:10-16).
- John 14:23 is the only place where Father and Son are combined in indwelling.
  - Jesus is mentioned on other occasions (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17).
  - The Spirit also is referenced (Rom. 8:9, 11; I Cor. 3:16).
  - In the Old Covenant God dwelt with the people in the tabernacle and the temple (Ex. 25:8; 29:45; Lev. 26:11-12; Acts 7:46-47).
  - In the New Covenant God dwells in believers (I Cor. 6:19; II Cor. 6:16; cf. I Pet. 2:5)!
- Jesus phrase "These things I have spoken to you," from John 14:25 is repeated in 15:11; 16:1, 4, 6, 25, 33.
  - He draws on the trust He had developed with them.
  - His word can be fully accepted and relied on.
- All things needful for the Christian Age would be revealed by the Holy Spirit as well as recalling things that might have been forgotten (cf. Jude 3; cf. Neh. 9:20).
  - This promise was for the Apostles and the Apostolic Age as the Apostles were subject to forgetting their experiences with Jesus.
  - Succeeding generations would have no such experiences to forget.
- Jesus promises to leave the Apostles with His "peace."
  - The word for peace in Greek is eirene, a word with a primarily negative meaning—the absence of war.
  - However, a Hebrew idea is behind this word when spoken by Semitic people—positive blessings and brotherhood (cf. Jud. 3:11, 30; 5:31; 8:29; Num. 6:24-26; cf. Ps. 29:11; Hag. 2:9).

- The idea of peace was prominent in the Old Testament prophets (Zech. 9:10; cf. 14:9; Isa. 52:7; 54:13; 57:19; Ezek. 37:26; cf. Acts 10:36).
- Jesus' peace is not what the world commonly covets (cf. Matt. 10:34-39).
- Jesus' peace is grounded in the hearts of believers and is secured in the unshakable courts of Heaven itself (Heb. 12:28; Eph. 1:3; cf. Rom. 8:31-39).
- Jesus declared, "The Father is greater than I," what did He mean?
  - Jesus had emptied Himself to come to earth as a man (Phil. 2:6-7).
  - Also, even in Jesus' return to Heaven with His full attributes of divinity restored (cf. Jn. 17:5), He was still submissive to the Father (I Cor. 15:25-28; 11:3).
  - There is a hierarchy in the Godhead that is not of superiority (cf. Col. 2:9; Jn. 10:30), but of place (Jn. 13:16). In this the Father occupies the first place.
  - I do not understand all there is to this, but then I really don't ever expect fully to understand God.
- Satan has no claim on Jesus—Jesus never sinned!
- As we are found in Jesus, Satan has no claim on us (Rom. 8:31-39)!
- Now Jesus will leave the upper room and journey out of the city of Jerusalem.

## **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the one who takes care of His own.
- He is able to defeat Satan.
- He continues to live with His followers.
- He gives true peace.

# A Study of the Christ Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The vine and the branches				15:1-17
The world would hate the disciples				15:18-16:4
The work of the Holy Spirit				16:5-16
Grief will be turned to joy				16:17-33

## Overriding Principles

- A disciple's life is tied to Jesus for all things he or she needs.
- If we live like Jesus lived, the world will react to us as it did to Jesus—this will result in a general hatred from all those who do not want to come to the light.
- The Holy Spirit supplied all truth for all earthly time.
- The death of Jesus in His crucifixion led to great gain.
- True peace can come only from Jesus.

## Commentary

### The Vine and the Branches (Jn. 15:1-17)

- The imagery of vine and branches was common in the secular world as well as in the religious metaphors of Judaism (cf. Isa. 5:1-7; 27:2-6; Jer. 2:21; 6:9; 12:10-13; Ezek. 15:1-8; 17:5-10; 19:10-14; Hos. 10:1-2; 14:7).
- Whereas in Israel's past they had commonly born bad fruit, Jesus was the true vine who produced what the nation had failed to produce (cf. Ps. 80:14-17).
- Jesus intends to establish an intimate relationship with all His followers (cf. Jn. 10).
- In Intertestament Judaism, the vine had become a symbol of wisdom.
- The significant rabbinic school of R. Yohanan ben Zakkai was known as the "vineyard."
- The Father is the "gardener," the one who tends the vineyard through all stages of development.
- "Pruning" would involve cutting the vine back in winter so that it might grow more rapidly in the spring. Additionally, the branches that did not produce would be removed to allow those producing to get more nourishment.
- One thing we learn from this is that unproductive Christians hold back the growth of the church.



- This entire process of spiritual growth in a disciple cannot occur unless the disciple and Jesus are closely linked together.
- Christians can be removed from Jesus if they are unfaithful (cf. Ezek. 15: 1-8; 19:12); we can fall from grace (Gal. 4).
- True joy is found only in Jesus (cf. Acts 13:52; Rom. 15: 13; II Tim. 1:4).
- The true test of friendship in the various cultures of Jesus day was said to be found in the giving of one's life for a friend.
- Jesus went beyond the accepted standard of love by dying for even His enemies (cf. Rom. 5:6-11).
- Jesus had a very practical way of defining His friends, they did what He said (cf. Jn. 14:15).
- Friendship goes beyond being a servant by adding a dimension to a relationship that is deeper and more satisfying—this allows for a greater degree of sharing.
- The choice of friendship with God is ultimately a matter of God's doing; apart from His grace there can be no relationship.
- With the privilege of friendship goes the responsibility of being productive.
- It is in the context of loving, knowledgeable service, God hears and answers our prayers.

#### **The World Will Hate Jesus' Disciples (Jn. 15:18-16:4)**

- Since the world will largely reject Christianity, it is imperative that Christians love each other.
- Early Christians were accused of being insurrectionists (claiming there is only one way), cannibals (eating the body and blood of Jesus at Communion), immoral (love feasts and the "holy" kiss), arsonists (teaching the world would be burned up), and disruptive in family relationships (when a family member became a Christian despite family opposition).
- The words of those who follow God are to bring a response similar to if God Himself had spoken (cf. I Sam. 8:7; Ezek. 3:7).
- Jesus name would be preached in opposition to Roman Emperors (i.e. Domitian required being addressed as "*dominus et deus*," Lord and God.)
- Yet, there was no true cause for hating Jesus (cf. Ps. 69:4).
- The Helper, or Holy Spirit, would be sent to assist the Apostles in a special way as they stood up to those who would try to stop their message.
- They had no choice but to speak boldly for Jesus (cf. Acts 4:17-20).
- Jesus' comforting assurances to His Apostles would be especially helpful in the coming times of persecution.

- Discipleship, especially with such visible men as the Apostles, was a dangerous thing.
- The actions of the persecutors would be because they did not know God; this was particularly amazing when the persecutors were Jews.

### **The Work of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16:5-16)**

- The coming of the Spirit was strongly tied to the beginning of the Messianic Age (e.g. Isa. 11:1-10; 32:14-18; 42:1-4; 44:1-5; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 11:17-20; 36:24-27; 37:1-14; Joel 2:28-32; cf. Jn. 7:37-39).
- The teaching of the Jews at the time of Jesus evidences striking statements quite similar to Jesus' words, "And when He comes, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."
- The Spirit would convict of sin due to unbelief (possessing faith is the only way to find forgiveness in Jesus), of righteousness as it would reveal the manner in which Jesus had lived, and of judgment because Satan would be judged and found wanting.
- The final word on the subject of truth would come by the Spirit of Truth to the Apostles within the context of their first century ministry (cf. I Cor. 13:8-13; Eph. 4:11-16).
- Additionally, the Spirit would reveal things yet to come.
- Death would not be the end of the Apostle's relationship with Jesus; through the ministry of the Spirit and because of the Resurrection, Jesus would renew His relationship with them.

### **The Grief of the Disciples would be Turned to Joy (Jn. 16:17-33)**

- Mourning, in the Jewish context, was very loud and demonstrative.
- God alone is able to turn mourning into true joy (cf. Est. 9:22; Jer. 31:13; Isa. 61:2-3; Matt. 5:4).
- The Messianic fulfillment of the "Day of the Lord" was predicted to be a time of distress (Dan. 12:1).
- Intertestament Jews used a phrase, "the birth pangs of the Messiah," to describe the distress to come before the consummation of the Messianic Age.
- This language and concept are common to the New Testament (cf. Matt. 24:8, 21, 29; Rom. 2:9; Acts 14:22; I Cor. 7:26; II Cor. 4:17; Rev. 7:14).
- True rejoicing is only found in the Lord (cf. Ps. 33:21).
- Compare John 1:1, 14 with Isaiah 66:14 to see how Jesus was the embodiment of God's word.
- Jesus' ability to know answers to questions before they were asked was convicting to the Apostles that Jesus was from God.

- Jesus knew that all the Apostles would desert Him (cf. Zech. 13:7; Matt. 26:31).
- Even though the Apostles would never find peace in the tribulations of the world, they could be courageous and of good cheer because of the peace they would find in Jesus.
- Jesus was always straightforward with the Apostles, even when the truth was distressing.

### **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the source of our strength and of all our success.
- He is the one who completely provides His followers with all they need.
- He offers unassailable peace.
- He brings joy in the midst of tribulation.
- He is totally honest and above board.
- He is our friend!

# A Study of the Christ Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Jesus prays for Himself				17:1-5
Jesus prays for His disciples				17:6-19
Jesus prays for all believers				17:20-26

## Overriding Principles

- The completion of Jesus' mission was ultimately to bring glory to the Father for His mercy and Grace.
- Jesus' concern for the Apostles was a reflection of His love and loyalty to those who serve Him.
- Jesus' prayer for all believers speaks to His enduring love for those who come to Him through the Gospel.
- Unity is one of the most important of all the things God values.
- Unity must be based on truth, a value even more significant than unity for unity can never be at the cost of truth.

## Commentary

### Jesus Prays for Himself (Jn. 17:1-5)

- Isaiah 42:8 and 48:11 declare God will not give His glory to another; Jesus sharing the Father's glory is a testimony to the fact that Jesus is God.
- Jesus' unselfish attitude is demonstrated in the fact He sought personal glory only to glorify the Father (cf. Isa. 49:3; Phil. 2:9).
- The authority invested in the Christ signaled a new dispensation (cf. Isa. 9:6-7; Dan. 7:13-14; Matt. 11:27; 28:18; I Cor. 15:24-28).
- In the Old Covenant, eternal life is also related to knowing God (e.g. Jer. 31:34).
- Destruction comes with the lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:6).
- The knowledge of God through all the earth is a grand theme of the predicted Age of the Messiah (Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14).
- Knowing God, however, does not refer simply to intellectual knowledge or "head knowledge."
- Living, intimate fellowship is the only way to truly know God—relationship rules (I Jn. 1:7)!
- Jesus being the Son of the Father "the only true God" does not disassociate Him from being God (cf. Jn. 1:1, 18), nor does it give Him an inferior status (Col. 2:9), rather it speaks to Jesus' "separate" association in the flesh (Jn. 1:14; Phil. 2:5-11). The "rest of the story"

is in John 17:5 where Jesus anticipates the glory He shared with the Father, "before the world was." At the time of the prayer in John 17, He had emptied Himself, but He would later be restored (cf. Phil. 2:5-11).

### **Jesus Prays for His Disciples (Jn. 17:6-19)**

- Jesus' prayer includes reference to God's name in verse six, (cf. v. 26). The idea deals both with the place of God's presence (cf. Ex. 3:13-15; Deut. 12:5, 21) and with a commitment to living true to the nature of God's identity (Ps. 9:10). Jesus would fulfill both concepts (Jn. 2:19-21; Matt. 11:27-30; Jn. 14:8-9).
- Jesus was the ultimate spokesman for God (cf. Deut. 18:18; Heb. 1:1-2).
- Holiness is a primary attribute of God (cf. Lev. 11:44; 19:2; Ps. 71:22; 111:9; Isa. 6:3).
  - Holiness represents God's completely perfect, perfectly balanced separateness from all else. We are called to be faithful to this perfect standard (Lev. 19:2; Matt. 5:48).
  - For the Jew, God's holiness was a thing that created distance, to Jesus it was something to be shared in an intimate relationship.
  - God is different in the most profound and good way possible (cf. Matt. 19:17).
- The "power of God's name" deals with His unassailable power by which He can deliver His people from any foe (cf. Ps. 54:1; 44:5; 54:1; 124:8).
- To invest one with your name, as God did to Jesus, is to endorse what the invested person does. With Jesus, this investiture is absolute (Phil. 2:9-10; Rev. 19:12; Heb. 1:1-3).
- Jesus protects His own (cf. Jn. 10:27-30).
- Judas, styled as "the son of destruction," was, according to the Semitic idiom, "son of," one who characterized or personified the things associated with destruction (cf. Jn. 8:44).
- John 13:18 cites Psalm 41:10, Acts 1:20 refers to Psalm 69:25 and 109:8 to show how Scripture predicted Judas' betrayal.
- Moses, Elijah, and Jonah all asked to be taken from the world in times of difficulty (Num. 11:15; I Kg. 19:4; Jon. 4:3, 8); at the times they asked, however, they were not removed. God had work for them to do and challenges to overcome. Similarly, Jesus does not ask that His disciples be taken from the world, but rather that they would be protected from Satan.
- "Sanctification" is from the same root as "holiness." Jesus requires that those who follow Him are people of integrity and holiness. They are to reflect their God as they are transformed by the word of God.

- The sense of the Greek in John 17:17, when the presence and absence of the definite article are considered, leads to the following equivalent, "Sanctify them by the standard of Your truth, Your word has the quality of truthful trustworthiness."
- The mission Jesus' gives to his disciples is a continuation of the mission the Father gave to Him.
- In addition to Jesus setting Himself apart for the sake of Father, He also did so for the sake of the Apostles (cf. Mk. 14:24; Jn. 6:51; I Cor. 11:24).

### **Jesus Prays for All Believers (Jn. 17:20-26)**

- God's covenants contemplate many generations of followers (cf. Deut. 29:14-15).
- Unity testifies to fellowship, which is the result of a responsive faith and love.
- The absence of unity speaks to a lack of fellowship and a failure of both faith and love.
- The reality of Jesus' mission of atonement will not be given creditability when it is represented by a disunited group of "followers."
- The perfect example of unity is seen between the Father and the Son.
- Jesus wants believers to enjoy the same glory that He has shared with the Father before the world was.
- Even though the Father's plan will soon lead to the death of Jesus, Jesus declares that the Father is righteous—the Son finds no fault with the Father's plan.
- Jesus strongly desired that God's love would dwell within His followers.
- Additionally, Jesus wanted to dwell within His followers.
  - The "infleshing" of Jesus in His body the church is a dominate New Covenant theme (Eph. 3:16-17; Col. 1:24-29; Gal. 2:20; 4:19 II Cor. 3:18).
  - Christ-likeness rules in the kingdom of the Christ (Rom. 8:29).

### **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the one who sought glory for the primary purpose of bringing glory to the Father.
- He is the protector of His own.
- He is our salvation.
- He extends grace while insisting on holiness in the truth.
- He insists on unity founded in truth as He also requires unity be like the relationship of truth and love He enjoys with the Father.
- He would live in us to use our flesh to continue His work.

# A Study of the Christ Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The second prediction of Peter's denial	26:30-35	14:26-31	22:39-40	18:1
Jesus prays in the Garden	26:36-46	14:32-42	22:40-46	
The mob comes and arrests Jesus	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-54	18:2-12
First Jewish phase of trial				18:13-24
Second Jewish phase of trial	26:57-68	14:53-65	22:54	
Peter's denials	26:69-75	14:66-72	22:55-65	18:25-27
Third Jewish phase of trial	27:1	15:1	22:66-71	
Remorse and suicide of Judas	27:3-10			(Acts 1:18-19)

## Overriding Principles

- The weakness of the flesh affected Jesus, but not in the way it did His followers; Jesus never betrayed the Father's cause.
- The mystery of Jesus' humanity and divinity come into conflict and the flesh is subdued.
- Truth and commitment can stand in quiet resolve against a riotous mob and in stark contrast to all the unprincipled actions of men.
- Selfish ambitions can drive men to abandon all the rules they profess to live by.
- Remorse and repentance are not to be confused (cf. II Cor. 7:8-10).

## Commentary

### The Second Prediction of Peter's Denial (Matt. 26:30-35; Mk. 14:26-31; Lk. 22:39-40; Jn. 18:1)

- The book of Zechariah pictures a shepherd who is pierced (Zech. 12:10), rejected (Zech. 11), and, in Zechariah 13:7, a shepherd the equal of Jehovah who, when struck, causes the scattering of His followers.
- Jesus reminds Peter that his predicted denial will take place.
- The reference to a rooster crowing would be understood to mean that the betrayal would happen before the coming dawn.

### Jesus Prays in the Garden (Matt. 26:36-46; Mk. 14:32-42; Lk. 22:40-46)

- The word *Gethsemane* comes from a Hebrew word that means "oil press," indicating a place on the Mt. of Olives where olive oil was produced.
- The most likely site for this account would have been a cave where the disciples may have gone to sleep.

- Jesus may have chosen the location because it offered warmth on what was a cold evening.
- The usual posture for a Jew in prayer was to stand and lift up one's hands; Jesus chose a posture associated with passionate entreaty and an admission of helplessness (cf. Mk. 5:22; 7:25).
- Intimacy allows very direct speech in prayer.
- The Father's will can be trusted as right, even when all emotions point in another direction.
- "Abba, Father" introduces an interesting thought.
  - "Abba" is the Aramaic word for father; there is no record of its use being employed toward God in a personal reference at the time of Christ.
    - The term is not the equivalent of "daddy," as some have suggested.
    - It would, however, carry a more familiar quality than our English word "father would" yet it would still contain a measure of respect and submission.
  - "Father" is from the Greek "pater," and would be somewhat interpretive for non-Jewish readers.
    - Familiarity and respect are blended together.
    - Both are part of a relationship with God.

**The Mob Comes and Arrests Jesus (Matt. 26:47-56; Mk. 14:43-52; Lk. 22:47-54; Jn. 18:2-12)**

- The mob was most likely made up of heavily armed Roman soldiers assigned to by Pilate to secure the temple, perhaps about 600 in number, and Levitical temple guards carrying clubs.
- The temple guard of the Jews had a well earned reputation of being little more than thugs.
- Judas' calling Jesus "Rabbi," followed by a kiss, would have normally been a customary gesture of respect from a disciple who regarded himself as a close friend; here, it is high-handed hypocrisy (cf. II Sam. 20:9)!
- Peter tried to defend Jesus against overwhelming odds.
- Peter had courage to engage in sword play, but not to affirm the teachings and identity of Jesus with his words (cf. Matt. 10:32-34) Jesus will have none of Peter's tactics; as Jesus had previously made clear, He was to die.
- The 72,000 angles Jesus references could have destroyed Rome multiple times over (cf. I Kg. 6:17).
- Jesus wanted to know why he was being arrested as a common robber, or perhaps as a revolutionary.



- The young man who fled naked into the night cannot be identified with any person in particular; his flight, however, symbolizes the complete breakdown among Jesus' followers.
- The "Chief priests" would represent the aristocrats of the priestly family.
- Jesus' courageous demeanor and disconcerting reputation produced a laughable scene when the mob began falling all over itself.

### **The First Jewish Phase of the Trial (Jn. 18:13-24)**

- Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas, was technically the high priest, but his father-in-law was the true power behind this highest of Jewish offices (cf. Num. 35:25).
- The family of Annas was extremely wealthy and greedy.
- Annas had five sons who served as High Priest, as well as his son-in-law; he was much like a godfather in Jewish politics.
  - The household of Annas was widely considered to be dishonorable.
  - Eventually the zealots took their wealth in the Jewish revolt that led to the destruction of Jerusalem.
- Apparently, either the apostle John was known to the high priest or perhaps he was a relative of the priestly family.
- John's position allowed him to move closer to the initial trials of Jesus.
- The palatial compound of the family of Annas is the location for the first trials.
- Spring nights in Jerusalem were commonly cold.
- A trial held at night was regarded to be illegal.
- The accused was not to be questioned in a Jewish trial.
- Josephus considered the Sadducees, dominated by priests, to be the most heart-less of all judges.
- The Jews were most concerned about the theology of Jesus, even though they would later express political concerns to the Romans.
- Jesus had not kept His teachings secret, they were given in the most public of places, almost everyone would have contacted them (cf. Isa. 45:19; 48:16).
- Many religions prefer hidden things, not so with Jesus.
- Witnesses in support of a defendant were to be questioned first at a Jewish trial.
- Jesus' requesting His legal rights brought Him a sharp (Gk. *Rhaspisma*) blow to the face.
- The High Priest was unbiblically given a place of respect by his cohorts that put him above the law of God.

- The accusation was that Jesus broke the law of Exodus 22: 28; He did not.
- Jesus' being bound at trial was against the law.

**Second Jewish Phase of the Trial—the Sanhedrin (Matt. 26:57-68; Mk. 14:53-65; Lk. 22:54)**

- The home of Caiaphas would have been expansive, well able to house the proceedings; it would have been part of a very large complex that housed the family of Annas.
- At least twenty-three members of the group of seventy, plus the High Priest, would have been necessary to make up a quorum of the Sanhedrin in a capital crime.
- Sadducees dominated the numbers of the group with a somewhat token representation of Pharisees comprised of their scribes, or "teachers of the law."
- Self-incrimination was illegal and unbinding.
- Finding Jesus guilty of claiming to be the expected Messiah would allow the Jews to present Jesus to Rome as a threat to Caesar.
- Jesus associates Himself with the divine Son of Man portrayed in the Messianic vision of Daniel 7: 13-14 as well as the divine figure at the right hand of God in Ps. 110: 1-2.
- The next time the Sanhedrin would encounter Jesus would be in His coming in judgment on them as the everlasting Messiah king.
- The reaction of Caiaphas was a show of deepest emotion, forbidden in a Jewish court except as a ritual act at the conclusion of a properly conducted trial that brought a guilty verdict.
- Blasphemy was punishable by death (cf. Lev. 24: 11).
- Jesus' claim of divinity sealed the deal as far as the Jews were concerned—death was necessary.
- The Jews, however, were not allowed by the Romans to execute convicted felons—Rome would be needed to complete the deed.
- A variety of illegal features stand out at Jesus' trials.
  - Trial at night.
  - On the eve of a Sabbath or on a festival day.
  - Negative testimony first.
  - A guilty verdict on the day of the trial.
  - Conflicting witnesses.
  - Trial at a private home.
  - Emotion shown by a judge during a trial.
- As with the first phase of the Jewish trial, Jesus is again beaten and otherwise treated with indignity.

### **Peter's Denials (Matt. 26:69-75; Mk. 14: 66-72; Lk. 22:55-65; Jn. 18:25-27)**

- Matthew compacts all of Peter's denials into one passage, typical of his topical form of development.
- While Jesus is on trial, so, in a sense, is Peter.
- Galileans were considered as grossly inferior by the Judeans (cf. Jn. 7:45-52).
- The speech of Galileans often slurred words and brought them ridicule from the more precise spoken Judeans.
- Ironically, a relative of Malchus, the man whose ear Peter cut off, remembers Peter in the garden.
- Peter's final denial could have come at a variety of disputed times, but certainly before dawn.
- The trumpet signal at the close of the third night watch (midnight to 3:00 A. M.) was called "cockcrow." But a literal rooster fits other information better.
- Later, Peter would be asked to affirm Jesus three times (Jn. 21:15-19).

### **Third Jewish Phase of the Trial (Matt. 27:1; Mk. 15:1; Lk. 22:66-71)**

- The early dawn begins this more "official" part of the Jewish trials.
- It is debated whether the term "Son of God" was commonly used as a Messianic term in the time of Christ.
- Jesus, based on His past experiences, expresses that it really didn't matter what He said, they will not listen to His answers or respond to His questions.
- Jesus repeats His association with divinity.
- They are now ready to take Jesus to Pilate so Rome can authorize an execution.

### **Remorse and Suicide of Judas (Matt. 27:3-10; Acts 1:18-19)**

- Judas would most likely not have been able to approach closely to the inner sanctuary; he probably had to hurl the coins at the priests from a distance.
- Judas is the only example of suicide in the New Testament.
- The Rabbi's believed suicide was a rebellion against God, the giver of life.
- The Jews were quite comfortable to pay a man to betray Jesus for execution, but were too "scrupulous" to take the money back "as blood money."
- The Acts account gives more information; Judas hanged himself in the very field his betrayal money was used to buy, later falling from the rope and bursting open on the ground.

- Matthew weaves together elements from Zechariah 11:12-13 and Jeremiah 19:1-13.
  - The context of Jeremiah has to do with innocent blood being shed and a burial ground being created.
  - Zechariah deals with the rejection of Jehovah's good shepherd and his being grossly undervalued at thirty pieces of silver.
  - The thematic parallels are stunning; Jehovah's shepherd is rejected by the people of Israel and valued at thirty pieces of silver. Additionally, money is flung into the temple and a polluted thing is purchased.

### **Who is Jesus?**

- He remains consistent to His humanity in His personal struggles leading to His death—He did not opt out.
- He gives straight forward counsel to His friends, including the bitter and the sweet.
- He suffered that we might live.
- He tells the truth, no matter what might result.

# A Study of the Christ Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
First Roman Phase of the trial	27:2, 11-14	15:1-5	23:1-5	18:28-38
Herod questions Jesus			23:6-12	
Second Roman Phase of the trial	27:15-30	15:6-20	23:13-25	18:39-19:16

## Overriding Principles

- Political expediency is a powerful thing, joined with career insecurity, fear, and superstition; several powerful human motivations become prominent features of Jesus' Roman trial.
- "Passing the buck" is a tactic with longstanding tradition.
- Good intentions are never enough.

## Commentary

### First Roman Phase of Trial (Matt. 27:2, 11-14; Mk. 15:1-5; Lk. 23:1-5; Jn. 18:28-38)

- Pilate was a "procurator," a title that applied to a financial officer of a province, or, as in Pilate's case, the governor of a third class province.
- Judea was a particularly difficult province to govern so Tiberius had merged the added authority of a "prefect" to Pilate, giving more power to Pilate to exercise control over almost all the civil and military activities of the province.
- Pilate's question to Jesus about whether He considered Himself "king of the Jews," demonstrated that the Jews brought Jesus to Pilate on civil rather than religious charges. Rome had no interest in local religious concerns (cf. Acts 18:14-17; 23:29).
- The Roman administrative work day began at daybreak and ended shortly before or after noon. This would account, in part, for the haste used by the Jews in getting Jesus to Pilate.
- In a trial involving non-Romans, Pilate had the authority to make up his own rules.
- The charges Luke records, misleading the nation, and opposing taxation were completely false (cf. Lk. 20:20-26).
- Regarding the religious charges, Jesus admitted His guilt. He was, after all, the Messiah, the anticipated Jewish King.
- His claiming to be a king would later be used a leverage to force Pilate to crucify Him (Jn. 19:12).

### Herod Questions Jesus (Lk. 23:6-12)

- Pilate thought he could escape responsibility by claiming a jurisdictional technicality to shift Jesus to Herod.
- Herod Antipas was tetrarch over Galilee and Perea from A. D. 4 until A. D. 39.
- Herod Antipas executed John the Baptist (cf. Lk. 3:19-20).
- Herod also took a special interest in keeping up with Jesus' ministry (cf. 9:7-9; 13:31-32).
- Jesus' silence before Herod recalls Isaiah 53:7).
- Jesus failure to put on a show for Herod leads to more mocking and abuse.
- Herod Antipas and his three brothers had, previous to this encounter, sued Pilate before Tiberius over offensive symbols Pilot placed in the Herodian palace in Jerusalem. The Herods won the suit!

**Second Roman Phase of the Trial (Matt. 27:15-26; Mk. 15:6-15; Lk. 23:13-25; Jn. 18:39-19:16)**

- The governor's custom of releasing a prisoner during Passover week reflected common Roman customs throughout the empire.
- Ironically, Barabbas was actually guilty of sedition, a charge the Jews brought against Jesus.
- Jesus, who had no political aspirations, was crucified under a charge implying He wanted to overthrow the government; Barabbas, a terrorist and insurrectionist, was released at the insistence of those very Jews who charged Jesus!
- There is manuscript and historical evidence to suggest Jesus and Barabbas shared the same first name, "Jesus." One manuscript reads, "Which Jesus do you want; the son of Abba, or the one called "Messiah?"
- At the death of Herod's son Archelaus, the Romans took over the Herod's Jerusalem palace as quarters for the governor. This is the likely location of the trial before Pilate, though other locations have been suggested.
- The Romans were very superstitious, dreams were considered to be omens. Pilate's wife's dream, under the stressful circumstances of the moment, would have been very disturbing.
- A common Roman custom was to publicly wash one's hands as a declaration of innocence.
- Matthew switches from the term "crowd" to "people." The latter term was a common way of referring to the nation of Israel. The nation had turned against their Messiah!
- The nation bears guilt for the crucifixion of Jesus, this does not at all warrant any level of anti-Semitism, but it is a sad fact—Israel has rejected their Messiah.

- Barabbas would now be released, but Jesus would be scourged.
- Scourging was a lashing performed with the *fustigatio*, a more symbolic, relatively mild punishment for lesser crimes (probably Pilate's intent), the *flagellatio*, severe, but not the most brutal, or the *verbera*, the most brutal of all, usually preceding execution. The descriptions indicate that after an initial relatively light lashing, the more severe *verbera* was actually used, consisting of three to nine leather straps imbedded with glass and bone. Following the beating, the flesh would have hung down in strips with bone and muscle exposed.
- Pilate, when all was said and done, was a pragmatist. Looking out for his own interests ruled.
- The thorns of Jesus' "crown" would have been several inches long, inflicting many lacerations and causing much bleeding.
- Additional mocking and beatings continued the horrific treatment received by Jesus. The purple robe mocked Jesus' association with being a king.
- Pilate's political fears and his superstitions would both have brought him considerable anxiety dealing with a man who claimed to be a king and the Son of God.
- Jesus would not entertain Pilate's desperate questions.
- Finally, when Pilate asserted his power over Jesus to punish or release, Jesus spoke. God, not Pilate, had the power.
- Pilate tried hard to set Jesus free, but not hard enough. Politics did him in.
- The fact that Jesus did not answer Pilate's question regarding the nature of truth confirms that Pilate did not really intend to follow the truth.
- John's expression, "day of preparation of Passover Week," does not mean a *Thursday* and is not, therefore, a contradiction with the Synoptics where *Friday* was the day of the crucifixion. John's expression "day of preparation" meant "preparation for the Sabbath," in this case, preparation for the Sabbath that fell during Passover Week. Still Friday!
- The deed was set, crucifixion was to be Jesus' form of execution (cf. Deut. 21:22-23).

### **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the one who will not waver from the course given by His Father, no matter what!
- He gave everything up for our salvation!

# A Study of the Christ Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Journey to Golgotha	27:31-34	15:20-23	23:26-33a	19:17
The first three hours on the cross	27:35-44	15:24-32	23:33b-43	19:18-27
The last three hours on the cross	27:45-50	15:33-37	23:44-45a, 46	19:28-37

## Overriding Principles

- Repentance is always possible, if the heart is receptive.
- Forgiveness is always to be sought, even for ones enemies.
- Forgiveness requires repentance.
- The greatest suffering of Jesus was not physical; it was the emotional strain of bearing our sin and being forsaken by the Father.
- The Crucifixion was an event that literally and figuratively shook the earth!

## Commentary

### Journey to Golgotha (Matt. 27:31-34; Mk. 15:20-23; Lk. 23:26-33a; Jn. 19:17)

- Commonly, the condemned were required to carry the crosspiece of their cross to their crucifixion.
  - The crosspiece weighed about forty pounds.
  - It would be hoisted into the, air with the condemned man nailed to it, to be placed atop the vertical beam at the place of crucifixion.
- Jesus had been so brutalized He could not carry the load all the way to Golgotha.
- Simon of Cyrene, a Roman province in North Africa, was compelled to carry the crosspiece for Jesus.
  - Simon was likely a Jew in Jerusalem for the Passover.
  - As the father of Alexander and Rufus (Mk. 15:21), he may well have been the father of the Rufus mentioned in Romans 16:13.
- Cicero tells that the executioner would commonly insert a hook into the condemned man to drag him along to execution.
- Jewish executions required a location "outside the camp" (Lev. 24:14; Deut. 22:23-24; cf. Heb. 13:12).
- "Golgotha" means, "the place of the skull," possibly due to the appearance of the rock formation, perhaps due to tombs at the site.
- "Calvary" is from the Latin, "calvaria," meaning "skull."



- There is a rabbinic tradition indicating a portion of frankincense was added to wine to numb the senses of those being crucified.
  - If this were the case, Jesus refused it because He was fully to suffer for the sins of others.
  - Otherwise, the gall (vinegar) added to the wine may have been but a further insult to Jesus by the Roman guards.
- Jesus tells the ladies mourning for Him to weep for themselves due to the coming destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Lk. 13:34-35; 19:41-44; 21:20-21).
- The request to have mountains “fall on us,” reflects the preference of a speedy death to the prolonged suffering characteristic of a city falling after a protracted siege.
- The reference to deeds done when “the tree is green” contrasted to when “the tree is dry” most likely refer to the escalation from the crucifixion of Jesus in peaceful times compared to thousands crucified when the Jews rebelled in A. D. 67.
- The earliest surviving Roman record of Jesus’ crucifixion is from Tacitus about A. D. 116.
- Josephus mentions Jesus’ crucifixion, although elements of the passage are commonly considered to be Christian additions.
  - A recently discovered Arabic version of Josephus probably represents a more accurate rendition of the original:
  - “At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good, and [he] was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders” (Ant. 15.44).

**The First Three Hours on the Cross (Matt. 27:35-44; Mk. 15:24-32; Lk. 23:33b-43; Jn. 19:18-27)**

- Crucifixion was an awful way to die!
  - Victims were either tied to the crossbeam or, as in Jesus’ case, nailed.
  - The arms were affixed to the crossbeam in such a way as to require, in order to breathe, painfully pushing up on the feet nailed to the vertical beam.
  - Eventually fatigue and cramping would not allow pushing up so the victim could exhale—suffocation resulted.
  - Recent studies have shown that, contrary to commonly held past assumptions, Jesus may well have been nailed through the palms of His hands, rather than at the forearm. Additionally,

Jesus legs were most likely nailed separately, allowing Him to straddle the cross.

- The Romans developed means to hasten death by how they positioned a man in crucifixion, but Jesus' death in a relatively short time was almost certainly due to a combination of brutal treatment and deep emotional stress.
- The ancients considered crucifixion the most barbaric form of punishment.
- The word "excruciating" comes from the Latin *excruciates*, meaning, "out of the cross."
- Jesus would have been stripped naked as the soldiers removed what little remained of His dignity and protection from the flies that gathered at such times.
- Psalm 22: 18 is fulfilled as Jesus' clothing is gambled away to the soldiers.
- The "robbers" (same term as used of Barabbas) crucified with Jesus were most likely political prisoners guilty of trying to overthrow the Roman occupation.
- Ironically, Jesus was not released because an insurrectionist was preferred by the crowd, additionally, He was crucified between two insurrectionists, guilty of the offense for which Jesus was improperly charged!
- Golgotha would have been a very public location so a maximum number of people could have witnessed the consequences of opposing Roman rule.
- Pilate's written notice of Jesus guilt would have been worn around His neck, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews."
  - It was a final dig at the Jews.
  - Pilate did not have to satisfy them on their insistence the placard be prefaced with "He said ...."
  - They had no leverage on this point.
- Wagging the head was a show of contempt in ancient Jewish culture.
- Rather than calling for the destruction of those present, Jesus sought their forgiveness—He practiced what He preached (cf. Lk. 17:3-5).
- Repentance must, however, precede forgiveness (cf. Lk. 17:4; Acts 2:36-38).
- Near the cross were Jesus' mother, His mother's sister (perhaps Salome, the mother of James and John), Mary the wife of Clopas, Mary Magdalene, and John the Apostle.
  - Jesus' mother was almost certainly widowed, would have been around fifty years old, and would have little or no personal income.
  - Jesus as the oldest son, trusts His mother to John (cf. Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16)

### **The Last Three Hours on the Cross (Matt. 27:45-50; Mk. 15:33-37; Lk. 23:44-45a, 46; Jn. 19:28-37)**

- Jesus was crucified at about 9:00 AM; darkness began about noon and lasted until about 3:00 PM.
- Darkness would here represent the Father's profound displeasure with humanity, and the reaction to the sins Jesus bore on His body (cf. Ex. 10:21; Matt. 25:30; I Thess. 5:4-7; I Pet. 2:24).
- Darkness over Jerusalem would have been particularly foreboding (cf. Isa. 60:2).
- Also, in the ancient world, darkness was associated with the passing of great men.
- When Jesus quotes Psalm 22:1, the crowd thinks He is calling for Elijah due to similar sounding words.
  - Elijah was associated with the coming of the Messiah.
  - Additionally, Elijah, in Jewish tradition, since he did not die (II Kgs. 2:1-11), could come to the aid of those in distress.
- Jesus' greatest pain was in dying as a sinner (cf. Phil. 2:8; Heb. 12:1-2; 13:13; I Pet. 2:24).
- In observing Jesus quoting parts of Psalm 22, it should be noted Jesus knew the positive outcome of the Psalm (Ps. 22:21b-31).
  - Verse 21b is especially comforting.
  - The change from verse 1 is dramatic, now God answers the plea of the Son and victory is enjoyed!
- Jesus thirst recalls once again the pivotal Psalm 22 through a reference to verse 15.
- Jesus was again offered sour wine, most likely in mockery; if there was a drug included, now He can drink, the price for sin has been paid.
- Dehydration, blood loss, and most significantly, deep emotional strain, bring the death of a victorious Jesus.
- The tearing of the temple's veil would suggest judgment on the nation, the end of the temple as a viable structure in the Jew's religion, and a new openness made possible for all people through Jesus.
- Psalm 31:5 is used in Jesus' final words as He, the ultimate righteous sufferer, entrusts Himself to God.
- Now, mission accomplished, Jesus can give up His life (cf. Jn. 10:11-18).

### **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the Suffering Servant.
- He entrusted Himself to the Father, no matter what.
- In the greatest suffering He had compassion for those who mocked Him.
- He beat Satan!

# A Study of the Christ Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Witness of Jesus' death	27:51-56	15:38-41	23:45b-49	
Burial	27:57-60	15:42-45	23:50-54	19:31-42
Tomb watched	27:61-66	15:47	23:55-56	
Empty Tomb	28:1-8	16:1-8	24:1-12	20:1-10

## Overriding Principles

- Jesus' mission could not be accomplished apart from His atoning death.
- The empty tomb is the greatest testimony to the truthfulness of Christianity.
- Without the Resurrection, Christianity is a vain religion.
- The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus provide the reasons for our belief.
- Commitment to Jesus is the required consequence to our belief.

## Commentary

### Witnesses of Jesus' Death (Matt. 27:51-56; Mk. 15:38-41; Lk. 23:45b-49)

- Because of Christ's sacrifice, as symbolized by the torn curtain of the temple, a new closer relationship with God became possible.
  - The curtain separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.
  - The Most Holy Place had highly restricted access—the High Priest entered twice on the Day of Atonement.
- The "holy people" raised up from the dead would have offered their testimony in support of Jesus.
  - This was similar to the appearance of Moses and Elijah in the Transfiguration.
  - They may have departed shortly, much as did Elijah and Moses.
- Many women followed along with Jesus in His ministry—the fear that caused the men to flee was not found in them.
  - These women probably at least partially funded Jesus' missionary of outreach (cf. Lk. 8:1-3).
  - Mary Magdalene (from Magdala, to help distinguish among the three ladies named Mary associated closely with Jesus).
    - There is no evidence to link Mary with having been a prostitute.
    - Her name being mentioned first, does, however, probably indicate she was a leader of the women who traveled with Jesus.
  - "The other Mary" was most likely the mother of James the son of Alphaeus aka James the Less (cf. Matt. 10:3).
  - Salome is the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee.
    - Possibly Jesus' mother's sister (cf. Jn. 19:25).

- If this is correct, and there is a grammatical uncertainty in the text just cited, James and John would have been cousins.
  - This would explain why she petitioned Jesus on behalf of her sons; a kinship obligation may have been assumed or expected (cf. I Kg. 1:15-21; II Sam. 14:2-20).
- The centurion's response "Surely this man was the Son of God," should be understood in the contemporary setting.
  - Some of the Caesars were called "son of god."
  - The phrase was also used of conquerors.
  - The centurion thus used the highest title Rome offered to, of all men, an executed Jew!
- Additionally, the centurion set the record straight—Jesus was a righteous or innocent man.
  - A Roman saw what most Jews did not.
  - Similar could be said of Pilate.

### **The Burial of Jesus (Matt. 27:57-60; Mk. 15:42-46; Lk. 23:50-54; Jn. 19:38-42)**

- The Jewish custom was to remove bodies before evening; this would have been particularly true of the day before the Sabbath of Passover Week.
  - The Romans enjoyed leaving bodies hanging for long periods of time—at times never allowing them to be buried.
  - Pilate, therefore, was asked to grant a special request.
- Preparation Day was the day before a Sabbath when needful preparations were made for the workless Sabbath day to follow.
- Joseph of Arimathea (exact location of his hometown debated) was a rich man who had become a disciple of Jesus.
  - A member of the Sanhedrin, as was Nicodemus.
  - Many Jews were looking for the coming of the Kingdom of God and thus would have been open to the claims of Jesus (cf. Mk. 15:43; Lk. 23:50-51; Jn. 3:1-15; 19:38).
- Joseph's asking Pilate to bury Jesus in his tomb fulfilled Isaiah 53:9.
- There was haste not only because the Sabbath approached, but executed men were also to be buried the same day as their death, so the land would not be defiled (Deut. 23:50-51).
- The Jews did not embalm, they wrapped bodies in linen.
  - The heavy weight of the anointing spices, 65 pounds, was used to mask the smell of decay. Spice coated strips wrapped the body.
  - Then the entrance to the tomb was covered with spices.
  - Washing the body, considered by the Jews to be of greatest importance, is not mentioned by any of the gospel writers.
- Washing the body, considered by the Jews to be of greatest importance, is not mentioned by any of the gospel writers.
- Among the wealthier Jews, when the flesh decayed, about one to three years, the bones were then placed in an ossuary (bone box).

- The tomb would have been a rectangular chamber carved out of a rock face.
- The fact it was a “new” tomb was appropriate for the occasion—Jesus’ death was unlike any other.
- Additionally, dead bodies were associated with defilement—Jesus tomb was undefiled.
- The stones used to seal tombs varied, but round stones, similar to a millstone, were frequently employed.

#### **The Tomb Watched (Matt. 27:61-66; Mk. 15:47; Lk. 23:55-56)**

- The Jewish leaders had a special meeting with Pilate on the Sabbath.
  - As long as they did not travel more than the legal limit for a Sabbath’s journey (Ex. 16:29) or enter the residence of Pilate (cf. Jn. 18:28), the delegation would not break the Sabbath (cf. Acts 1:12).
  - They were very scrupulous about matters of ceremonial defilement, but quite willing to “lynch” an innocent man.
- The Jews would have been given permission to use the same troops to secure His tomb as had been previously employed to arrest Jesus.
- Sealing the tomb put Rome’s guarantee on securing its contents.
- The troops not only stood by to protect the tomb; their failure to do so would mean their execution.
- The family and friends of Jesus waited until after the Sabbath for an opportunity to prepare properly Jesus’ body for burial—unaware of the work done by Nicodemus and Joseph.

#### **The Empty Tomb (Matt. 28:1-8; Mk. 16:1-8; Lk. 24:1-12; Jn. 20:1-10)**

- Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James the Less very courageously went to the tomb to complete Jesus’ burial preparations.
- Mary the mother of Jesus, Salome, Joanna, and Susanna were in the group of women associated with the crucifixion and burial, but apparently were somewhat farther behind.
- Physical phenomenon is at the disposal of God’s providence.
- The women would did not have sufficient strength to move the stone, indicating its great weight and the difficulty involved in opening the tomb.
- Angels are often associated with light indicating their pronounced purity (cf. Jud. 13:19-20)
- .Women become the first humans to herald the Resurrection.
- The differences in the gospel accounts reflect the different arrival times of the women in the group.
- The “third day” need not be taken to mean anything more than parts of three different days (cf. Hos. 6:2).
- The linen strips encountered in the tomb would preclude robbery of the body—too much time needed to unwrap a body.
- The face cloth folded up separately is another interesting aspect to the appearance of the burial chamber.

- This was used to keep the mouth closed.
- Apparently, Jesus removed it after breaking from His other grave clothes.
- John, younger than Peter, was the faster of the two.
- The evidence was conclusive; Simon and John are brought to belief.
- Belief must always be based on evidence.
- They did not know what to do next, so they went home.

### **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the Resurrection and the Life.
- He conquered death.
- He is Lord!