

An Artistic Biography of Jesus



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Introduction

My prayer is a brief pictorial biographical framework of Jesus' life will be attractive to readers. It can be said; 'Pictures are worth a thousand words'. The book is events driven and advances a simple basic *journey* theology. Hopefully there is little dogma or doctrine advanced; just the life of a divinely human man who changed human history. The real acknowledgement for this biography belongs to Jesus. He fulfilled the life God called him to live, fully human, and Immanuel, God with us. His life was recorded by the inspired Gospel writers. I pray, as a follower of Jesus, this Artistic Biography of Jesus will honor him.

An Artistic Biography of Jesus is written to help people visualize, order, understand, and remember the life of Jesus. As a reference it contains 32 artistic renderings and brief commentary focused on different key events in his life. The key events are grouped around four base locations from which Jesus lived, traveled, and ministered. You will meet Jesus through selected key events in various settings. As you walk with him, feel his challenges, joys, and concerns. We can learn from his human and divine nature. He brings God's logos (Word) to a world in need of truth. His experiences guided the daily walk of his followers then and are available to us now.

The author's position is that we need more of Jesus in our world today. The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Galatians, shared the fruit of a life filled with the spirit of Jesus included; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Paul stated there was no law against these virtues. In striving to 'be best' we can be; the life of Jesus provides a very helpful template for living. That is why the author wants all people to know the life of Jesus and consider greater practice of his teachings.

Why should we focus on events? We live in an event driven information age. Overviews or summaries are a part of our 30-minute newscasts. Often our commentators are trying to pack

20 or more stories in brief sound bites. Politicians are scheduling photo opportunities to communicate messages. Organizations hire event planners to create themes. More depth coverage of subjects is available through television documentaries on; events, history, and biographies. We are constantly learning from *pictures of events*. How people behaved, what they said, what they did, lead to impressions. We draw values or truths about the lives and goals of people from visual events. By ordering a picture of the *events* in the life of Jesus in our minds, we can know him better and have a closer relationship with him. We were “Created to become like Christ.”¹ Jesus taught in the oral tradition: clearing temples; delivering sermons on mountainsides; eating in homes; performing miracles with impact; telling parables; and teaching through encounters with Jewish leaders. He wanted observers to take home and use his messages.

Three important concepts shape this Artistic Biography. The remaining pages of the Introduction expand these three concepts which are:

1. Four base locations provide order and chronology to Jesus’ life.
2. Memory theory with art helps us recall events for reflection and dialog.
3. The four base locations of the ministry of Jesus open up the basics of a *journey* Christian theology.

1. Four Base Locations provide order and chronology to Jesus’ life.

The four base locations approach to the life of Jesus started while I was facilitating a group pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1998. On that trip our group traveled throughout the entire Holy Land. The area in which Jesus ministered is about 150 miles long and 50 miles wide. During the trip I observed that Jesus’ ministry focused around four base locations. Three of the four locations are cities: Nazareth (his early years through age 31); Capernaum (the

¹ Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Life*. Zondervan Publisher, Grand Rapids, MI. 2002. p.171.

1 ½ year great Galilee ministry); and Jerusalem (Passion Week). The fourth location is two provinces, Judea and Perea. The provinces are divided by the Jordan River. Provinces are used (rather than cities) because Jesus and his disciples were traveling from city to city in Judea and Perea. They were on the move for a six-month period from his transfiguration to the triumphal entry into Jerusalem for Passion Week.

2. Memory theory and Visualization helps us recall events for reflection and dialog.

God has created us with a marvelous memory capability. The human brain has the capacity for 10 trillion bits of information and facts. How do we store and recall those facts? One way is by focusing our attention on *stories* or *narratives*. Most people can remember a story better than a random set of facts.

To assist recall the author has grouped events into families of information using alliterations. The author through these alliterations (In's, C's D's, and T's) by geographic location hopes the retention of a framework of the life of Jesus can assist readers. You may wish to develop your own word associations or visualizations for recall. That is great! Use your mind to know Jesus better, retain key events, live his teachings and share his biography.

3. The four base locations of the ministry of Jesus open up the basics of Christian theology.

Dr. Leonard Sweet, author and theologian, delivered a sermon on the "Hour of Power" (January, 2003) television service from the Crystal Cathedral. He shared a six-word simple theology: *Come Down, Come Out, and Come Home*. I have adapted Dr. Sweet's "simple theology" to eight words that are tied to the four base locations used in this Guide. They present a *journey* for each section of this Guide to open up dialog on the basics of Christian theology.

<i>Place</i>	<i>Journey Theology</i>	<i>Scripture & Author's Comments</i>
Nazareth	Come down	Jesus came down from Heaven with Gods Word (Logos)" and truth for all people to receive his light (John 1).
Capernaum	Come follow	As Jesus called his disciples he said "Come follow me" (Matthew 4:19)
Judea / Perea	Come live	In teaching his disciples, Jesus calls us to live for him in the full. (John 10:10b).
Jerusalem	Come home	Jesus goes to prepare a place for us. (John 14:3-4).

This *journey* theology helps us understand the life of Jesus. He came to improve the whole world and help people develop purpose on life's journey

My hope and prayer is that parents and Grandparents will use this book to teach young people the life of Jesus and an appreciation of the arts. Finally and importantly much credit for an Artistic Biography of Jesus goes to my dear friend Arthur J. Ammann, M. D. His graphic computer skills are at the heart of developing and preparing for publication this book. His timeless energy and patience are very much appreciated and honored. Thank You Art! Our hope is parents and grandparents will assist young people learn the life of Jesus and appreciate great art.

Blessings, Tom J. Cowley D. Min.

Nazareth Overview

Nazareth is a city on a hill in Galilee. It overlooks the Old Testament Jezreel Valley. Looking to the South on a clear day from Nazareth, Mounts Tabor, Moreh and Gilboa can be seen. The village of Nain is also visible in the distance. Today, Nazareth is primarily an industrial town housing an important automotive assembly plant. It is a part of Israel's "occupied territory" and has a large Arab (Islamic) influence.

Mary and Joseph journeyed from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the census when Jesus was born. They returned to Nazareth, after a brief stay in Egypt, to Joseph's carpentry business. Nazareth became the hometown of Jesus. As Matthew (2:23) notes he was called Nazarene. Just like each of us have a hometown where we were brought up (New York, San Francisco, etc.), Jesus too could call Nazareth his hometown. Interestingly, Nazarene in Jesus day was a synonym for "despised."

The concluding Nazareth event occurs in the home synagogue of Jesus. He rolls out the Isaiah scrolls and claims he is the fulfillment of the passage. Jesus is taken to a hill in Nazareth, and passes through those who reject the claim and Jesus moves his ministry to Capernaum.

Simple Theology – Nazareth



Nazareth

Come Down

John 1: tells us Jesus has 'Come Down' from heaven with God's Word (logos) and truth for all to receive His light

God makes the Decision to send his Word

God, since creation, had interest in sharing his word with his people. Moses conveyed God's law, the Ten Commandments, on Mt. Sinai. The Hebrew nation had trouble understanding God's words. God decided on a different plan to share his word (Logos). He would send his son, Jesus, with the new covenant for people. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14a). John affirms the divine (yet fully human) nature of Jesus.

Later the Apostle Paul shares, "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son," (Galatians 4:4a). Greek culture (common Hellenist language and Greek philosophy) and Roman advancements (transportation progress and roads) provided the "backdrop" for God to *fulfill* his promised Messiah. Think of the celebration in Heaven! God had decided the fullness of time had arrived! God would send his Son with the Word. What is known as the Messianic Age begins with the coming of Jesus to the earth.

The Word (logos) was to be fully human and dwell among us. The importance of proclaiming this "Good News"...that God's word transcended from heaven to visit the earth, is important for our lives today. God must have been disappointed that centuries of working with his people, the Hebrews, had not produced much fruit. So he chose that the time had fully come for his Son, Jesus, to become flesh and dwell among people to share his word.



In the Beginning God's Word (logos) *came down* and dwelt
among us

1. In the Beginning was the Word – John 1:1-18, Matthew 1:1-17, Luke
3:23-38

Infant Birth

We celebrate God's gift of light to the world each Christmas season. Herod was king in Judea. An elderly priest, Zechariah, and his wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant with a son, John. Their son became John the Baptist. Meanwhile in Nazareth, the angel Gabriel visited her cousin, Mary. She would bear a son named Jesus, Son of God most high. While Mary first questioned Gabriel, since she was a virgin, and Joseph gave thought to stepping quietly away from his engagement, both Mary and Joseph were obedient and became servants of the Lord.

During this time a decree came out from the Emperor Augustus that a census should be taken. Mary and Joseph made their way from Nazareth to Bethlehem (the city of King David's birth). While there Mary gave birth to the *Infant* in a stable. At the time, shepherds from the local fields and wise men from the East came to honor his birth.

Matthew records the gifts of these wise men: *gold*, symbolizing royalty, a messianic King; *frankincense*, an ingredient in worship aroma; and *myrrh*, oil used to heal. After eight days had passed the child, Jesus, was presented at the Temple in Jerusalem. Simeon, a righteous and devout man guided by the Spirit, blessed the Messiah. Soon Joseph was visited in a dream by an angel of the Lord. He was advised to take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until told otherwise. Desperate to protect his throne, Herod had ordered the slaughter of all babies less than two years old in Bethlehem. Upon Herod's death, an angel appeared to Joseph ordering the return of his family. Fearing life in Judea, Joseph settled in his hometown, Nazareth.



Infant Birth

Birth of Jesus and presentation – The Christmas Story

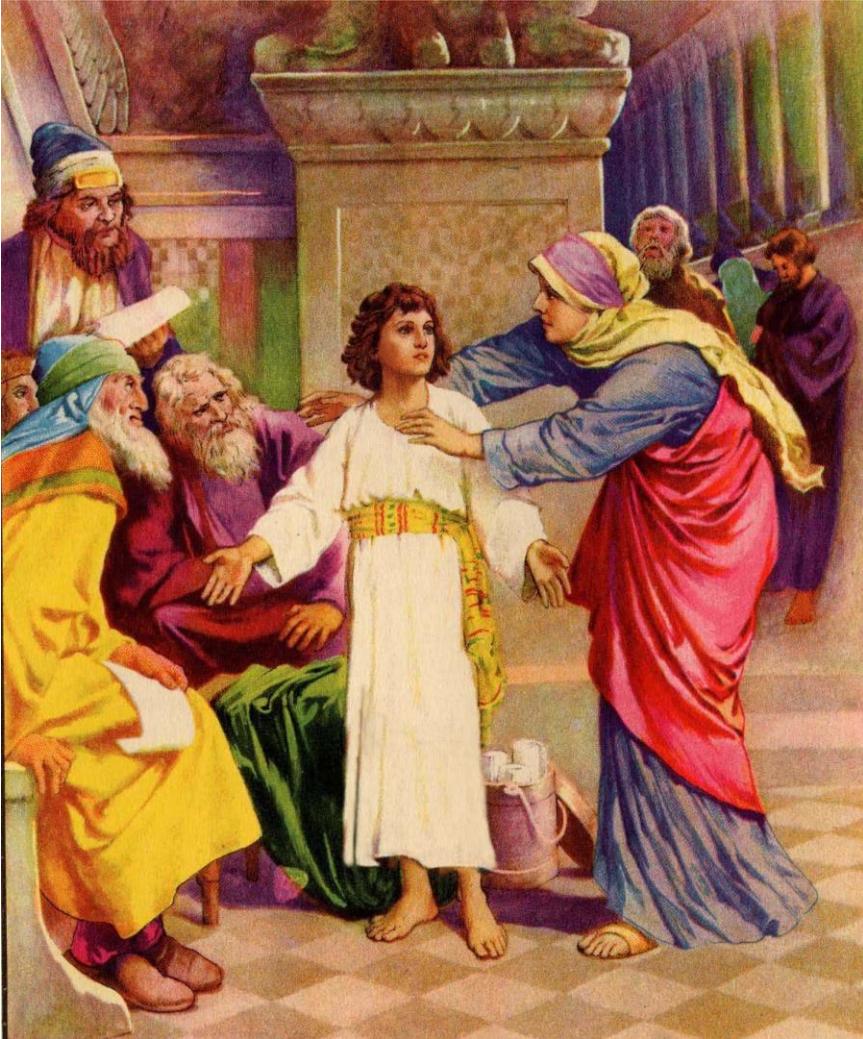
2. Infant Birth – Matthew 1:18-2:23, Luke 1:5-2:40

Increase In Wisdom

Little is known of the childhood of Jesus except for a Passover visit to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve years old. In Luke 2:39 we are told Mary and Joseph did all required by the Law so that the child Jesus was filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him.

When Jesus visited the Temple in Jerusalem at age twelve, those in the temple were amazed at his answers to their questions. He was about his Father's work in his house. Luke 2:52 tells us, "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." *Jesus increased in wisdom and stature!*

Jesus must have been diligent in his study of the Old Testament scriptures. He was delighted to be in his Father's house and dialog with teachers in the temple courts. Spiritual dialog is an important part of a growing faith. Growing in wisdom and stature is a patient, maturing process in life.



Increase in Wisdom and Stature Jesus at age 12, in the Jerusalem Temple, among teachers, asking questions

3. Increase in Wisdom and Stature – Jesus' first Passover in Jerusalem temple at age 12 – Luke 2:41-52

Inspiration - Baptism of Jesus

On the Mediterranean scene, it was the fifteenth year of the reign of Roman Emperor Tiberius. Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea and Herod was ruler in Galilee. A word from God came to John, known as John the Baptist, that he was to minister in the wilderness of the Jordan River.

Inspiration has a beginning. Age 30 was considered the age which manhood began in the Hebrew community. Jesus, age 30, was listening to God. He was inspired to leave a carpentry business and fulfill a calling from God. Jesus comes to the River Jordan wilderness and is baptized by John. A voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22b).

Affirmation in our lives is important. When one hears a calling or undertakes a task, it is important to feel the affirmation of the Spirit. People like to feel their talents and gifts are being properly deployed.

It must have been important that Jesus knew his Father loved him, and was pleased with him. As his ministry began, Jesus also must have felt John's affirmation. John shared "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:7-8).



Inspiration

Jesus, at age 30, leaves Nazareth and his carpentry business for baptism

4. Inspiration – Matthew 3:1-17, Mark 1:1-11, Luke 3:1-22, John 1:19-34, 3:22-36

Inner Strength - Jesus 40 days in the Wilderness

The spirit led Jesus to fast in the wilderness on his journey to Jerusalem. He was tempted for 40 days. People can identify with temptations. After receiving inspiration and affirmation to serve the Lord, temptation of worldly pleasures and time commitments enter our lives.

Matthew 4 records how Jesus faced three temptations and answered each one with God's word from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 8:3, 6:16, and 6:13).

Devil's Temptations

Answers Jesus used

Turn stones to loaves of bread

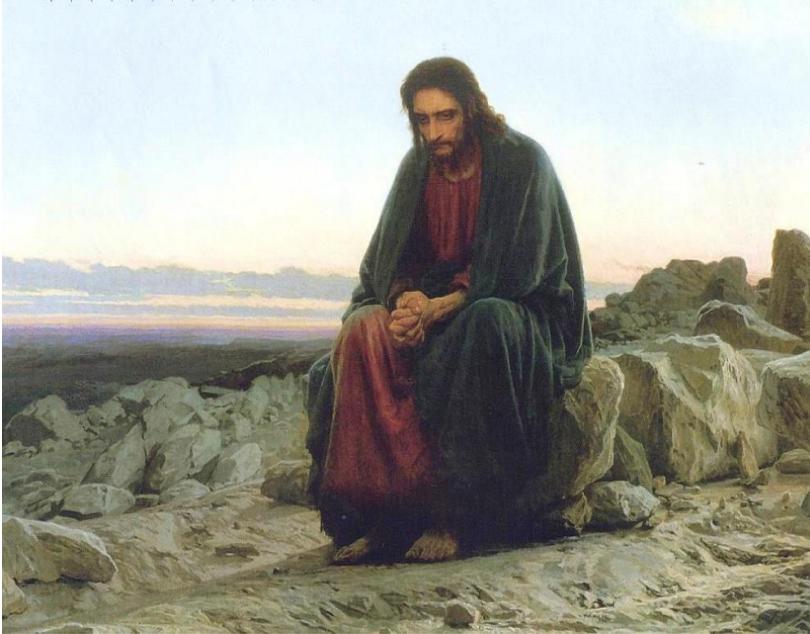
One does not live by bread alone, but word of God.

If you are God, jump from pinnacle of temple, safely

Do not test the Lord

Bow down and worship me and I will give you material splendor

Worship God and me, serve him, not worldly kingdoms



Inner Strength Temptation of Jesus in the Wilderness

5. Inner Strength – 40 Days in Wilderness – Temptations – Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13

Initial Encounters of Jesus

Jesus starts his ministry after baptism and showing inner strength overcoming temptation in the desert. The next events of Jesus' first year of ministry flow quickly. The Gospel of John records the following events:

Jesus calls first disciples

He changes water to wine at wedding in Cana

He clears the temple in Jerusalem of money changers

He encounters Nicodemus by night, and advises him; you must be born again

He meets a Samaritan woman at a Sychar well and converts her to become the first evangelist for his ministry

He heals a nobleman's son

Each of these *Initial* encounters has its own message. One can see the fully human, loving Jesus in these initial encounters of his ministry. Jesus is: making friends with his first disciples; enjoying a wedding in Cana; showing love for temple worshippers; telling important truths to Nicodemus; being open to all, including a woman Samaritan; and healing a faith-filled official's son.



Initial Encounters Wedding at Cana, Changes water to wine,
6. Initial encounters – John 2:1-11 (Lesson # 1)



Initial Encounters Nicodemus – You must be born again
6. Initial encounters – John 3:1-21 (Lesson # 2)



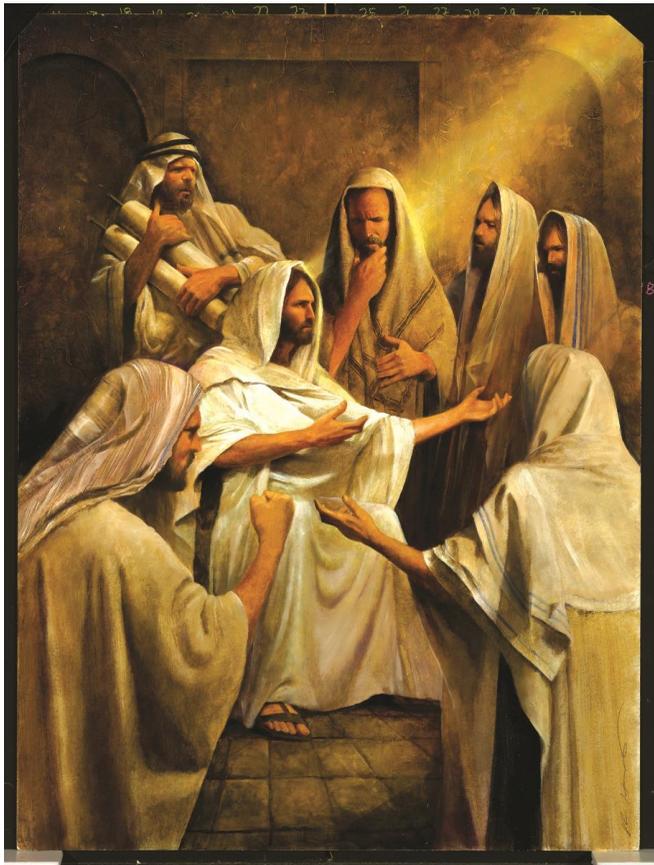
Initial Encounters Woman at Well (lesson #3)

6. Initial encounters – John 4:1-54

Inauguration Year Ends

Jesus read from scrolls of Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth. He announced that the Lord had anointed him to preach the good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for prisoners, recover sight for the blind and release the oppressed. Jesus proclaimed that he was the fulfillment of the Isaiah scriptures. He also predicted that no prophet would be accepted in his hometown. The local people of Nazareth were furious when they heard this and drove him out of town!

The first year of Jesus' ministry, known as the year of *Inauguration*, ends with rejection in his hometown, Nazareth. He moved his ministry to Capernaum, on the nearby shores of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus will begin what is known as the Great Galilean ministry. He responded to rejection and the ending of his first year of public ministry in Nazareth by moving forward with God's call to him.



Inauguration Year Ends Inauguration year of Jesus' Ministry ends – Rejected in Nazareth

7. Inauguration year ends – Rejection in home synagogue in Nazareth – Luke 4:14-30

Capernaum – The Galilee Ministry

After rejection in his local Nazareth synagogue, Jesus moved his ministry for the next 1 ½ years to Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus emphasized important teaching of the *New Covenant* in his ministry. Galilee proved to be a most responsive audience to his messages. In contrast, the people of Nazareth had trouble accepting one of their own as the Messiah. Hebrew leaders in Jerusalem had too much at stake thus challenged Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament - promised Messiah.

Peter's home in Capernaum was the base in Galilee for Jesus and his travels. Jesus must have felt comfortable in the midst of these affirming surroundings. Fishermen, a tax collector, a Zealot, and people from all walks of a more rural life listened to his teachings. Hillsides beside the sea provided natural amphitheatre settings for oral preaching and teaching of the New Covenant truths Jesus shared. Some scholars refer to the time of Jesus in Galilee as the "Year of Popularity." Jesus must have felt good to be affirmed in his life!



Capernaum Theology

Come Follow

As Jesus called His disciples He said; "Come follow me"
Mathew 4:19a. His call remains the same today.

Jesus calls his disciples to Follow Me and learn God's word and plan for living

As Jesus moved his ministry to Galilee, he began to gather disciples. Jesus called four common fishermen, to *Come follow me*, and I will make you fishers of men. The men, two sets of brothers, (Andrew and Simon [Peter], and James and John, sons of Zebedee) were engaged in successful fishing businesses on the Sea of Galilee. They immediately left their nets, answered his call, and became among his first disciples (followers). This would mean leaving their emphasis on worldly matters. Jesus taught his followers Kingdom values as they humbled themselves before the Lord.

Jesus encountered Levi (to be called Matthew) sitting in his tax booth. Jesus said to him, "Follow me," and Levi got up, left everything, and followed him. Following prayer with his Father on a mountainside, Jesus eventually called twelve disciples to be his close followers and companions (Luke 6:12-16). In Galilee many others joined the ministry and followed Jesus. All who followed Jesus did not stay with him for the long haul and left his ministry. (John 6:60-71).



Capernaum

Come Follow

As Jesus called his disciples he said, 'Come follow me' (Matthew 4:19a). His call remains the same today to humankind.

8. Come follow me – Matthew 4:12-25, 9:9-13, Mark 1:14-20, 2:13-17, 3:13-19, Luke 5:1-11, 5:27-31, 6:12-16, John 1:35-51

Changed Attitudes

Kingdom Attitudes are Important

Christ suggests as a first step that his followers consider *Changed Attitudes*. Problems and challenges become blessings, Kingdom attitudes so to speak - rather than being bogged down by the world. These teachings are often referred to as the Beatitudes. The nine attitudes can be organized in many ways. One approach is to order the first four teachings as an *inward* journey, leading to blessings of mind.. The next four are an *outward* journey providing holiness blessings to others. The ninth is a capstone attitude stated as being blessed when walking in faith. Jesus calls his followers to be salt and light in his world. The following summary traces this inward / outward attitude journey, noting the attitude and the blessing derived from faith in Jesus.

Attitude	Blessing faith provides
Inward	
Poor in spirit	Theirs is kingdom of heaven
Mourn	They will be comforted
Meek	They will inherit the earth
Thirst for righteousness	They will be filled
Outward	
Merciful	They will be shown mercy
Pure in heart	They will see God
Peacemakers	They are called children of God
Persecuted for my sake	Theirs – will be the kingdom of heaven

CAPSTONE – “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:11-12).



Changed Attitudes The Beatitudes - Kingdom Attitudes –
Sermon on Mount (part 1)

9. Changed attitudes – Matthew 5:1-16, Luke 6:17-26 – Sermon on the Mount –
1st Study

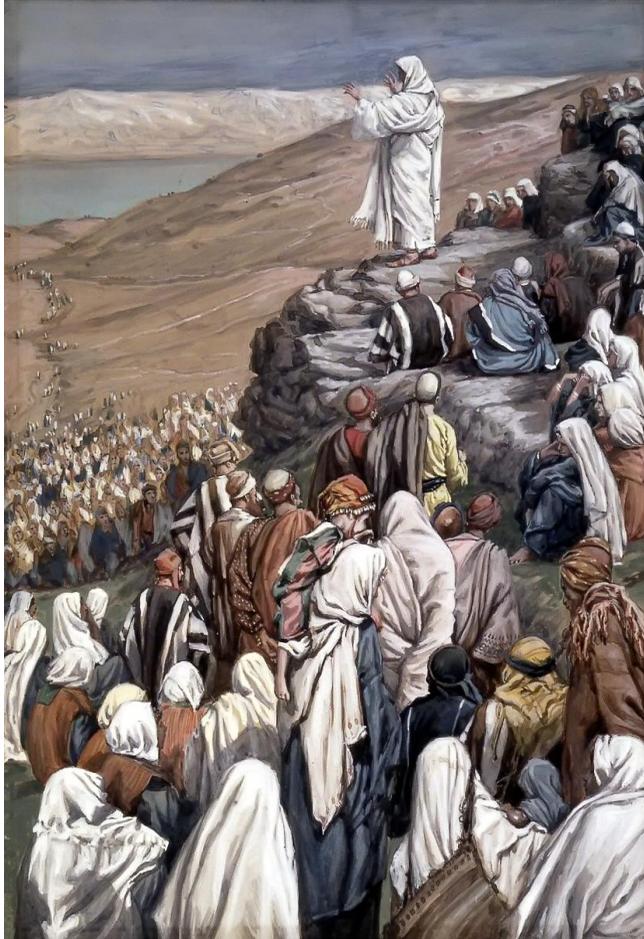
Love of people is at the center of life

The Sermon on the Mount is considered Jesus' greatest sermon. There are many ways to order the sermon and the lessons for life he shared. After the opening Beatitudes, this Guide divides his sermon into two parts: love for neighbor teachings and love for God teachings. This division reflects Jesus' Great Commandment when he summarized the law into, "Love the Lord and Love your Neighbor" (Matthew 22:37-39). We will consider the "Love your Neighbor" teachings here in Event 10. Jesus teaches a new form of love for this world, agape love. Agape love is learning to intelligently and intensely will the best for another. Agape is a love that expects nothing in return.

Love your neighbor – Selected teachings of Jesus (Matthew 5:17-48)

Anger, our sharp tongue may 'murder' a person
Lust, is a type of adultery and leads to trouble in relationships
Marriage equals Godly type love between a committed man and woman
Keep oaths and our word, let our 'yes' be 'yes' and 'no', 'no'
Turn the other cheek to those who attack you
Learn to Love our Enemies

The Sermon on the Mount sets a high standard for followers of Jesus. He builds on the *foundation* of the Old Testament and law of the Prophets with focus on the moral laws of Moses. His teachings in the Sermon on the Mount can be viewed as fulfillment of the *new covenant* described by the prophet Jeremiah; "'The time is coming' declares the Lord, "when I will make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel and the house of Judea" (Jeremiah 31:31). "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts" (Jeremiah 31:33b).



**Commandments of
Love**

Sermon on the Mount / at Lake – You have
heard it said Love your Neighbor
Sermon on the Mount (part 2)

10. Love Neighbor

Matthew 5:17-48

Love of God is the foundation for Construction in life

Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount stating whoever hears his words and does them is a wise builder, *Constructing on Rock*. He outlines ways we “Love God” in Matthew 6 and 7. Luke provides a “second telling” of selected of Jesus’ teachings.

Ways to Love God – (Matthew 6-7)

Give quietly to the needy

Pray to the Father the Lord’s prayer in private

Fast privately, don’t look somber

Store treasures in heaven rather than on earth

Trust God, do not worry about tomorrow

Do not judge, trust God to judge

Make your needs known to God

Enter through God’s narrow gate to life

Bear good fruit, like a Godly tree

Build on solid rock, love God

God desires that we love only him, serving obediently. Jesus calls us to build an indwelling temple, with Christ the cornerstone.



**Construction on
Rock**

Love God through - Prayer, fast, trust,
do not judge, the narrow way, bear fruit.
Your house will withstand storm

Sermon on Mount (part 3)

11. Construction on the Rock – Matthew 6:1-7:29, Luke 6:37-49, 11:2-4, 12:22-

Miracles of Jesus

The NIV Bible records a total of 35 'Miracles of Jesus'. The majority, 23 miracles of Jesus, occurred during his ministry in Galilee. The *Compassion* of Jesus can be noted as he accomplishes *caring and curing miracles*. One senses the warm heart he had for humankind. The 35 miracles of Jesus are recorded in all four Gospels (Matthew 20 miracles, Mark 18 miracles, Luke 20 miracles, and John 8 miracles). Listed below is a partial list of 23 miracles by Jesus; 17 involved human healing while 6 show power over nature. The events impacted crowds, brought attention to Jesus, and indicated his power and teachings.

Changes Water to wine
Heals a Man with Leprosy
Heals Centurion's servant
Heals Two Demon possessed men; herd of swine sacrificed
Arise and walk, a Paralytic man is healed!
Heals on Sabbath; Jewish leaders upset
Casts out demons; not by Beelzebub
Calms storm and disciples fears
Casts out an unclean, evil spirit of a man on the Sabbath
Heals Jarius' daughter
Heals a bleeding Woman
Heals Widow's son at Nain from death
Feeds 5,000
Walks on water, saves Peter
Comforts a Greek woman born Syrian Phoenicia
Heals a Deaf, mute
Feeds 4,000
Heals blind man at Bethsaida
Heals boy with demon
Heals infirmed man at sheep gate pool
Restores sight to blind, Jericho
Raises Lazarus from Dead
Withers a Fig Tree to represent dead faith of Jewish leaders



12. Caring / Curing Caring, curing, compassion miracles of Jesus

Compassion, Caring, and Curing (selected healings, miracles) – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

(Example #1)



**12. Compassion, Caring, and Curing (selected healings, miracles) –
Matthew, Mark, Luke, John**

(Example #2)



12. Compassion, Caring, and Curing (selected healings, miracles)
– Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

(Example # 3)

Jesus sends disciples, John confirms his ministry

Jesus reminds his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few” (Matthew 9:37b). Jesus made his promise of wholeness not only to his disciples, but to all those who decide to follow him. Wholeness can be viewed as discovering the unique person God wants each of us to become. In Matthew chapters 8-15 we observe Jesus bringing wholeness to those who believed. A part of wholeness is sharing our faith with others. He trained disciples to go out, *centrifugal*, two by two.

The Jewish faith had an inward focus, *centripetal*. Birth within a Hebrew family blood line was valued as a key to full membership. Samaritans, born to Jewish / Syrian families, were looked down upon. In Matthew 10 Jesus sends out his disciples to the lost sheep of Israel to share his message. Later, in final instructions to his disciples, who were about to become apostles of the faith, he expands the mission for his message to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Jesus clearly envisioned a *centrifugal* faith for all the peoples of the world.

John the Baptist, while in prison (Matthew 11), sends two disciples to *confirm* the ministry of Jesus. The disciples find a valid ministry of healing and teaching. Jesus also affirms the greatness of John the Baptist in God’s kingdom. Today, those serving Jesus need their ministries *confirmed* by thoughtful observers. This ensures service in his kingdom to a heavenly versus worldly agenda!



Centrifugal Faith Send out workers, Two by two. Fields are
Confirmed Ministry ripe for harvest. Disciples of John the
 Baptist confirm ministry of Jesus

**13. Centrifugal vs. Centripetal Faith / Confirmed Ministry – Matthew
9:35-11:19**

Cultivating God's Word and remaining Clean Within

In Matthew 13, Jesus shares parables describing the Kingdom of heaven. Cultivation of the word is a story of the farmer sowing seeds to illustrate the process of how we receive the word of God. Some seeds fell on the path and were eaten by birds, never reaching the hardened human heart. Other seeds fell among the rocks, sprang up briefly before the sun parched the shallow soil, and are an example of those who listened and observed briefly to his teachings. Some seeds fell among the thorns and were choked as they grew. The word is choked when we pursue both worldly and heavenly teachings. Finally, some seed fell on good soil, representing the fertile mind of a follower of Christ and his teachings. These seeds produced a crop that multiplied a hundred, sixty, thirty times what was sown! Walking with Christ, cultivating and nurturing his teachings, produces a life of multiplication! In addition to the parable of the Sower, Jesus shares other parables in Matthew 13. He describes the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus highlights kingdom values and multiplication.

Parable	Matthew passage
Weeds, gather tares and burn	13: 30, 36-43
Mustard seed great among herbs	13:31-32
Yeast produces leaven	13:33-35
Hidden treasure, sells all he has	13:44
Fine Pearl, of great value	13:45-46
Net to separate kinds of fish	13:47-52

Jesus taught "Clean and Unclean" and hated hypocrisy of church leaders. What comes out of our mouth from the heart makes us *clean* or *unclean* (Matthew 15:1-20).



Cultivation of Word Parable of Sower, Mustard Seed, Lost Coin,

Clean Within Pearl of value. What comes from our mouth, and
From the heart within, makes us clean

14. Cultivation of the Word – Clean within – Matthew 13, 15:1-20, Mark 4:1-32, 7:1-23, Luke 8:4-21, 13:18-21

Church Defined

As the Great Galilean ministry draws to a close, Jesus visits the region of Caesarea Philippi, a stronghold of Hellenistic thinking and worship of the Greek god Pan. It was here that Jesus asked Peter, who do you say I am? "Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God' " (Matthew 16:16). Jesus states that *believers*, such as Peter, are the rock upon which he will build his *church!*

Jesus defines his *church* as a community of believers. In Matthew 18, Jesus outlines guidelines for maintaining a healthy church. He promises, "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20). Wherever believers meet to honor his name and kingdom, his spirit will be there. This includes church and Para church organizations. As communities of believers, we all must look to his presence for health within the body.

The church may be viewed as a mission station, a place where believers come and are renewed in the spirit to fulfill their calling to serve Jesus Christ. I like to think of this as a church without doors; where a community of believers is prepared to go and lead a purpose-driven life. The community of believers is a place where doctrine and dogma take a back seat to a personal relationship with Jesus, a desire to see his teachings practiced in the world, and the fulfillment in daily life of that divine encounter.



Church Defined

Peter's confession, Jesus, "on this rock, I will build my church" at Caesarea Philippi – Church, a community of believers

15. Church defined at Caesarea Philippi – Matthew 16:13-20, 18:1-20, Mark 8:27-30, Luke 9:18-27

Teaching the value of children in this busy world was important to Jesus

Jesus placed great importance on children, and our attitude toward them. To Jesus humble children provide his followers with a model for spiritual learning. A child is trusting and unpretentious.

The love Jesus had for children shows when he instructed his disciples not to rebuke and ignore children regarding his teachings. When questioned about who would be the most important in the kingdom of heaven he pointed to the humility and innocence of a child. He also did not want to hinder spiritual learning of children, pointing today to our efforts to win young people to Christ.

Those who cause children to sin face severe punishment. It would be better for them to have a millstone hung around their neck and drown.

Finally, Jesus reminds adults to receive the kingdom of God like a child. Recently, at a book signing, Robert H. Schuller shared, "Reading the Bible is like eating fish, don't get caught on the bones." Good advice as we study the Bible today!



Children Important Jesus sees a model for spiritual learning in children.

16. Children important, the greatest in heaven, a spiritual model –
Matthew 18:1-9, 19:13-14, Mark 9:33-37

Conclusion – Galilee Ministry

From Caesarea Philippi, Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a mountain. There he was transfigured before them. His face showed like the sun, and his clothes became white with light. He appeared with Moses and Elijah, and the voice of God affirmed Jesus, “This is My Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him” (Luke 9:35b). A similar affirmation, from the Father, was heard at Jesus’ baptism.

As they descended from the mountain Jesus instructed those who were with him not to tell what they had seen until he was raised from the dead. From that time forward Jesus began explaining to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, confront the chief priests, be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Jesus predicted his betrayal into human hands. The disciples were distressed and did not understand what he was saying. When they reached Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee, the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter and asked for Jesus to pay the temple tax. Jesus instructed Peter to go to the sea and take the necessary coin from the mouth of the first fish that came up in the water. Later he would instruct them to pay to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and render to God what is God’s. Jesus instructed the kingdom of heaven was quite different from earthly kingdoms. Jesus taught separation of church and state!

Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. As the Galilean ministry draws to *completion*, Jesus had reached and touched people of all backgrounds. He had formed his core group of disciples and was popular in Galilee. The *New Covenant of Love* had been taught on the foundation of Jewish law and practices. In our next studies we will study events in *his six-month travels to Jerusalem* from base locations in Judea and Perea.



Conclusion, Galilee Ministry Jesus predicts death, Transfiguration, leaves Galilee Ministries moves through Judea /Perea, towards Jerusalem

17. Conclusion – Ministry in Galilee – Jesus turns to Jerusalem – Matthew 16:21-17:13, Mark 8:31-9:13, Luke 9:28-36

Judea / Perea Ministry

The last six months of the earthly life of Jesus Christ is a travelogue through the provinces of Judea and Perea. These six months represent a turning point in Jesus' life. Some authors call it a period of opposition. After his receptive audiences in Galilee, "Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51b). The stakes for following Jesus are raised. Early in the journey Jesus warned those who were with him walking along the road: "the Son of Man has no place to lay his head" (Luke 9:58b). He emphasizes a sense of urgency as he says, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:60b). In this Luke travelogue (Luke 9:51 – 19:27), Jesus "raises the bar" for his followers and *Disciples are coached*.

The base of Jesus' ministry moved about in Judea and Perea during this six-month period and was not centered in a particular village. Perea is an area east of Jerusalem across the Jordan River. Jesus received affirmation from God during his travels that would take him twice to feasts in Jerusalem and once to Bethany to raise Lazarus. In John chapters 7-11 Jesus *Declares his Divinity* at the Feast of Tabernacles and Feast of Dedication. Through a series of I AM claims before Hebrew leaders, he leaves no doubt as to his mission during these trips to Jerusalem.



Theology Lesson – Judea / Perea Come Live

Jesus calls us to live for him. We can live a life to the full (John 10:10b). The fruits of a spirit filled life are: 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control' as Paul reminds us in Galatians 5:22-23.

Followers of Jesus are called to be humble – Deny Self

Towards the end of the ministry in Galilee, Jesus told his disciples to keep minimal provisions, “Take nothing for the journey – no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic” (Luke 9:3b). Jesus was also coaching disciples to *deny self* for their emerging responsibilities. Arguments arose among the disciples as to who would be the greatest. Jesus taught his followers, “For he who is least among you all – he is the greatest” (Luke 9:48b). Human nature is the reverse, to think of self first. Jesus calls his followers to reverse the order; Jesus first, others second, and self last.

Facing Samaritan opposition Jesus resolutely continued travels for Jerusalem through other routes (Luke 9:51-53). The disciples suggested bringing down fire from heaven to destroy a village, but Jesus, denying their anger, went on to another village with salt and light.

A man volunteered to follow Jesus wherever he would go after burying his father. Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head” (Luke 9:58). Later, Jesus replied, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). Travels continue and Jesus emphasizes entering through the “narrow door” (Luke 13:24).

At the feast of the Kingdom, those who have humbled themselves on earth may be first in the kingdom and those who were first on earth, may be last (Luke 13:30). As Jesus travels with his disciples to Jerusalem, we sense urgency and denying self are important messages of Jesus.



Deny Self

Whoever is least among you will be the greatest

18. Deny self – selected passages Luke 9, 13, 16:19-31

People cannot serve two masters – Decision with Focus

Jesus reminds the crowds to listen and follow the signs he is giving. The Christian walk demands a life completely focused on God. One needs to have their whole body full of light shining in this world. He tells the Pharisees that although they may clean the outside of their cups, inside they are full of greed and wickedness. Be clean inside! Light the world on the outside. Some values of the kingdom are shared in Luke 12. We hear of a rich fool who stored his crops in bigger barns for himself, only to lose his life. To be rich towards God requires treasures in heaven, which are more valued than treasures on earth. Jesus reminds us where our treasure is there our heart is also. We must be dressed for service and have our lamps burning. Our decision to follow Jesus demands constant focus.

The parable of the shrewd manager (Luke 16:1-15) reminds us no one can serve two masters. Money is not of great value in God's Kingdom. The currency of love, *agape love*, from the heart is a key in his kingdom. Zacchaeus, the tax collector, came down from a tree, gave half of his possessions to the poor, and followed Jesus (Luke 19)! Jesus uses this as an example of *decision and focus!*



Decision with Focus There are: Treasures in heaven and treasures on earth, we cannot serve two masters

19. Decision / Demands focus – selected passages Luke 9, 12, 16:1-15, 19:1-27

Followers of Jesus are given an urgency to serve – Do It

Jesus expects a sense of urgency among his disciples. The current phrase, “Just do it”, captures an attitude Jesus would probably embrace. He wants his followers to jump into the ministry wholeheartedly. A couple of parables demonstrate the importance of taking action and the dangers of not responding to God’s call.

Story of Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) – An expert on the law approached Jesus and asked what he might do to inherit eternal life. Jesus asked him how he read the law and the expert responded “Love the Lord and love your neighbor”. Jesus complimented him for knowing the law. The expert then asked, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan. A Priest, Levite, and Samaritan passed a man who had been beaten and was in need of care. The Priest and Levite (respected men in the Jewish community) passed by the man without giving him help. Only the Samaritan, a person looked down upon at the time, took pity on the man and took care of him. Jesus asks the expert who was the good neighbor (a Samaritan?) and concludes by saying, “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37b).

Great Banquet (Luke 14:15-24) – Jesus tells of a certain man (God) who was preparing a great banquet. While he asked many to attend; most had excuses and could not come. The question Jesus asks is; who will be at the Lord’s banquet? The great banquet parable concludes with a warning because Pharisees have not taken action. Jesus relates, “Then the Master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in so that my house will be full’ ” (Luke 14:23).



“Do it”

Be a good neighbor, the Good Samaritan story. Carry the cross and follow me, at the great banquet, he who has ears let him hear.

20. **“Do it,”** dust off oneself – selected passages Luke 10, 14, 15

Dwell with Him Daily

The richness of a relationship with Jesus has great value

Near the conclusion of the Judea / Perea ministry Jesus began predicting his death to his disciples. Jesus laid groundwork for the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit to be available to his followers. He shares with his disciples, "Things that cause people to sin are bound to come...so watch yourselves" (Luke 17:1a, 3).

After Pharisees asked Jesus when the Kingdom of God would come, he shared, "The Kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is' or 'There it is' because the *Kingdom of God is within you*" (Luke 17:20a, 21) [emphasis added]. Followers of Jesus are people dwelling with his spirit in their hearts.

Peter expressed the concern of the disciples and the plight of his followers in Luke 18:28, "We have left all we had to follow you." Jesus then again predicted his death and resurrection (Luke 18:31-34). Jesus promised his disciples they will receive much more in the age to come, *eternal life*. We are told the disciples did not understand this message.

Author Brian McLaren, through his mature Christian character Neo relates, "The lowest available risk that I see is the risk of journeying on in faith. You see, I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe Jesus meant it when he said the Spirit of God would be with us, guiding us, to the very end. So I believe that he will guide us through the winds and currents of change, no matter what storms come. In fact, I believe that he is the wind in our sails, leading us into the change, because that's his way."
(McLaren, Brian D. *A New Kind of Christian*. Josex-Bass, San Francisco, CA. 2001. p. 42.)



Dwelling with him
Daily

God does not come by careful observation people will say, "Here it is" or "There it is," but the Kingdom of God is within you!

21. Dwelling with Him daily – Luke 17-18

Value a good marriage! Two becoming one is to be cherished – Discourage Divorce

A group of Pharisees came to Jesus with a difficult question concerning divorce, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?” (Matthew 19:3b). Jesus went back to the original purpose of marriage in Genesis 1:27 and 2:24; God created man and woman in his own image and in marriage two (a man and a woman) become one flesh. Jesus *discourages divorce* by sharing, “So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate” (Matthew 19:6).

Jesus does not focus on laws, but where the heart is. This is the goal in marriage; two become one. When one finds this in the husband and wife relationship, it is a treasure and gift from God. The love of Christ and his cross at the center of marriage is God’s vision of two becoming one in him.

Marriage partners, who pray together, stay together!





**Discourage
to Divorce**

God's goal; two becoming like one, strive attain this ideal in marriage. Marriage is not by the Law, but the heart.

22. Discourage divorce – Not laws, but where the heart is; goal: two become one

Matthew 19:1-12, Mark 10:1-12, Genesis 1:27, 2:24

The ground is level at the Foot of the Cross Dignity of Women

Throughout his ministry Jesus elevated women and demonstrated a *Dignity for Women*. Early in his ministry, he honored his mother's concerns, with a first miracle, changing water into wine at a wedding in Cana (John 2). His dialog with a Samaritan woman at the well in Sychar (John 4) again showed dignity for woman in his early ministry.

Now that his ministry was on the move from place to place, women continued to play an important role tending to his needs and those of his disciples. John 11:5 shares the love Jesus had for Martha, her sister Mary, and Lazarus. Later women are the first at the tomb to see the risen Christ. Many experiences illustrate the importance women played in the life of Jesus. He had respect for women. Selected stories listed below demonstrate his *dignity* for women.

Mary, Martha – Lazarus healed
Mary chosen to become the Mother of Jesus
All women – adultery defined
Canaanite mother – daughter healed
Bleeding woman – healed as she touches Jesus' garment
Daughter of Jarius healed
Poor widow contributing two mites recognized
Woman who anoints Jesus is given appreciation
Widow of Nain, Jesus heals dead son
Sinful woman – anoints Jesus
Crippled woman – healed on the Sabbath
Samaritan woman becomes evangelist – at well in Sychar
Woman caught in adultery forgiven – man without sin cast 1st stone
Women last at the cross
Mary Magdalene – first at empty tomb of Jesus



23. Dignity for women – various events, encounters from all four gospels listed below

Matthew 1:18-25, Matthew 5:27-30, Matthew 15:21-28, Mark 5:25-34, Mark 5:21-24, 35-43, Mark 12:41-44, Luke 7:11-17, Luke 7:36-50, Luke 13:10-17, John 4:1-26, John 8:1-11, John 12:1-11, Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:1-13, Luke 8:1-3, John 20:10-18

Divinity Declared

Jesus taught he and the Father are one

During the Judea / Perea travels Jesus made two trips to the Jerusalem temple and one trip to Bethany, near Jerusalem. Jesus went to the temple for the Feast of the Tabernacles – [October] (John 7:1 – 10:21) and to the Feast of Dedication – [December] (John 10:22 – 42). During these Jerusalem travels, one can detect the challenges and barriers Jesus faced with the entrenched Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. In Bethany Jesus visited Mary and Martha and raised their brother Lazarus from the dead. The Gospel of John records an important step in Jesus' ministry at this time. With his "I am" statements Jesus openly *declares his divinity* directly to temple leaders. Below are Jesus' "I am" claims from John.

John

7:16 – My teaching is not my own, it comes from him who sent me.

7:28 – I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true.

7:33 – I am with you a short time, then I go to the one who sent me.

8:12 – I am the light of the world, follow me...have light of life.

8:16 – I am not alone; I stand with the Father who sent me.

8:23-24 – I am from above – I am not of this world.

8:49 – I am not possessed by a demon.

8:50 – I am not seeking glory for myself.

8:58 – Before Abraham was born...I am.

10:7 – I am the gate for the sheep.

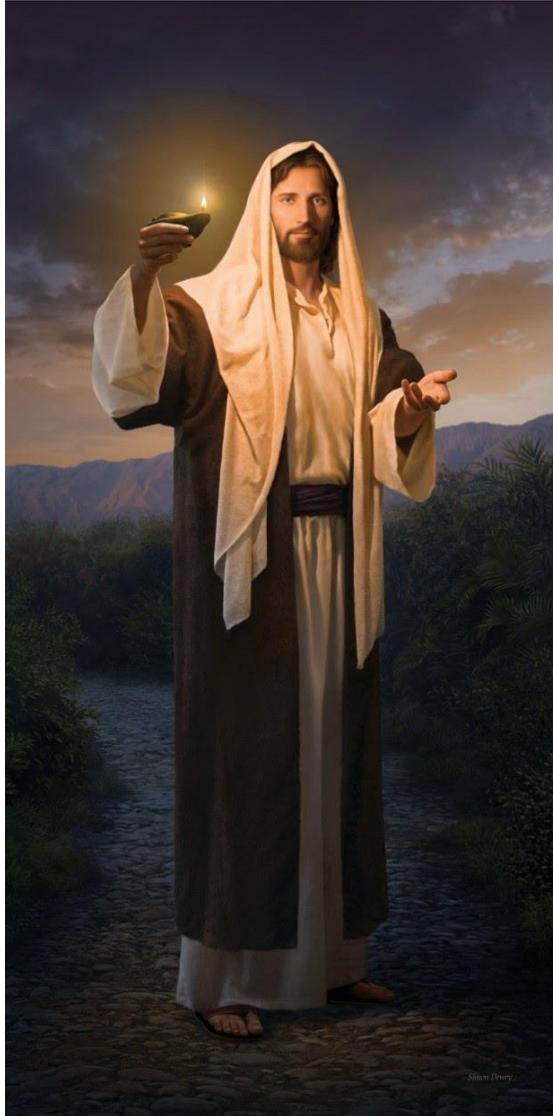
10:11 – I am the good shepherd; and lay down my life for the sheep

10:14 – I am the good shepherd, I know my sheep, they know me.

10:30 – I and the Father are one.

11:25a – I am the resurrection and the life

The Jewish leaders continue to build their case against Jesus. "We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God" (John 10:33). Jesus does not back down and concludes, "Understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" (John 10:38b).



Divinity Declared The I AM's of John 7-11 begin an important step in ministry of Jesus, he openly declares his divinity

24. Divinity Declared - John 7-11 (selected passages)

Jerusalem – Passion Week

Events in Jerusalem cover the seven-day Passover period, resurrection experiences through his ascension (40 days), and the power of the Holy Spirit being with the Apostles at Pentecost (50 days after Passover). We will walk with Jesus during the last days of his earthly ministry, and experience the grief of the cross and joy of resurrection on Easter Sunday.

We will see his disciples with the power of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost 50 days after Passover. About 35% of the four Gospels are devoted to these last days in Jerusalem. Each of the Gospel writers has a different audience in their Gospel writing, but all assign great importance to reporting the events of this period.

Theology Lesson – Jerusalem

“T” Treks, travels – with Jesus in Jerusalem Passion Week to Pentecost



Jerusalem

Come Home

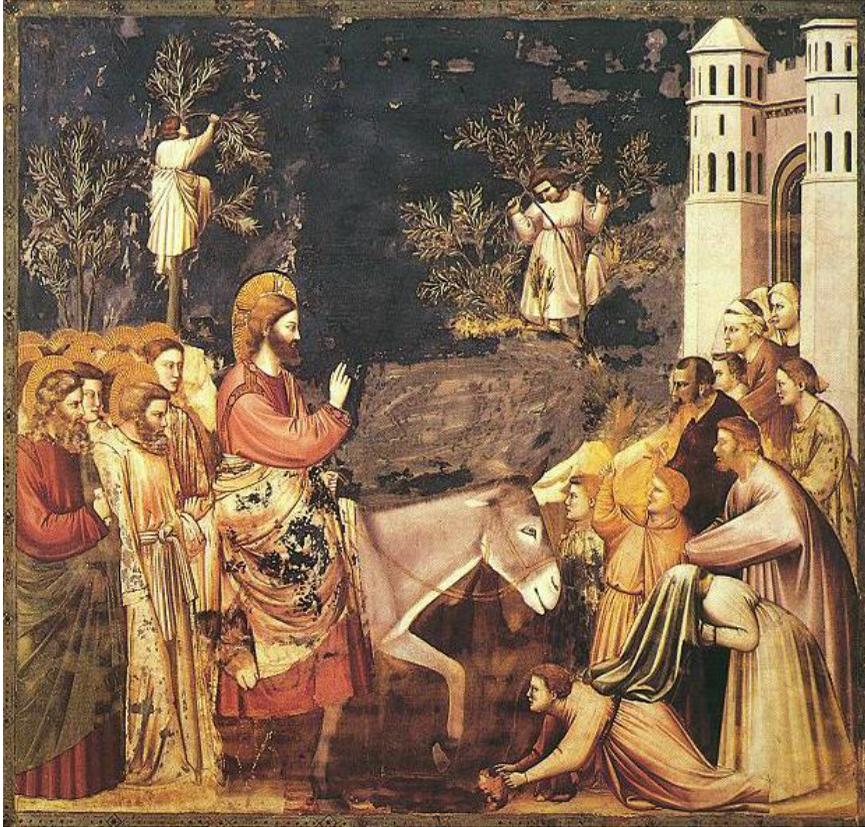
Passion Week in Jerusalem is the story of Jesus ‘Coming Home’. Jesus assures his followers in the Upper Room, ‘ I am going to prepare a place for you....that you also may be where I am going’ (John 14:3-4)

Crowds shout Hosanna as Jesus enters Jerusalem Triumphal Entry

As they approached Jerusalem, Jesus instructed two of his disciples to go on ahead, where they would find a donkey with her colt. The disciples brought the donkey and the colt, placed cloaks upon them and Jesus sat upon them. Large crowds went ahead of him shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David." As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" The crowd answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

John begins his account of the *Triumphal Entry* event the evening before (Chapter 12). Here Jesus is enjoying a dinner with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Mary anoints Jesus' feet with costly pure nard. Judas questions her actions. Jesus affirms Mary's actions and talks of his day of burial. Jesus notes you will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.

It is interesting to compare these accounts of Jesus' arrival into Jerusalem with the arrival the Jews expected. Many Jews living when Jesus came were looking for another leader / King. Nearly 1,000 years before, David and his mighty men had conquered the Philistines and the surrounding tribes. Jews thought, surely God would send another leader to remove the yoke of Roman domination, and restore the golden age. *God had a different plan!* The Messiah would be a servant of mankind. He would suffer death on a cross. Jesus was a suffering servant. The NIV study Bible notes no Old Testament chapters have more to say about the suffering and death of Jesus than Isaiah 52:13-53:12. The triumphal entry was the fulfillment of this prophecy.



Triumphal Entry
on

God sends his humble servant, leader,
Sunday the back of a donkey. Crowds
shout Hosanna.

25. Triumphal Entry – Humble servant on donkey – **Matthew 21:1-11,**
Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-44, John 12:12-19

Jesus clears the temple and points to a withered fig tree as a symbol of dried up faith

Following the triumphal entry Jesus returns to Bethany. The next day Jesus returns to the temple to cast out the money changers and to cleanse the temple as a house of prayer for all nations. Think of the change in ambience and attitudes Jesus created by cleansing the temple. He was beginning to confront the Jewish leaders regarding key issues. After the Hosannas and celebration of the previous day, Jesus took a stand for the Lord.

On the way to the temple Monday morning, Jesus said to the fig tree “May no one ever eat fruit from you again” (Mark 11:14b). The disciples found the fig tree withered the next morning on their way to the temple. Fig trees normally get leaves in March and April but do not produce fruit until June when their leaves are full. This tree was an exception. At Passover time it was already full of leaves yet had no fruit. The incident provides a parable on the judgment of Israel and its lack of fruit. It is a visual symbol for Jesus to use as he returned to the temple on Tuesday and challenges Jewish temple leadership regarding the fruitless nature of their faith.



Temple Cleared
Monday

Jesus cleanses temple of moneychangers
for prayer, Jesus notes fig tree with no fruit

**26. Temple Cleared for prayer, Fig tree noted – Matthew 21:12-22, Mark
11:12-25, Luke 19:45-48**

Jesus has one last teaching opportunity with temple leaders – Temple Teaching

When Jesus visited the temple, the chief priests and elders came to him questioning his authority. Initially, he did not tell them by what authority he was doing miracles and teaching. He indicated the Kingdom of God will be taken away from Jewish leaders and given to people who will produce fruit.

As Jesus silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together and asked, “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment of the Law?” (Jewish Law consisted of more than 600 rabbinical teachings). Jesus’ reply was simple: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.’ ” (Matthew 22:37-40).

In Matthew 23 Jesus went on to point out the hypocrisy of the teachers of the law and the Pharisees by saying “they do not practice what they preach” (Matthew 23:3b). He lists seven woes Scribes and Pharisees used to shut out the kingdom of heaven to other people;

devouring widow’s houses, instructing proselytes poorly, swearing by alters not to God in heaven, avoiding weightier matters – (judgment, mercy, and faith), preaching extortion and excess, being beautiful outside, dead inside, and killing and crucifying your prophets



Teaching in Temple The woes of priests, and hypocrisy.

Tuesday

Simplicity, love God, love neighbor, all laws can be summarized under these two simple teachings

27. Teaching: Temple – Matthew 21:23-23:39, Mark 11:27-12:44, Luke 20-21:4, John 12:20-50

Jesus on the Mount of Olives teaches his disciples regarding end times and judgment

Jesus and his disciples leave the temple area and retreat to the Mount of Olives, across the Kidron valley. In Matthew 24 disciples ask about the end of the age. Jesus *teaches* his close followers of the importance of sharing the Word. Jesus states “this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14). Jesus shares the endurance of the Word, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away” (Matthew 24:35). He goes on to share the day and hour of his return is known by no one, not even the Son, only the Father. Jesus shares in Matthew 25 three parables to triangulate and conclude his thoughts on the signs of his coming and the end of the age;

Ten Virgins – 5 have oil in lanterns and are prepared
Talents – Invest, don’t hide talents and reap the rewards
Sheep and Goats – Serve the needy; reward in heaven

Through three parables Jesus teaches the importance of; preparedness, urgency to use our talents, and rewards for serving those in need. It is interesting to note that Matthew, writing to a Jewish audience gives the most details about Jesus’ confrontation with leaders in the temple and shares Jesus’ teachings on end times. Mark, to a lesser extent, shares his dialog with disciples on the Mount of Olives, but does not expound the parables from Matthew 25. Luke shares some parables related to the Matthew 25 teachings, albeit at an earlier stage in the chronology of Jesus’ ministry.



**Teaching on
Mt. of Olives**

Tuesday evening

To disciples; subject end times Hour of his return known only by Father, heaven and earth pass away, but his words never pass away

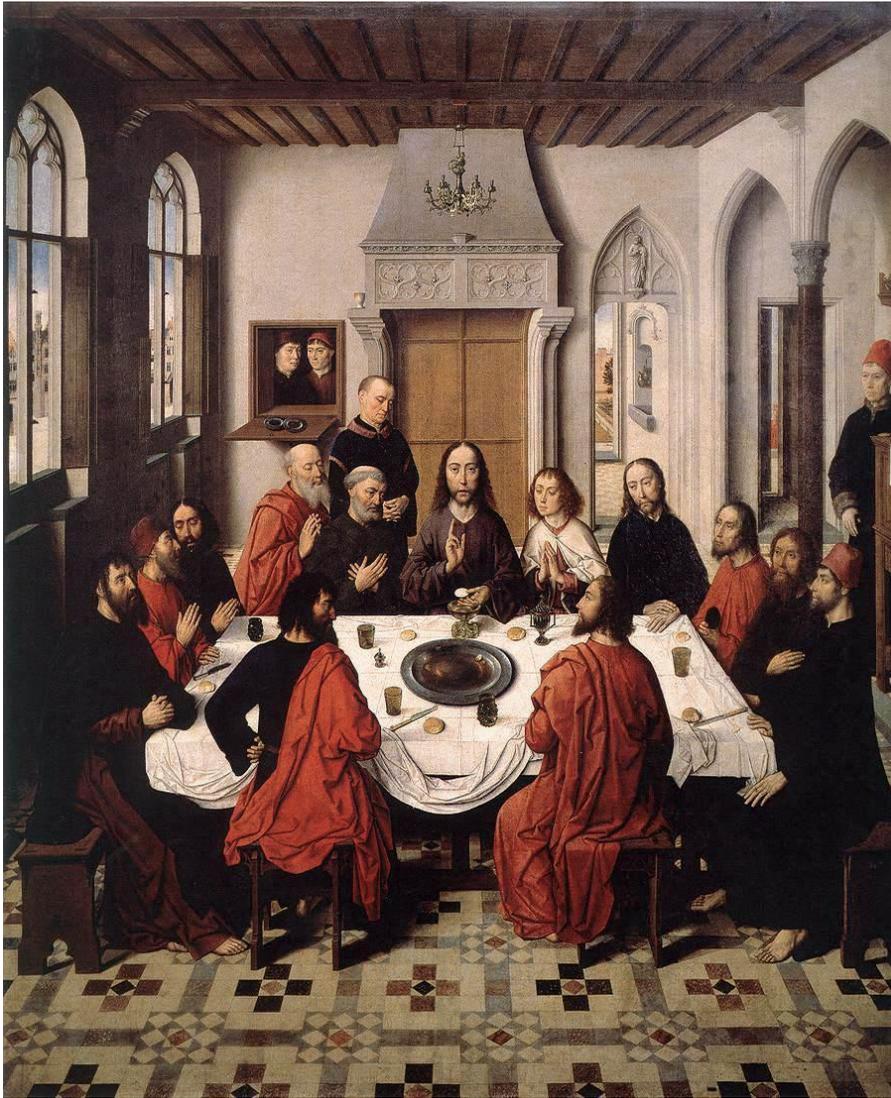
28. Teaching Mount of Olives: End times – **Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21:5-38**

Jesus shares last words with his disciples in Upper Room Time had Come

Jesus knew the *time had come* for him to leave this world and go to the Father. He was sharing his final moments with his disciples. Jesus showed his disciples the full extent of his love. Pouring water into a basin he washed the feet of his disciples. Foot washing was a custom of the times. Feet with sandals were both tired and dirty at the end of a day. Hospitality, warmth, and equality were all among a servant's task in the act of foot washing. Jesus called his followers to action: "Now that you know these things you will be blessed if you do them" (John 13:17).

Jesus comforts his followers stating he is going to prepare a place for them (John 14:1-4). The way of serving will not be easy; Peter will betray his calling three times very shortly. Jesus leaves us a counselor, the Holy Spirit, to be with us forever. The bread (body) and wine (blood) become a cleansing celebration of his life for Jesus' followers. As Jesus and his disciples take leave of the Upper Room, he points to the symbolic grapes and vine on the temple doors; "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener" (John 15:1). He goes on to share: "you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit" (John 15:5a). He also commanded them to: "Love each other" (John 15:17b). Jesus completes this intimate discourse with his disciples in prayer to the Father (John 17). "I made your name known to them, in order that the love you have for me may be in them" (John 17:26).

When Jesus finished praying for his disciples, he crossed the Kidron valley to the Gethsemane garden. His disciples fell asleep, Jesus prayed to his Father: "not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42b).



Time had come

Wednesday evening,
Thursday

Jesus anointed, goes to Upper Room,
passes Temple gate, crosses Kidron
Valley, to Gethsemane with disciples

29. Time had come – Matthew 26:1-46, Mark 14:1-42, Luke 22:1-53, John 13:1-17:26

The trials and subsequent death of Jesus on a Cross

Judas guided soldiers to arrest Jesus. Jesus' *trials* begin as he is first taken to Annas, the father in law of Caiaphas, the High Priest and then to Caiaphas himself. In the court yard, while Jesus was before the High Priest, Peter denied knowing him three times. Jesus was transferred to Pilate. After asking Jesus if he was the King of the Jews, Jesus would state that those were Pilate's words and his kingdom was not of this world.

Frustrated, Pilate had Jesus flogged, and again questioned him. Finding nothing wrong, Pilate left the decision of his fate to the Jews. They insisted Jesus be crucified, for claiming he was the Son of God. Pilate approved the crucifixion and Roman soldiers took charge of Jesus. Fulfilling Old Testament scripture (Psalms 22), soldiers cast lots for his clothing and did not break his legs, which was the custom. Women were last to remain mourning at the cross. Jesus, a compassionate son, turned care of his mother to his disciple, John (John19:25-27). Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, the man who had visited Jesus by night, wrapped the body of Jesus in spices with new linen and buried it in a new garden tomb.

The sacrifice God the Father and his son Jesus made on the cross shows their love for people. Christ fulfilled: "Greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Jesus said: "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34a). When the Word became flesh and dwelt among us 2,000 years ago, Jesus was rejected. One stands at the foot of the cross and surveys it with awe. God's love, Jesus forgiveness for the world, and their love for all people are evident.



Trials, Crucifixion Arrested by Romans. Trials of Jesus by Thursday night, High Priests, Sanhedrin, Roman rulers, Friday accused of blasphemy, flogged, crucified

30. Trials, Crucifixion, Death and Burial – Matthew 26:47-27:66, Mark 14:43-15:47, Luke 22:54-23:56, John 18:1-19:42

Christ our Lord has Risen Today! – Tomb Empty

Christ our Lord has Risen Today! - Tomb is Empty

After resting on the Sabbath, early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, the women returned to the tomb with spices. Mary Magdalene saw that the stone had been removed. She stood outside the tomb, crying. Then a man, whom she thought was the gardener, approached. He asked, "Who is it you are looking for?" She explained she couldn't find the body of Jesus. Jesus caught her eye and said "Mary." She turned and cried out "Rabboni!" (John 20:15-16). Women were first at Jesus' birth, last at the foot of the cross, and first to discover the tomb is empty!

Meanwhile, the disciples were together in the Upper Room. The door was locked for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. Thomas was not present at this first appearance of Jesus to his disciples. John 20 concludes as Thomas states, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25b). A week later Jesus appeared to the disciples and Thomas was there. Jesus told him to stop doubting. Thomas answered, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28b). Jesus said, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29). The words of Thomas: "He is Lord", become the confession of the early church. .

Jesus had predicted his death and return. He delivered!



Tomb Empty
Sunday morning

He has Risen!! Mary Magdalene arrives early with spices, stone is rolled back, she sees Jesus, he says 'Mary' she cries out: 'Rabboni'

31. Tomb is Empty – Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke. 24, John 20-21, selected verses Acts 1, 9, 15, 22, 26, I Corinthians 9, 15

Teach and Talk

In Galilee Jesus appeared to his eleven disciples. He instructed them: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). Among followers of Jesus this is known as the "Great Commission," to evangelize and teach the truth of Jesus and God's word.

Later, on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, at the ascension, he said to those assembled: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes to you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Followers of Jesus are empowered to be his witnesses; to talk of Jesus, his divine nature, his impact on lives today and to invite people to follow him.

He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. The remaining 11 disciples joined together in prayer with the women, Mary mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. In the 40 days between Jesus' resurrection and ascension, his half brothers, James and Jude, were converted. Later, church Apostles met in Jerusalem and affirmed the call of Jesus to Gentiles (non-Jewish people) (Acts 15).

The word Pentecost is derived from the Greek for the "50th day". Jesus had been crucified 50 days earlier near the end of Passover. Now the Jewish Feast of Weeks or the Feast of First Harvest was at hand. It was one of the five "Pilgrimage" festivals when Jews from all nations came to Jerusalem. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, encountered these visitors. The Holy Spirit entered followers to empower them at Pentecost.



Teach and Talk

The 50 days after
Jesus arose

The Great Commission (Teach) and
Jesus imparts power of Holy Spirit at
ascension; be my witnesses (Talk).

32. Teach and Talk – Matthew. 28:16-20, Acts 1, 2, 15 (selected verses)

Appendix – Further Thoughts

In the Introduction the author's position was that our world today needs more of Jesus, his life and teachings. *An Artistic Biography of Jesus* is written and formulated with the express purpose to help readers to visualize, order, understand, and remember the life and teachings of Jesus.

For those who are followers of Jesus, the author hopes this book provides some new and fresh ideas to assist your faith and journey with Jesus. Remembering, recalling, and sharing events and stories from his life as well as your own life will enhance dialog with family and friends.

For those of another faith or are not followers of Jesus, the author prays this book is a valuable resource to a life that changed human history. Our calendars are marked by his birth and death (B. C. and A. D.). Christ's life ushered in a new era concerning the importance of love and community. As a religious person the author studies all religions and is interested in dialog that is inclusive, includes the beliefs and thoughts of others for consideration.

We live in a rapidly changing and shrinking world. The importance of peace among people and understanding the world and various cultures is important. The author has had the privilege of traveling the world and meeting people of all walks of life. A common thread of human thought is living life to the full and leaving a better world for our children and grandchildren. This too was the desire of Jesus, live life to the full and leave a spirit for the ages. Blessings, Tom J, Cowley

NOTES