
a *Grace Notes* course

Life of Christ 300

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Lesson 310

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The Beheading of John the Baptist

Matthew 14:3-12

Mark 6:17-29,”

Exposition.

The Reason for John’s Imprisonment.

Herod sent out men to arrest and seize John the Baptist. He was then chained and placed in prison.

It was this incident that caused Jesus to go through Samaria on His way to Galilee. It was on account of this that He spent time with the Samaritan woman at the well, and brought the town of Sychar into His kingdom. This is narrated in Matthew 4:12 and John chapter four.

Herod Antipas had married Herodias, his sister in law and niece. She had left Philip the Tetrarch, Herod Antipas’ half brother, for him.

Herodias was just a little bit older than Christ, now about 34-35 years of age. She hated John the Baptist because he had preached against her immoral and incestuous behavior.

John preached, saying OUK EXESTIN, ‘it is not right.’ This was by John’s reckoning against the very laws of nature, and so it was.

This was more than just sex, it was a capital crime according to the law of Moses. Leviticus 18:16 defines this marriage as incestual: “You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother’s wife; it is your brother’s nakedness.” Verse 29 defines the punishment as requiring a ‘cutting off from the people.’

So here is this ruling family over Galilee; they are only half-Jewish, which made them the target of awful prejudice from the racist Jews. They are incestuous, in direct contravention to the law of God. They should be executed under capital punishment, but this ruling family lives above the laws of the Jews.

Now John the Baptist has virtually joined the party of the Pharisees in their crusade against this kind of immorality.

John has lost the focus of his ministry since the rapid ascension of Christ’s popularity.

According to Josephus, John was no longer baptizing for the remission of sins, but preaching that his baptism cleansed the body, while righteous behavior cleansed the soul. John had moved to legalism in an attempt to retain his following.

John is immensely popular, so that Herod Antipas and Herodias fear the people will turn against them if they listen to the strident sermons of this man.

10. Therefore they must stop him, and he is seized and chained and thrown into prison. It is clear that John is imprisoned at the royal quarters.

11. In the royal quarters there was a certain royal steward by the name of Chuza. His wife was named Joanna, and it turns out that she is a believer in Jesus Christ.

12. A steward was an OIKONOMOS, a manager of the royal household. All logistical matters were a part of his domain.

When Herod ordered the seizure and imprisonment of John the Baptist, the matter was delegated to Chuza.

While John was in prison, his care was the responsibility of Chuza.

13. If we were to construct a probable course of events it would be like this:

John is imprisoned. He is befuddled by his imprisonment and the end of his ministry. So much so that he has doubts that Jesus is truly the Messiah.

But after John sends his disciples and they return with the news of the healings and miracles, his doubts vanish like a desert mist, and he is once again on the path to his destiny. This transpires over the course of not more than a few days.

It is after this that John turns his contact with Chuza and his family into a gospel opportunity, and Chuza’s wife Joanna becomes one of the women’s auxiliary in support of Christ’s ministry.

14. “For Herod continually feared the crowd, because they held him as a prophet, and knowing him as a righteous and holy man, he kept him safe, and after hearing about him he was very perplexed, and he gladly heard him.”

Herod gladly heard John the Baptist. The adverb is HADEOS, which means glad in a cheerful but not ecstatic sense.

Herod was not overflowing with joy when he heard John the Baptist, but he did so cheerfully.

And Herod really did listen to the Baptist, as indicated by the genitive case of AUTOU. When the verb AKOUO takes its object in the genitive, there is a sense of listening more carefully, and even obedience.

There is a distinct possibility that Herod believed at this point. But even if he did it was swiftly forgotten.

But then Herod Antipas' birthday came around, and it turned out to be a fateful day.

The word EUKAIROU designates this as not only a special day due to it being the time of Herod's birthday, but also a fateful day in the history of Israel. They were about to lose their greatest prophet of all time.

Now there were great festivities planned for the day, and dignitaries, both civilian and military had arrived to participate.

There were MEGISTASIN, people of great standing. That is, famous people from around the land. Maybe Simon the Magician was present, up from Samaria; maybe others who had gained fame during that time.

There were CHILIARCHOIS, that is, the high-ranking Roman military officers who were stationed in Galilee. A chiliarchos was literally, a 'ruler of a thousand.' The modern battalion commander is about right for this rank - perhaps a colonel. Well, there were more than just one of these.

There were PROTOIS TES GALILAIAS - the 'first men' of Galilee. These were the public leaders, the people on the 'A' list at all the parties. Now there would be tax-gatherers - men who knew Matthew. There were Romans. No question that there would be some from the leaders of the Sadducees, the religious group that believed in social assimilation and living for this life alone.

With the reputation of the Herodians, it would certainly be an interesting proposition to go to one

of their birthday parties; who could tell what kind of degeneracy would be encountered? Perhaps these guests would be nervous indeed.

At some point in the festivities, the daughter of Herodias came in to dance. Her name was Salome.

The name Salome does not appear in the Bible. Rather, Josephus mentions her in his histories of the Jews.

Salome is identified as a KORASIOU. This is the diminutive form of KORE, which describes a young woman, usually a virgin. From this we can conclude that Salome was very young, perhaps barely a teenager, or perhaps even just short of that.

The most probable type of dance of the day was the PANTOMIMUS, a "solo enactment of a popular story theme in stylized mimicry, often with dramatic and sensual movements and postures" .

There would be a tremendous amount of charm in the story-telling and sensual dance of this girl. Indeed, if she had learned anything from her mother, it would be sexual allure, considering the reputation of Herodias.

Herod was exceedingly pleased with her; and who knows the reaction of the guests? The Sadducees would have gulped it down like some sumptuous after-dinner fare. The Romans would react with more stoicism. But none would desire to offend at this grand event.

Now the rest is a nightmare - an awful revelation of the degeneracy of this family.

Herod is pleased with the dance of Salome. The verb is ERESEN, from ARESKO, which means to take pleasure in a person or thing.

Now Herod was pleased, but there may have been ulterior motive; Salome is the daughter of Herodias by Herod Philip. He certainly would desire to please this little girl and so gain by the praise.

His praise turns out to be effusive. He offers her up to half of his kingdom as a reward for her dance.

(1) Herod most likely feels safe in this proposal, since this girl is his step-daughter, and so the kingdom will remain with him.

(a) This is not the first time in Bible history that such an offer has been made.

(b) Beckon back to the time of Esther; Esther pleased King Xerxes so much that he offered her anything she desired, up to half of his kingdom.

(c) The irony in all of this is that the book of Esther contains the account of an anti-Semitic plot.

(d) It is ironic because the request from Salome is going to require the death of the greatest man of the age of Israel. And that is about as anti-Semitic as you can get!

(e) You see, at the banquet of Xerxes, Queen Esther begged for her life, and for the life of her people, the Jews. She begged for life, knowing that Haman had hatched a plot to destroy them.

(f) But this Salome will be quite different. She begs for the death of the greatest man of all the age of Israel. By Christ's account, John is greater than Moses or Elijah, Isaiah or Daniel or Zechariah. Greater than any prophet in the 1400 years previous.

(2) But this is going to play out in tragedy, and you can almost feel the dread as Salome leaves the room.

(3) Well Salome goes back to her mother, and asks her just what would be good to ask, and immediately you get the impression that these two have hatched a plot.

(4) And you know by her request that Herodias is an evil woman. It wasn't enough for her that John was cast into prison at her command; it was her measure of revenge to take his life.

(5) And indeed this was revenge, for she had a long-standing grudge with this prophet of God, and she was going to see it through.

(a) This was not only a failure to forgive, which is the case for every grudge; it was a failure to forgive when the suffering was deserved.

(b) That's why this is tragic from every angle. John the Baptist lost his focus, and moved his

ministry from Christ to the Herodians; Herodias hated what he had done, unveiling her evil before all the people so that she was completely hated by them.

(c) Leviticus 19:18 puts it very well: "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord."

(d) Instead, vengeance belongs to the Lord, and be confident that He will repay.

(e) Luke 6:37, "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

(f) Whenever you fail to forgive, you have committed a failure to orient that other person's sin to the cross.

(g) Truly you are attempting to bear the burden of the cross, which was already carried by Jesus Christ Himself.

(h) And you should know that it is common for those with guilt complexes to hold grudges against others.

(i) But Herodias didn't just demand the execution of John. She demanded that his severed head be brought on a platter to be seen by all these birthday guests.

- And so it is clear that her motivation not only includes revenge against John, but also against Herod Antipas, her husband.

- She knew that this request would bring great shame upon him before all of his honored guests. She knew that they would say nothing of the incident - nothing to his face, that is.

- She knew how this would fester within Herod, and how he would eat away at himself over it.

- She was motivated to destroy this man whom she had been so anxious to marry not so long ago. Probably less than a year. This reveals a great hatred.

- To Herodias, men are a way to gain power; men are weak before her charms, easily manipulated; but never are men to be trusted, never to be loved. She is chained to their power in a male-dominated

society, but she overcomes by means of their weakness.

(j) “And after entering immediately with speed before the king, she asked, saying, ‘I want right away in order for you to give to me upon a platter the head of John the Baptist.’”

- Mark portrays the speed with which things happened after the agreement between mother and daughter.

- The girl enters the dining room META SPOUDES - with speed. In fact, Mark’s gospel even says EUTHUS - ‘immediately.’ This adverb shows decisiveness and swiftness to conclusion.

- And more than this - Salome makes her demand, and demands that it be done EXAUTES ‘right away.’ This is literally, ‘from this point in time.’

- So included in the demand is the timing of the act. Salome wants that head immediately.

- It snatches the breath away to realize the soul of this young girl. For she has added the speed and the demand for immediate action all by herself.

- It tears out the heart to realize what utter degeneracy she has at her young age. How decisive she is toward this callused and heinous request!

(6) Herod does not want to do this.

(a) There are two reasons why he rationalizes the necessity of the act.

- First, because of his oath. He feels he must have integrity toward his word.

- Second, because of the dinner guests. He feels that to renege on the oath would be to lose face before all of these dignitaries, both Roman and Jewish.

(b) But of course this is an act of utter immorality, and entirely aside from the holy character of God.

- There is a verse that is the perfect counterpoint to this whole incident. 1 John 5:14, “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

- Well Herod Antipas had no standards, and so you could ask anything of him, and he would give it, even if it was evil.

- There is no limit from the throne of grace. You may have it all if it is according to God’s will.

- But God’s ability to answer your requests never extends to the realm of evil. His integrity will not allow it.

(c) Herod has an absence of self-esteem to do the right thing.

- You must have a detachment of will in order to bring about what is right in your life.

- That is, your decision-making process must be apart from worldly factors.

- You cannot make decisions on the basis of what other people think, or what the world demands.

- Herod, the ruler of this region, the man of highest rank present, does not have the self-esteem to eat his pride and tell this little girl that she is wrong to request what is evil.

- He is afraid of what these lesser-ranking persons are going to think of him. He sees breaking this oath as a weakness, when in reality the girl has broken the oath before him.

- She has broken the spirit of integrity within the oath, and therefore abrogated Herod’s necessity toward veracity.

- Self-esteem comes from a sense of what is right, and especially who is important.

- If you see yourself as God sees you, then you will gain resolve in staying on the side of right.

- But Herod was more worried that his dinner guests would see him as a weak man, than whether he should do the right thing.

- It would have been so easy to say to take the girl aside and tell her that this could not be so.

- This would not be the end of Antipas weakness. In the Passover after next, Antipas is in Jerusalem when the trial of Jesus takes place. As a courtesy, Pontius Pilate sends Christ to Antipas, deferring to his rulership of Galilee, Christ’s home province.

- Luke 23:8-12, “(8) Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him. (9) And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing. (10) And

the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently. (11) And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate. (12) Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been enemies with each other.”

- So Herod has a chance to set Jesus free and redeem himself of his weakness against John the Baptist. He fails, and as a result, Jesus would die.

(d) That this young girl could even make this request of her uncle indicates that she is a monster-child.

· No one ever says no to Salome. She knows how to tantrum; she knows how to manipulate; she knows how to pout.

· If Herod says no to Salome here, he risks a nuclear tantrum. He would rather have some prophet die than undergo that.

· Even if he should insist on the wrongness of it, he knows that he will pay dearly for it.

· Herod has made this magnanimous offer to his niece because of the dinner guests. He wants to impress them with the greatness of his generosity.

· Now she asks of him something awful. But he cannot lose out on his scheme to impress them, so he goes through with it.

So Herod sends for the executioner to follow through with the request.

(1) The prison was a part of the palace compound; it would take a while for the executioner to walk there, summon John to a suitable place of execution, place his head upon a platter, and then return to the girl.

(2) You can perhaps imagine John in his prison cell. Resting, praying, exercising - all according to a daily regimen. And in comes the executioner with sword. It is time.

(3) John has barely time to think and pray - the briefest of prayers comes from his lips and then the infamy is performed.

(a) It is at that moment that his soul is placed into an interim body, and he is transferred to Paradise in Hades.

(b) There he meets the presence of God face to face and comes to know the truth about himself and about Jesus. He has left the sinful flesh behind.

(c) There he receives the reception of a hero as the greatest prophet in the age of Israel.

(d) You can perhaps imagine a delegation of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Moses and David, Elijah, Elisha, and Samuel stand at the forefront. All around are Hosea and Amos and Zechariah; Habakkuk and Zephaniah and Malachi. There also are Nahum and Joel and Jonah. Obadiah, Haggai, and Micah stand there, all stand in respect.

(e) All these great men desire to question the Great One, the one who prepared the way for the Messiah. All of them defer and listen humbly as John tells of his personal contact with the one who will be King of kings and Lord of lords.

(4) And then jump forward in time to just a year and a little more later.

(a) It is another day in paradise. There is worship, and there is conversation. Conversation, I think, to which the angels would long to listen.

(b) The men there speak of their times and their longing for the Messiah and the details of his life.

(c) Suddenly there is a grumbling in Torments, across the Great Gulf Fixed; the everyday moan of the damned is momentarily silenced, and an impossibly bright light appears. John, Elijah, and the rest rise again with a thrill and gather to the edge of the Gulf.

(d) Could it be? Who is it? Is it... Yes. Yes it is! A stunned silence follows His words, and then He approaches across the Gulf. The great crowd of Old Testament saints gathers around the Savior.

(e) And in that time He pronounces that the work of salvation is done. A shout! A cheer goes up, and every knee bows and every tongue there confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord.

(f) It is now time to leave this Paradise and go on to Heaven, and the Savior leads them all in a

victorious procession. What triumph and what joy! What purity of worship.

(5) But back at the palace, back at the birthday party again, as the stunned guests sit and lay at the remains of their dinners, in comes the executioner with John's head on a platter.

(a) You can only imagine the horror of the dinner guests as they see this spectacle before them.

(b) Even the hardened CHILIARCHS of the Roman Army must be appalled at what they observe here, for the palace is no place for this kind of violence.

(6) Herod and Herodias ruled Galilee for ten more years or so, until Herodias schemed to gain her husband true kingship through the Roman emperor.

(a) Gaius became disgusted with the scheming of this woman, and he distrusted Antipas greatly.

(b) Instead of kingship, Gaius gave Antipas exile to Gaul, and in Lyon. Herodias chose to join him, even after being offered exemption from the exile of her husband. From that moment they are never mentioned again by the chroniclers of history. But in a way they are.

(c) They lived in Lyon, in central Gaul, in the middle of a different nowhere from Tiberias in Galilee.

(d) A century and a half later, Lyon became famous for its persecution of Christians - persecution unto death. The heritage of Herod Antipas and his niece/sister in law/wife lived on.

(7) And then one day, Herod Antipas dies; and also Herodias and Salome in their times. And they go to Torments in Hades.

(a) There they three reside for centuries, full of fear and anticipation; still the hatred reigns in their souls.

(b) And one day there in Torments they hear a commotion - an assembly is called, and all are forced to attend. Herod Antipas and his second wife and her daughter grudgingly gather around a man, and Herod has some shreds of recognition.

(c) Here is the man that he always wanted to see, standing before him even now. Herod Antipas leans forward in spite of himself, to listen again.

(d) But there is no speech this time; only a massive figure in chains, chains of darkness, so that the figure is obscured. Yet Herod knows with fear that this figure is Satan, the great hope of the sinfully enslaved. And the chaining of the Great Enslaver represents the total defeat of their false hope. Herod and Herodias and Salome are crushed at this moment, and the agony of what is to come in a 1000 years is multiplied greatly.

(e) The 1000 years passes with the agonizing emotion of the anticipation of something truly awful. And then Herod Antipas is called before the Great White Throne, and he finally gets his audience with Christ.

- And yet Herod is completely humble before this King of kings and Lord of lords. He cannot stand before this throne as king; he cannot demand from Christ an accounting of His ministry.

- There before Herod Antipas is the evidence of his folly in the nail holes in the hands and feet of the Savior of the World.

- Herod is no longer the one to be feared, the one in control.

- The sentence is passed, and he is cast into the Lake of Fire for an eternity of pain. So he will exit the scene of history.

A Transitional Passage.

The Translations:

Mark 6:30, "And the apostles gathered before Jesus and reported to Him all the significant things they did and taught."

Luke 9:10a, "And after the apostles returned they gave an account to Him of the significant things they had done."

Harmony: "And after the apostles returned, they gathered before Jesus and reported to Him all the significant things they did and taught."

Exposition.

So a period of time has passed since Christ sent out the disciples to preach to the towns in Galilee.

There is no record of what Christ was doing at this same time; perhaps the exact same thing.

The disciples gather back to Christ and give a report on the significant events of their lives - what they did and what they taught.

They did miracles and performed healings; they taught about the Kingdom of Christ. They told Him of the responses of the crowd - of victories and defeats along the way.

How they must have loved to see Him listen; how they must have glowed when He approved, and even when He made corrections.

Christ gave them also the camaraderie of mutual experience. They were now truly fellow-workers in the gospel. He is developing initiative and leadership in them by this way. They know now that they are like Christ in His work.

Our lives should be like this through prayer.

We should often report the significant events our lives to God the Father.

The victories and defeats, and the concerns which we encounter along the way.

We should also note the significance of our mutual experiences with Christ. That is, we should realize that nothing we have encountered has eluded the experience of the Son of God.

Jesus' Withdrawal from Galilee

Matthew 14:13-14: "(13) Now Jesus, after hearing [them] withdrew from there in a boat into a deserted place by Himself; and the multitudes, after hearing, followed Him on foot from the cities. (14) And after going out [from the boat] He saw a great multitude and felt compassion for them and He healed their sick."

Mark 6:31-34: "(31) And He says to them, 'You yourselves go by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a short while.' For there were many coming and going, and they did not have significant time to eat. (32) And they left in the boat for a deserted place by themselves. (33) And they saw them going, and many recognized them and ran there together on foot from all the cities, and preceded them. (34) And after going out [from the boat], He saw a great crowd and felt

compassion for them, because they were like sheep having no shepherd, and He began to teach them many things."

Luke 9:10b-11: "(10) And after receiving them He withdrew by Himself into a city called Bethsaida. (11) And the crowds after knowing [this] followed Him; and after welcoming them He was speaking to them concerning the Kingdom of God, and curing the ones having need of healing."

John 6:1-3, "(1) After these things Jesus went out to the other shore of the Sea of Galilee of Tiberias. (2) Now a great crowd followed Him, because they were witnessing the signs He was doing upon the weak. (3) And Jesus went onto the mountain and there He sat with His disciples."

The disciples' ministry had become much like Jesus'. They had healed the sick and done miracles and cast out demons, and as a result, the crowds began to gather.

The disciples were so swamped that they did not have significant time to eat. They had absolutely no time to themselves.

This being true, they surely had no time before God, either, and so they were in a state of spiritual and logistical compromise.

Christ has experienced this in His own ministry, so He knew exactly what to do. He told them to go to a deserted place and rest for a short while.

During that rest they could spiritually and physically restore themselves.

Two related principles come out:

There are needy people in the world; needy physically, emotionally, logistically, and spiritually. If you are able to meet those needs through ministry, you are going to be swamped. In the devil's world, you will never run out of people to minister to.

But you must learn to withdraw from your ministry to recharge yourself spiritually and physically. The needy will still be there when you get back, and the Lord can take care of them in between. You must withdraw every day for spiritual growth, and from time to time to replenish yourself in other ways.

Your ministry will vanish if you neglect your relationship with God, because the river of your ministry flows from the spring of your time with the Father.

And this applies equally to all ministries related to Christian service and spiritual gifts.

It doesn't matter if you are an anonymous person with the gift of helps or a well-known evangelist. You will not only fail to reach the objective, but you will compromise your reward at the judgment seat.

Ultimately, you will let others down because of that. Ministries fail because congregations eat their pastors alive, and he lets them.

Now the rest mainly has to do with geography.

Jesus and His disciples are both on the Tiberias shore of the Sea of Galilee. Tiberias is on the southwest side of the Sea.

They go in separate boats to escape from the crowd.

The disciples leave first, and the text does not indicate which direction they go. We can only construe it from the fact that they end up at the same location as Jesus. Since Jesus headed toward Bethsaida, and the disciples left from there with Him to go up onto a mountain, they must have headed toward the same place.

But the Sea of Galilee is very small, and any boat is visible from any place on the shore. As the boat with Jesus' disciples deployed, the crowds saw the direction, and began to run around the shore to the other side.

It was very likely a calm day, because the crowds were able to make their way around the shore by foot, and still precede the sailboats that were taking a more direct route.

The disciples land at Bethsaida or thereabouts, and once more they are swamped by the crowds. Their attempt to escape has temporarily failed.

But Christ waits until after the disciples have left, and He follows behind. The crowds also anticipate His arrival, and so they are waiting for Him just the same as His disciples.

But Christ sees the crowds, and He feels compassion; again they are like sheep without a shepherd.

These peoples are in a leadership vacuum; neither the Romans or the Jews are providing leadership to meet the needs of the people.

As such, they are lost, unable to find their way in the helplessness of their sins.

So Christ has a twofold remedy to this problem:

(1) First, He teaches them many things about the kingdom. He sees this body of truth as the solution to their problems.

(2) Second, He heals their sick. This second so that they will certainly grasp what He is saying about the kingdom. This is a clue that atonement really is a part of Christ's kingdom ministry. Atonement was necessary to bring Israel into the millennium.

So as a matter of course the crowds now follow Jesus - because He was healing their weak.

(1) Not necessarily because of His kingdom ministry.

(2) At the very core of this description is a rejection of the kingdom ministry. This is also a good example what happens today in another fashion.

(3) People tend to fall in love with the accoutrements of church without getting to the heart of the matter.

(a) They love the society of good people without finding love for God Himself.

(b) They love the peace of a sanctuary without knowing the God Who causes the peace.

(c) They love the stability of liturgy and ritual without learning its lessons and while neglecting the greater informational power of church age mystery doctrine.

(d) They love the approbation that they get from their ministers without realizing the need for autonomy before God.

At last Jesus and His disciples go up onto a mountain. This is somewhere near Bethsaida.

It could be up the Jordan River a number of miles, on or near Mt. Hermon. It could be one of the

small hills nearer to Bethsaida. The mountain itself is not specified.

From the narrative which follows, it is clear that Jesus and His disciples would not be alone on the mountain.

The text does not say whether it was their desire to escape the crowds, but perhaps this is so. There would be no other clear reason to go to the mountain.

Jesus sat down with His disciples. He has time alone with them, teaching and training important things, theological and practical.

This now becomes the setting for a remarkable series of events that will culminate in the Bread of Life discourse.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand

Matthew 14:15-23

Mark 6:35-46

Luke 9:12-17

John 6:4-15.

Exposition.

Introduction.

Look for two things here: an interesting symbolism of the Passover, and a specific preparation for the bread of life discourse.

Christ is going to take advantage of this miracle that God has provided, and communicate terrific doctrine from it.

So take note of the way this works; an opportunity presents itself; Christ performs the miracle by the power of the Spirit, and then a lesson will be taught. This is standard fare for the incarnation.

A quick note is necessary on the harmony. The synoptic gospels have a generic viewpoint on the interchange between Christ and the disciples; no one speaker is mentioned. They are portrayed as coming to our Lord as a group, and talking as a group.

But the gospel of John does one better; it identifies the speakers within the group as Philip and then Andrew. In the harmony, the viewpoint of John's gospel is taken, and the other omitted entirely.

The setting: "Now the Passover was near, the feast of the Jews. Now after evening came and the hour was very late."

You may recall that Christ has recently sent out His disciples on their evangelistic efforts, and they have returned.

Also, Christ and the disciples have failed in their endeavor to escape the crowds, even though they crossed the Sea of Galilee on boats. So now the crowds have gathered again.

John's gospel records that the Passover feast of the Jews was near.

We have a rare chronological marker in this. It is Passover, Spring of AD 29; is nearly one year from the death of Jesus Christ by crucifixion.

And there is also something remarkable in this. It is that time of year in which the people of the land should be thinking about going up to Jerusalem for the Feast of feasts.

They should be gathering what they need, and making arrangements to stay with family, or at least at an inn. They should be remembering the Psalms of Ascent, and heading for the spiritual capital of the world.

But instead they are following Christ around the countryside, seeing His miracles and listening to His teaching. There is a frenzy here that disregards even the most important religious event of the year.

No wonder the Pharisees were so concerned! They knew that they were going to have low attendance at their version of an Easter service, and that really bothered them.

The setting is a mountainside on the Northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, not too far from Capernaum. There is a crowd arrayed there, waiting in anticipation for Christ to do something or at least to say something.

It is getting late. Mark says it is late, while Luke says the day was starting to decline. You can mark the time as right at dusk on the basis of this.

The disciples' request concerning logistics for the crowd. "the disciples came to Him saying, 'The place is deserted and the hour is already past; release the crowds, so that after they go forth into

the surrounding countryside and villages they might lodge and buy food for themselves, because we are in a deserted place.”

The disciples here make some observations about the condition of the crowd, but I think it is legitimate at least to say the following:

The crowd has been there for a day; they have no great need for immediate logistics. If they don't eat, they won't die.

The same could be said for lodging. A night out under the stars would probably do them a fair amount of good. They could all huddle together for warmth and be fine. Only if it were raining would shelter be an issue, and rain was not all that common.

These are relevant because they uncover the souls of the disciples. At the very core of this all is a single fact: if the crowd wanted to do that, they would have done so on their own initiative.

Therefore we can conclude that the disciples were for some reason anxious to get rid of the crowds. And this we already knew from the previous passage in our Life of Christ series.

They are mistaken about one thing: they say, 'release the crowds.' They say this to Christ when the crowds are staying because they want to. The verb is APOLUSON, and in this context it connotes letting the crowd disperse, to become a non-crowd.

The disciples see this as a golden opportunity to get rid of this crowd so that they can all finally have some peace and quiet. But Christ does not.

Christ now sees an opportunity to teach something new to His disciples, and so He waits.

Jesus' Response and Testing of His Disciples.
 "Therefore Jesus, after lifting up His eyes and beholding that a great crowd came to Him, says to Philip, 'Where should we buy bread in order that we might feed these?' And this He said testing him; for He knew what he was about to do. Philip answered Him, 'Two hundred denarii of bread is not sufficient for them that each might receive a little.'"

John's gospel takes over the narrative now.

Jesus lifts up His eyes and beholds the crowd. Two participles set the scene with a dramatic sweep.

The first aorist participle is EPARAS, He lifts up His eyes. You can see Christ on the mountain, concentrating on something at hand - perhaps a scroll of the Old Testament scriptures; perhaps a conversation.

He looks up to see what His disciples are talking about, and there is the crowd. The aorist participle THEASAMENOS records His surprise and the significant nature of the crowd. It always denotes the seeing of something important and significant to the viewer.

Philip is the one. Jesus chooses to test him. Perhaps because he is the nearest; perhaps because he needed the test.

John 1:43-46, "(43) The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, 'Follow Me.' (44) Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. (45) Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son Joseph.' (46) Nathanael said to him, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.'

John 14:7-11, "(7) If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.' (8) Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' (9) Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?' (10) Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. (11) Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.'"

Philip was one of the seven to serve table to the widows of the early church, Acts 6:1-6.

Philip went to Samaria and preached the gospel after the scattering from Saul's persecution. He

was very powerful, and the people responded with joy. Acts 8:4-8.

After he believed, Simon the magician joined Philip's evangelistic tour.

After the Samaritan tour, God the Holy Spirit guided Philip south and west of Jerusalem to give the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch.

When the eunuch went on his way home, Philip preached his way northward along the Mediterranean seacoast until he reached Caesarea, which is almost even with the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus asks Philip where they might buy bread to feed all of the crowd. You can see right away that this is not a serious question.

It is not a serious question, because the crowd is so large, and their treasury so small. Jesus knows His question is ludicrous from the moment it passes His lips.

In fact, He employs the adverb of place POTHEN to emphasize this very thing: He says, 'Where...'

The only reasonable answer is nowhere, and that is what Jesus intends to demonstrate with the adverb. There is no place on earth that they can buy bread at such a low price so as to feed all the people that are arrayed on the mountain before them.

Any fool would know that this was not a real possibility, and so the question is largely rhetorical.

But Philip has a tendency to take everything at face value.

And this He said testing him; for He knew what he was about to do.

John has the insider's view as Christ's closest friend. Christ wanted to test Philip, who took everything at face value, and often took an analytical human viewpoint.

Christ knew of this miracle beforehand; He knew exactly what the Spirit was going to do through Him.

This forms a counterpoint to the woman with the hemorrhage. In that incident, Christ had no idea what the Spirit was going to do. The Spirit saw the

woman reach out to touch Christ, and made the sovereign decision to heal her.

Christ had to be humble to the leading of the Spirit, but here there is knowledge beforehand of what will be done. Christ has His will involved in the performance of this miracle.

Christ sees the appropriate symbol of the bread, and of spiritual food. He knows that this will be just right as a lesson for His disciples and for this crowd. And He knows that the Spirit will honor the symbol because it is in perfect line with the will of God.

"Philip answered Him, 'Two hundred denarii of bread is not sufficient for them that each might receive a little.'"

To get an idea of the amount of money here, a denarius was about a day's wage; perhaps 50 dollars by today's American standard of minimum wage. Two hundred denarii would come out to about a thousand dollars, or somewhat less than twenty cents a head, considering women and children. Twenty cents worth of bread is not a great amount. This is Philip's point.

But more than this is the fact that Philip takes Jesus seriously. He misses the point about the ludicrous nature of the question.

"But after formulating an answer He said to them, 'They have no need to leave. You yourselves give to them to eat.' One of His disciples says to Him, Andrew the brother of Simon Peter, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two preserved fish; but what are these things for so many?'" For there were about five thousand men outside of women and children.

Before the command comes a factual statement: they have no need to leave. So Christ gives the disciples a cue that He is quite serious this time, even though the statement and the command will seem funny.

Now our Lord changes the question into a command, because He is turning to His miracle and His lesson.

Remember that Jesus has only just put a ludicrous question to Philip; now He puts a totally ludicrous command to them, in order to test their faith.

But it is a command.

Now you would think that by this time, after being with the Messiah for nearly two years, that the disciples would not hesitate to obey. That somehow they would be sensitive to His peculiar way of doing a miracle. All it takes is a simple trust.

And especially after he made such an issue out the silliness of trying to feed them by buying enough bread for each to have just a little.

Especially key is the statement of Christ that there is no NEED to leave.

The Greek phrase is OU CHREIAN ECHOUSIN APELTHEIN.

There is great wisdom in this, and it is the true set-up for the bread of life discourse. They have no need to leave, but they do have need of truth. So let's take this assumption and develop it a little.

There are two major reasons why you need God's word.

First, because it leads unto salvation.

Second, because it leads unto eternal reward.

But there are many other benefits.

- ? God's word gives you a clear understanding of your origins as a human being.
- ? God's word gives you a clear understanding of your destiny as a believer.
- ? God's word gives you a clear understanding of yourself, your weaknesses and your strengths.
- ? God's word warns you against self-destruction and equips you against it.
- ? God's word gives you recovery from degeneracy.
- ? God's word gives you wisdom in all avenues of life: love, work, and play.
- ? God's word is the source of true and lasting peace in life.
- ? God's word supplies a place of calm in every storm of life.

- ? God's word provides confidence and capacity for enjoyment in all times of prosperity.
- ? God's word furnishes comfort in every hurt and grief of life.

Therefore, all of us should have a doctrinal orientation to life. This is based on God's perfect communication to us.

- ? Doctrinal orientation to life is the total trust and dependence on the Word of God in answering life's questions and solving life's problems.
- ? Doctrinal orientation to life assumes that there is no problem so great or complex that the Word of God cannot provide the solution.
- ? Doctrinal orientation to life assumes that there is not question about life that God cannot answer.
- ? Doctrinal orientation to life gives believers confidence about the future, come what may.
- ? Doctrinal orientation to life results in dedication to the faith perception of the truth.
- ? Doctrinal orientation results in good decisions from a position of strength, and a better orientation to God's direct will for your life.
- ? Doctrinal orientation to life approaches life from the viewpoint of priorities.

The command is for the disciples to give the crowd to eat.

Christ commands them to find the food from their own resources, and this apart from purchasing it from their own treasury.

So they must fall back on their own resources, and this is where Andrew enters the picture.

Andrew is an interesting disciple, because he does one of most important things of all time - he introduces his brother Peter to Christ.

John 1:40-42, "(40) One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. (41) He found first his own

brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah.' (42) He brought him to Jesus."

When Andrew finds the Messiah, the first thing he did was get his brother. And by doing so, Andrew had role in changing the world.

10. Andrew has a basic obedience, but his rational mind at the same time protests. 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two preserved fish; but what are these things for so many?'

There is a constant tension between the disciples' obedience and their rational thinking.

All of their lives they had been conditioned to think and believe in a way that excluded the miraculous and supernatural.

Remember that these men lived in an age devoid of prophets and supernatural manifestations of God's work. So it had been for many generations, since the prophet Malachi ceased his work.

This represents an ingrained pattern of thinking for these adult men. They are 20, 30, 40 years old, and used to thinking in such rational patterns.

Their way of solving problems has to do with the earthly and natural frame of reference, and they find much difficulty in shaking loose from that.

Whether it is calming the storm or feeding the five thousand or walking on the water, the disciples have difficulty in seeing that Christ has the power of God to do miracles.

But really important in this doing of miracles is the reason. According to a system of priorities, miracles are done in order to focus on relationship with God.

This miracle is a fine example. The people are gathered to hear the word. Christ is not going to disappoint them. Since it is more important for them to hear of Christ's kingdom, a miracle should be done here.

And this is the way in which Christ desires His disciples to think. If the reason is right, God has the power to bring it about.

It would not be until the resurrection that the disciples would fully understand this principle. And even then it took some convincing.

This event is all the more remarkable in that it occurs after the disciples had been sent out, and performed their own miracles and healings. You would think that if they had seen God's work through their own hands, they would begin to assume that it would go through the hands of Christ.

11. "For there were about five thousand men outside of women and children."

Jesus' orders concerning the food and the crowd: "And He said, 'Bring them here to me.'" And Jesus said, 'Order the crowds to recline on the grass group by group in numbers not above fifty.' For there was much grass in the place. And the disciples did so, reclining them all. They fell company by company by the hundred and by the fifty."

Our Lord desires to set this up in an orderly fashion. He wants this done with maximum efficiency.

He first orders the loaves and fishes brought to Him; He is going to be the originating point of the distribution - the source of the miracle.

And second He tells His disciples to arrange the crowd just so - group by group in numbers not above fifty.

There are perhaps eight or ten or even fifteen thousand people out there; five thousand men alone.

So Christ is suggesting more than one hundred groups of fifty. This mountain must be arranged like a sporting event.

And Christ says for them to recline on the grass. This is for the purpose of a meal. They must have been standing, waiting restlessly for something to happen. And would it ever.

It is John who mentions that there was much grass in that place. Anyone familiar with the countryside would understand that unless there is grass, this is going to be no picnic. Grass is a blanket on which the people may recline.

Mark records that they fell company by company by the hundred and by the fifty.

It should not be too great a surprise that they disobeyed. The crowd was a little bit disorderly in carrying out this command.

But there they are, arrayed before Christ in their own groups. You can feel the rustle of anticipation moving through the groups.

Being organized in such a manner, they knew that something was about to happen, and that it had to do with food.

This crowd of five or ten thousand is not so great. Every person there will be able to perceive this miracle. Imagine the layout of Coors Field; that edifice is set up for 50,000 baseball fans. If only ten thousand show up, all of them will have excellent seats where they can perceive clearly what the players are doing.

So it is with this arrangement. They will all see Christ break the bread and the fish and know for certain that there is only so much in those few loaves and fishes. You see, they will know - certainly know - that this is a miracle.

The blessing and breaking of the bread, and the distribution of the food unto all: "After receiving the five loaves and the two fish, after looking up toward heaven He gave the blessing, and after breaking the loaves He kept on giving them to the disciples that they might set them before the crowd, and the two fish He divided for all, as many as they wanted."

Christ gave the blessing after looking up toward heaven.

This provides a quick insight into Christ's posture during prayer.

Our custom of bowing in humility came not from Christ, and not from Paul.

1 Corinthians 11:3-13, "(3) Now I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of a wife, and God is the head of Christ. (4) Every man who holds down the head while praying or prophesying is ashamed of his head. (5) But every woman who prays with an uncovered head is ashamed of her head. (6) For if a woman does not cover her head also let her be sheared; but if the shearing or shaving is shame for a woman, then let her be covered. (7) For a

man ought not to have his head covered, being the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. (8) For man is not from woman, but woman from man. (9) For indeed man was not created for the woman, but woman for the man. (10) For this reason the woman ought to have authority over her head because of the angels. (11) However, a woman is neither apart from man, nor is man apart from a woman in the Lord; (12) For as the woman is from the man, so also the man comes through the woman; and all are from God. (13) Judge for yourselves in this: is it fitting for a woman to pray uncovered before God? (14) Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, (15) but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering. (16) Now if anyone presumes to be contentious, we do not have such a practice, nor do the churches of God."

This passage is about authority orientation. Authority goes from God to Christ to man to woman. There is a concentration here not on the church but on the marriage relationship.

Holding down the head is a symbol of shame; the leader in the church ought not to do such a thing - the one prophesying or praying.

But a woman who prays with an uncovered head is ashamed of her head. This stands as a reference to authority; the woman is never to pray outside of the authority of her spiritual head; an uncovered head is one without authority.

We say this: we say that authority is an umbrella which covers our head. Paul had a similar idea - that authority is covering for the head.

So the husband is the spiritual authority in his household, and he ought not to pray with his head hanging down, as though he were ashamed of his authority, Jesus Christ.

But the woman who prays out from under the authority of her husband is ashamed of her husband.

And Paul says that the woman who is out from under the authority of her man should have her hair sheared, because it will teach her about shame. But if she does not like having her head

sheared, then she must submit to her husband's spiritual authority.

But the man should not have his head covered; that is, he should not have his wife in authority over him; the reason is clear: the man is the image of God.

(1) And don't we know that the image of God has to do with ruling authority?

(2) So the man is the image and glory of God (in his imitation).

(3) But the woman is the glory of the man (in her imitation of him).

The woman came originally from the man; she is Adam's rib.

This order of creation sets an order of precedence and the pattern for authority.

(1) As the first-born son has the right to inheritance, so also the first-born of the race have rights to authority.

(2) Jesus Christ is the first-born of all creation and the first-born of the dead, Colossians 3:15-18.

The conclusion is that the woman was made for the man, and not vice-versa; and because of this she must remain under the man's authority.

Verse 10 just about interprets the whole passage: "For this reason the woman ought to have authority over her head because of the angels."

(1) This translation is quite literal; there is not the least hint that it should be interpreted as 'symbol of authority' or some other legalistic nonsense.

(2) The woman fell prey to Satan, the fallen angel in the garden. Paul points out her vulnerability here.

(3) She needs authority to prevent that deception. Since Paul states the reason for the necessity of authority over the woman, see how ludicrous it comes out if you take this as a literal head-covering: 'Since the woman is vulnerable to the fallen angels, she needs a veil or head-covering.' This will save no woman! Ever!

Verses 11 and 12 seem to mitigate the requirement, but instead they strengthen it. Now through childbirth the woman can have authority over a man; at least while he is a child. She can

perpetuate the gentleness of men toward her fairer sex by means of raising male children in the right way, teaching them to respect womanhood and giving them something to respect.

Paul comes to an intermediate conclusion in verse 13: "Judge for yourselves in this: is it fitting for a woman to pray uncovered before God?"

In verse fourteen Paul illustrates from nature: long hair looks beautiful on a woman; because a woman's hair is significantly different from a man's.

(1) And he says that long hair is dishonor to a man, but glory to a woman.

(2) This does indeed set the general standard for hair length; a man's hair must be generally short and a woman's generally long. There is plenty of room for individualism within this guideline.

(a) A man wears his hair short in order to demonstrate his rulership over nature and authority over the woman.

(b) A woman wear her hair long in order to demonstrate her humility to her man.

kp Now if anyone presumes to be contentious, we do not have such a practice, nor do the churches of God.

(1) Here Paul expresses the final word of authority on the matter. If you disagree, no one has such a practice.

(2) In other words, neither Paul personally, nor none of the churches have a different practice from what was stated in the passage.

(3) In other words, if you disagree, tough. No one is going to go with you in the matter.

The Biblical concept of blessing (see separate doctrine).

And all ate and were satisfied, and since they were filled, He says to His disciples, 'Gather the excess fragments, that nothing might be destroyed.' Therefore they gathered and they filled twelve baskets of fragments from the five loaves of barley which were left over by the ones who had eaten, and also from the fish.

All ate and were satisfied, the second detail being important in light of how many people were there.

Matthew 14:20 uses ECHORTASTHESAN means to eat your fill or be satisfied by eating.

The people ate and gained not only nutritional satisfaction, but also psychological. That is, they felt full.

In fact compare this with Revelation 19:21, "And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh." You can see the intent of the writer here. There was so much flesh that all the birds were filled with it.

This was indeed a miracle. Five loaves and two fish might be enough for ten people to eat and gain some satisfaction, but comes nowhere close to feeding one thousand times the same number.

This satisfaction is intended as a symbol.

It is the symbol of satisfaction for eating of the bread of life, the word of God.

It is the symbol of the conditions of the kingdom of God. That is, the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ.

You see, in the history of the world, there has always been famine and poverty; hunger has always been present among the nations of the world.

War also ravages the face of the earth. Yet here is Christ demonstrating that where there is only a little food, it is enough for thousands to eat to satisfaction. This will be the nature of His kingdom.

The millennium.

(1) Introduction.

(a) The millennium is a future 1000 year dispensation that is characterized by perfect environment.

(b) The Bible has many predictions about the millennium - there is a fair amount of information on the subject.

(c) The millennium has not yet occurred - there is absolutely no historical evidence that would support the theorem that the millennium has already occurred.

· A period of 1000 years of peace and prosperity would have surely been documented.

· Logically, the millennium can only be in the future. Christ could not have returned yet, nor could he have brought in the millennium before he was born.

(d) The Bible unequivocally portrays the millennium as a real event in the future history of planet earth.

· There is no credence to the argument that there will never be a millennium and that world history simply goes into the eternal state.

· Neither is there any indication that the millennium is only a metaphor.

(2) It is impossible for mankind to bring in the millennium through his own strength.

(a) It is crystal clear from the Revelation passages that the millennium comes as the result of the second advent. Revelation 19:11-20:6 lays out the sequence of events so that there can be no mistake. "(11) Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. (12) His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself. (13) He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. (14) And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him on white horses. (15) From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. (16) On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, King of kings and Lord of lords. (17) Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly in mid-heaven, 'Come, gather for the great supper of God, (18) to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.' (19) And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who sits upon the horse and against his army. (20) And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the

mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. (21) And the rest were slain by the sword of him who sits upon the horse, the sword that issues from his mouth; and all the birds were gorged with their flesh. (20:1) Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain. (2) And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, (3) and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years were ended. After that he must be loosed for a little while. (4) Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom judgment was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (5) The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. (6) Blessed and holy is he who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with him a thousand years.”

(b) Humanity is totally incapable of bringing in a millennium.

- We do not have the mental capacity to do so - even with computers we are no better off.

- As long as the devil is in the world, he is well able to outsmart any human group that relies on their own wits.

- And think: the devil has been trying to bring in his own millennium for more than ten thousand years, and he has miserably failed. If he cannot do this with his superior intellect, then how can we?

(c) Without the visible leadership of Christ, even believers are incapable of administrating the entire world into a perfect environment.

(3) The advent of the millennium was delayed by the rejection of Christ and His kingdom by the Jews during the first advent.

(4) The environment of the millennium.

(a) The millennium will provide a perfect environment, for three main reasons:

- The whole earth is under the leadership of Jesus Christ.

- All the fallen angels are placed into prison under the earth.

- The earth is populated only by believers in Jesus Christ.

- The baptism of fire removes all unbelievers - this occurs at the second advent. Ezekiel 20:34-38, “(34) I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out; (35) and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. (36) As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, says the Lord GOD. (37) I will make you pass under the rod, and I will let you go in by number. (38) I will purge out the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord.” See also Matthew 25:31-46

- Only 144,000 Jewish believers remain - Revelation 14.

(b) The perfect environment means the following:

- Ideal spiritual environment.

- The best environment possible for evangelism and spiritual growth - visible and glorified Christ ruling in perfect environment.

- This does not mean that there will be no unbelievers. Some may even grow up in this perfect environment and reject Him. Volition will continue to function in both positive and negative ways.

- Added to this will be universal knowledge of God, Isaiah 11:9, “They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

- Incredible spirituality with an even greater outpouring of the ministry of God the Holy Spirit - far greater than ever before. Joel 2:28-29, "(28) And it will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions, and even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

· Wonderful family life as the keystone to a one world government under the laws of Divine Establishment.

· Perfect establishment justice through the great judge, Jesus Christ, and His delegated authorities, church age believers.

- Isaiah 2:4, "And he will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war."

- Isaiah 11:1-2, "(1)Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. (2) And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding. The Spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord."

- 2 Timothy 2:12, "If we endure we will also reign with Him."

- Revelation 2:25-27, "(25) nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. (26) And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; (27) and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father."

- Revelation 3:21, "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

- Revelation 5:10, "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

- Revelation 20:4,6: "(4) Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them.

And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ... (6) Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years."

· Universal peace

- Psalm 46:9, "He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire."

- Isaiah 2:3, "And many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths.' For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

- Hosea 2:18, "In that day I will also make a covenant for them. With the beasts of the field, the birds of the sky, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword and war from the land, and I will make them lie down in safety."

- Micah 4:3, "And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nations will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war."

· Universal prosperity, Psalm 72:7,16. "(7) In his days may the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace till the moon is no more... (16) May there be abundance of grain in the earth on top of the mountains; its fruit will wave like the cedars of Lebanon; and may those from the city flourish like vegetation of the earth."

· Longevity will once again become common. Isaiah 65:20, "No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his days; for the youth will die at the age of one hundred and the one who

does not reach the age of one hundred shall be thought accursed.”

- No handicaps, Isaiah 35:5-6, “(5) Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. (6) Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy.”

- Nature will return to its pristine state.

- Romans 8:19-22, “(19) For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. (20) For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope (21) that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (22) For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.”

- Isaiah 11:6-8, “(6) And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. (7) Also the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. (8) The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper’s den.”

- Isaiah 35:1-2,7: “(1) The wilderness and the desert will be glad, and the Arabah will rejoice and blossom; like the crocus (2) it will blossom profusely and rejoice with rejoicing and shout of joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God... (7) The scorched land will become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, its resting place, grass becomes reeds and rushes.”

- Isaiah 65:25, “‘The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpent’s food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain,’ says the Lord.”

- And all this in spite of man being sinful - yes, still sinful. The human body will remain the same

in that the sin nature is transmitted, and babies are still born spiritually dead.

(c) The people of the millennium.

- The millennium begins with the 144,000 surviving Jews who were the remnant of the tribulation,

- Isaiah 10:20-22, “(20) Now in that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. (21) A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. (22) For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, only a remnant within them will return; a destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness.”

- Isaiah 11:11-12, “(11) Then it will happen on that day that the Lord will again recover the second time with His hand the remnant of His people, who will remain, from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. (12) And He will lift up a standard for the nations and assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

- This reestablishes Israel as God's client nation and they function as originally intended.

- The ruler of the millennium will be Jesus Christ.

- All of the fallen angels spend the millennium locked in the prison of Tartarus, Rev 20:1-3, “(1) Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. (2) And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; (3) and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.”

(d) The purpose of the millennium.

- The purpose of the millennium is to prove once and for all that when God rules, perfect environment ensues.

· The millennium is God's final argument in the angelic conflict.

· The millennium shows, once and for all, that God was just to the fallen angels in eternity past when He passed judgment on them.

- They had no cause to rebel under the just and perfect prehistoric rulership of God.

- Even when they did rebel, God dealt with them justly and doubt offered them grace in spite of their rebellion.

- The millennium is the greatest display of all of God's grace.

(e) The end of the millennium is marred by the Gog and Magog revolution, Revelation 20:7-10. This violent attempt at the overthrow of God's government ends with the final judgment. The eternal state ensues.

Therefore the men seeing what sign He performed were saying, 'He is truly the prophet who is coming into the world.' Therefore Jesus after knowing that they are about to come and seize Him in order to make Him king, He immediately ordered the disciples to embark into the boat and to precede Him to the other side to Bethsaida, until what time He might release the crowds. And after releasing the crowds He went up onto the mountain by Himself to pray. And after evening came He was alone there."

The prophet who is coming into the world is a messiah reference. If your memory is sharp, you will recall this same appellation from John the Baptist's inquiry. "Are you the coming one, or should we expect another?"

The men saw His sign - the sign of the bread, and they decided that Christ was indeed the Messiah.

It is John alone who recalls this distinction in his gospel.

The aorist participle IDONTES tells us that two things happen in sequence. The crowd sees Christ perform this miracle, and then they make their conclusion.

They saw and then concluded that He was the Messiah.

From all the previous miracles this was not so.

From changing the water into wine until the present there is no 'Messiah' movement for Christ.

Has there been a dramatic change in their attitude and world perception? It seems not, from Christ's reaction.

Jesus figures out that they are about to come and seize Him in order to make Him king.

The aorist participle GNOUS implies that Jesus did some thinking in order to perceive their intent. The aorist tense participle shows antecedent action to the main verb, just like IDONTES above.

So the crowd thinks about the miracle, and then they perceive that Christ is the Messiah.

Then Christ thinks about the crowd, and then He perceives that they are about to seize Him in order to make Him king.

He figures this to be a bad thing, and acts with immediate action.

He orders the disciples to immediately get into the boat for the purpose of flight to the Bethsaida side of the Sea.

What gives here? Isn't Messiahship the point? Isn't this exactly the goal? Well, I would say that it depends on the people you are going to rule.

Christ identifies the motive of this crowd in John 6:26, "Truly truly I say to you, you seek Me not because you saw signs, but because you ate from the bread and you were satisfied."

Their motive is frivolous. They want to eat. They see Jesus as their meal ticket.

In our time, our hard work is not directly related to our provision of food, because we are by and large not farmers.

But in the time of Christ, a good chunk of the people had to farm, and it was hard, sometimes even backbreaking work. It was before the John Deere tractor era, remember.

As a result of this, the provision of an abundance of free food would certainly be a boon. Few people had other bills to pay. No phone, no electricity, no gas, no water, no waste disposal. Just taxes and food, and a few sundry other items like clothing.

This crowd had identified that their toil on this earth was finished, thanks to this miracle. If He could do this once, He could do it again.

Now they recognize Christ as a provider, but their acceptance of this logistical supply does not mean in any way that they had accepted the spiritual creed of the Kingdom.

Christ does not want just anyone. He wants people for their beliefs, not for their desires.

So this definitely represents a twist of negative volition. They wanted Christ as king for the wrong reason.

Some reflections:

In a nation, you can have a great constitution, and still be degenerate, thanks to the weakness of the people.

You can have a great king or president, and if the people are weak and degenerate, the nation is nothing.

In any organization, the weakness of the masses will overcome the goodness of the leadership.

The issue of motivation becomes paramount.

(1) Christ's Galileans were motivated by their laziness, and by their desire for easy logistics. They were motivated by their stimulation lust, always wanting to see a miracle, but never really seeing its significance, even when it is painfully obvious.

(2) They lack the pure motivation of personal love for God. They lack the initiative and discipline which leads to spiritual momentum.

This cross-applies to church ministries.

(1) In an effort to build up membership, church leaders often resort to extraneous motivational techniques.

(a) They work from the social angle, or from the entertainment angle, in order to produce numbers in membership and attendance.

(b) But then the reason that the crowds are there is completely wrong.

(2) A church full of people who need to be entertained, and who accept the social life over the spiritual life is a bad church. People who are there

for the wrong reasons are a distraction to the others who have their priorities straight.

(a) Bad people love society too.

(b) Bad people love entertainment too.

(c) But bad people universally hate the truth.

(d) You can keep bad people away simply by teaching the truth all the time.

(3) There is a right reason to belong to a local assembly of believers. Spiritual growth unto spiritual maturity.

(4) In the course of obtaining the objective, you may of course enjoy the society of other believers; you may also partake in various forms of virtuous entertainment, so long as your priorities remain.

(5) This does not mean that the church is only for mature believers. On the contrary, it is for believers of all stages of spiritual growth. But the people of the church are all to share the same priority: development of personal love for God through the intake and application of God's word.

This also stands as a refutation to the missionary credo that you must take care of a person's basic needs before you can give them the gospel.

(1) Many mission efforts go toward feeding people so that they will listen to the word.

(2) A starving man who is honest about his spiritual standing will love the gospel. A fat and full man who is not will reject it.

(3) There is no immediate connection between basic needs and the gospel.

(4) This should stand as no discouragement toward charity.

(5) Christian charity is an effort to meet the basic needs of starving people to keep them alive.

(6) Keeping a person alive is a good thing, because it extends their opportunity to hear and receive the gospel.

This analysis of Christ also has important ramifications for any political body during the church age.

(1) It comes down to the people. Why? If the greatest ruler in the world rejected a ruling offer

from His own people, then we can certainly conclude that the people are important.

(2) The king or ruler(s) is most often a reflection of the people.

(3) The greatest ruler of all times, the King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ - He rejected this opportunity because of the people.

It is important now to make some proper distinctions between the kingdom of Jesus Christ then and now.

(1) In the gospel records the proclamation of the Kingdom was inseparably connected with its King.

(a) The good news of the Kingdom was announced to Israel alone.

(b) This preaching of the Kingdom to Israel laid upon that chosen nation the demand for a decision.

(c) The ministry of Christ and His message of the Kingdom met with opposition from the very beginning.

(d) This tide of opposition toward our Lord's good news of the Kingdom grew steadily to a definite crisis. First, reference is made to those who were nearest to Him. Second, the attitude of the people in General is described... Third, and most important, there came a definite crisis of opposition on the part of the religious leaders of Israel.

(e) What has been said above, of course, will raise the problem of contingency.

(2) After He made that offer clear, the people of Israel rejected it, and in fact demanded and got His death. They rejected the offer for the following reasons:

(a) The high spiritual requirements our Lord laid down as essential for entrance into the kingdom.

· The Sermon on the Mount established a spiritual code and an establishment code.

- Christ revealed the spiritual code in the beatitudes.

- Much of what follows the spiritual code is the establishment code.

· The offer of Christ was this: that if they would live according to the spiritual and establishment code of the Kingdom, He would give to them millennial conditions.

(b) He therefore refused to establish a kingdom merely social and political in character.

(c) His denunciation of the current religion with its traditionalism, legalism, and ritualism Luke 11:37-54, "(37) Now when he had spoken, a Pharisee asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined at the table. (38) When the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal. (39) But the Lord said to him, 'Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness. (40) You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also? (41) But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you. (42) But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. (43) Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places. (44) Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it.' (45) One of the lawyers said to Him in reply, 'Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too.' (46) But He said, 'Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers. (47) Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. (48) So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs. (49) For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, (50) so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, (51) from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be

charged against this generation. (52) Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering.' (53) When He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects, (54) plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say."

(d) His scathing arraignment of the ruling classes (Matt 23).

(e) His association with and compassion for the outcasts of Israel (Matt 9:10-13; Lk 15:1,2).

(f) His exalted claims for Himself (John 5:16-18; 10:24-33; 18:37).

(3) Because of this, the earthly millennial kingdom was placed on hold, and a new dispensation began.

(a) The church age is that dispensation. It is designed to develop co-rulers for Jesus Christ. It has a special plan for that development that makes it unique from the other dispensations as far as spiritual growth is concerned. 2 Tim. 2:12, "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him."

(b) Church age believers have their citizenship from the kingdom of heaven, but they are currently living in the devil's world, Php 3:20, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

(c) It is the role of the church believer to represent their home nation before others in a foreign country. It is not their role to take over that foreign country.

(d) Church age believers are therefore ambassadors, but not yet rulers, 2 Cor 5:20.

10. Jesus' response to this effort: "He immediately ordered the disciples to embark into the boat and to precede Him to the other side to Bethsaida, until what time He might release the crowds. And after releasing the crowds He went up onto the

mountain by Himself to pray. And after evening came He was alone there."

Christ had to get away from these ill-motivated people. He gives immediate orders.

He is very eager to get the disciples away from these people, and also Himself. But He first takes responsibility for the crowd.

By staying with the crowd, Christ gives His disciples time to get away to Bethsaida, to the east.

He knew that they would stay with Him after the miracle of the bread and fish.

And He went up onto the mountain by Himself to pray.

(1) Jesus Christ is under stress here! He is a man, and this event represents a disappointment.

(2) The greatest stress relief of all time is the prayer, and here our Lord turns to His Father in heaven.

(3) This is a bit of fancy, but the prayer was certainly like this: "My Father who is in heaven; let Your name be sanctified; let Your kingdom come; let Your will become, as in heaven so upon earth; give to us today our logistical bread, and forgive us our debts as we ourselves also forgave our debtors; and do not bring us into testing, but save us from the evil."

(a) For this prayer remained the desire of Christ's heart, regardless of the two years of disappointment.

(b) The crowd had done everything wrong for two years, and this is a culmination.

(4) Yet this was a test, and Christ had to endure.

(5) So Christ was alone on the mountain that night, talking with God the Father.

(6) This was a rare and precious occasion in the life of Christ.