Four Witnesses, One Lord and Saviour

A Reader's Harmony of the Gospels With Dates, Seasons and Feasts

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John set in one order, event by event, with a commentary before each section to prepare the reader for the passages.

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Introduction

A. What This Book Is

God gave four accounts of the life of his Son: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each one is complete in itself, and each was written for its own purpose. But all four tell of one life. Many events appear in two, three or all four of them, and each writer adds something the others leave out.

A **harmony** sets the four accounts in one order, so that the reader can see where each event falls in the life of Christ and read every account of it together. This harmony does that in a simple way. It does not print the text of the Gospels. It gives a grid: one line for each event, with the chapter and verse in each Gospel where that event is told. The reader opens the Bible and reads across the line, Matthew, then Mark, then Luke, then John.

Before each part of the grid there is a short commentary headed **Before You Read**. It tells the reader where the story stands, who the people and places are, what the season and the feast are, and what to watch for in each Gospel. The aim is that the reader comes to the four passages prepared, not puzzled.

In short: a reading guide that sets the four Gospels in one order, with a commentary to prepare the reader for each part.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

B. Why Read the Gospels Together

Each writer adds something. Matthew alone tells of the wise men. Luke alone tells of the shepherds. John alone tells of the water made wine at Cana. Only by reading all four does a reader see the whole of what God recorded.

The order becomes clear. The Gospels were not all written in strict order of time. Matthew often gathers teaching and miracles by subject. Reading them together shows where an event falls in the life of Christ, and what came before and after it.

Two events are not mistaken for one. Some events look alike but happened at different times: Jesus cleansed the temple at the beginning of his ministry and again at the end; he fed five thousand and later four thousand. Reading together, with the times marked, keeps them apart.

Apparent differences are understood. Four honest witnesses describing the same event never use exactly the same words. The differences are usually the details each one chose to record. Seeing them side by side shows how they fit.

In short: reading together shows the whole record, the true order, and how the four accounts fit.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

C. How This Harmony Is Built

The harmony follows four rules.

1. **John's feasts form the frame.** John names the feasts Jesus attended: three Passovers, a feast of Tabernacles, a feast of Dedication, and an unnamed "feast of the Jews" (John 2:13; 5:1; 6:4; 7:2; 10:22; 11:55). These give the years of the ministry their shape, and the other Gospels' events are placed within them.
2. **Time words fix the order wherever the text gives them.** "The next day," "after six days," "when the sabbath was past," "six days before the passover." Where the text ties two events together in time, the harmony follows it.
3. **Where a Gospel arranges by subject, the harmony says so** and does not force it into a different order. Such passages are marked.
4. **No text is changed to make the accounts fit.** Where the order is uncertain, the harmony says so and gives the options in a note.
5. **Every verse is placed.** Each verse of the four Gospels appears once in the grid as a passage to be read. Mentions and recollections of an event told elsewhere are shown in brackets.

The dates follow the companion study *How Long Did Christ Minister?* They are given as "about," because scripture does not give years in our reckoning, and the study shows what can and cannot be known. Where a date is uncertain, the commentary says why.

In short: John's feasts give the frame, the text's own time words give the order, nothing is forced, and every verse is placed.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

D. How to Read the Grid

Each line of the grid is one event:

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
11 ○	An angel appears to Joseph in a dream; he takes Mary as his wife	**1:18-25**	—	—	—

- **#** is the event number, used in the notes and the index.
- **Bold** marks the fullest account. Read it first.
- — means the Gospel does not record the event.
- † means the Gospel tells the event in a different place from its time order (for example, Luke tells of John the Baptist's imprisonment early, in Luke 3:19-20, to close his account of John's preaching).
- **(brackets)** mean the Gospel mentions or recalls the event without telling it.

Each event also carries a mark showing how sure its place in the order is:

- ● **Fixed by the text.** A time word or a plain sequence ties it in place.
- ○ **Probable.** The order of the Gospels points here, but no time word fixes it.
- ◌ **Uncertain.** Careful readers place it differently. A note under the grid gives the options.

Two kinds of band run across the full width of the grid:

- **Period bands** give the stage of the story, the approximate date, and the season of the year.
- **Feast bands**, marked ◆, show where a feast falls, with the verse that names it.

Moving around the book. The Table of Contents is a set of links. Click any chapter or section there to go straight to it. When you are done, click the heading of that chapter or section to return to the Table of Contents. Each section's entry also lists the passages it covers in each Gospel, and the same passages are given again beside "Before You Read" at the start of the section.

In short: read across the line; start with the bold reference; check the mark before building anything on the order.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

E. How to Use This Harmony

For reading straight through. Take one section at a time. Read the commentary, then read each passage in the grid, bold first. Note what each Gospel adds. A section a day takes a reader through the whole life of Christ in a few months.

For study of one event. Find the event by its number in the index, read every account of it, and read the commentary for its section.

For finding a verse. Look up the verse in the Gospel Index at the back, which lists every chapter of each Gospel with the event numbers it covers. The index shows what comes before and after that verse in the life of Christ, and where the other Gospels tell the same event.

For teaching. The commentary sections can be read aloud as an introduction before the passages are read.

In short: read straight through, study one event, or start from any verse.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

F. The Weighing Notes

Where the commentary makes a judgment (on dates, on order, or on how two accounts fit together), it ends with a note headed **Weighing it**. The note says how strong the point is, which way it points, and what a careful reader could fairly answer. Five words are used for strength:

- **Direct statement:** scripture says it in so many words.
- **Strong inference:** it follows closely from what scripture says, and the other reading has to strain.
- **Reasonable inference:** the more natural reading, but an honest reader can take it otherwise.
- **Corroboration only:** consistent with the point, but about as consistent with the opposite. Stated, not leaned on.
- **Neutral:** often cited, but settles nothing.

Sections that explain and argue nothing are marked *Narrative* or *Method, not argument*.

The harmony makes judgments on three kinds of question, named once here so that each note can say which it bears on:

- **Order:** where an event falls in the sequence.
- **Date:** when, in years, months or seasons, an event took place.

- **Fit:** how two or more accounts of one event, or of two similar events, belong together.

In short: every judgment carries its weight openly, and names whether it concerns order, date or fit.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

In Short: This harmony sets the four Gospels in one order as a grid of references, with a commentary before each section to prepare the reader. John's feasts give the frame, the text's own time words give the order, and every uncertain placement is marked.

Part One: Before You Begin

Chapter 1: Four Witnesses

A. What "Gospel" Means

The word "gospel" means "good news." It translates the Greek *euangelion*, from *eu*, "good," and *angelia*, "message." Mark opens his book with it:

> **Mark 1:1** *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;*

The good news is that God sent his Son, and that through his life, death, resurrection and ascension, men and women may have life. John states the purpose of his whole book in those terms:

> **John 20:31** *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

The four books came to be called "the Gospels" because each tells that good news through the life of the one it is about.

In short: "gospel" means good news, and the four Gospels tell that good news through the life of Jesus Christ.

Weighing it: Direct statement — on the meaning and purpose of the Gospels. John 20:31 states the purpose in so many words.

B. Why Four?

God's own law required more than one witness to establish a matter:

> **Deuteronomy 19:15** *One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.*

The principle is repeated in the New Testament: **"In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Corinthians 13:1)**. God gave not one account of his Son's life but four. Each is a separate witness, and together they establish the record.

Four witnesses also mean four viewpoints. A man described by his king, his servant, his doctor and his closest friend would be described truly by each, but each would notice different things. So with the Gospels. Chapter 2 sets out the viewpoint of each.

In short: four witnesses establish the record, and each sees from his own viewpoint.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the number of the Gospels reflects the law of witnesses (Fit). The principle of witnesses is a direct statement. That God gave four Gospels for this reason is not stated, and a careful reader can fairly answer that scripture never explains why there are four. The principle still explains why differing accounts strengthen the record rather than weaken it.

C. How the Gospels Were Written

The Gospel writers did not depend on memory alone. Jesus promised his apostles help in remembering:

> **John 14:26** *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

Luke, who was not one of the twelve, tells how he worked. He gathered the accounts of eyewitnesses and set them out in order:

> **Luke 1:1** *Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 1:2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; 1:3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, 1:4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.*

And all scripture has one source behind its human writers: **"All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16)**; **"holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21)**.

So each Gospel is the work of a real man, with his own style and choices, and also the word of God. Both are true at once.

In short: the writers used their memory, the eyewitnesses and careful order, and God's spirit guided what they wrote.

Weighing it: Direct statement — on the inspiration and method of the Gospels.

D. Each Writer Chose

No Gospel records everything. John says so twice:

> **John 20:30** *And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:*
>
> **John 21:25** *And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.*

Each writer selected the events and words that served his purpose. That is why one Gospel has an event the others lack, and why a harmony is needed to see them together. A gap in one Gospel is not a denial; it is a choice.

In short: every Gospel is a selection, and silence in one is not a contradiction of another.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that the Gospels are selective (Fit).

E. The First Three and the Fourth

Matthew, Mark and Luke share much of the same material, often in the same order and sometimes in nearly the same words. They are called the **Synoptic Gospels**, from a Greek word meaning "seen together." They follow Jesus' work mainly in Galilee and bring him to Jerusalem once, for the last week.

John is different. About nine-tenths of his material appears in no other Gospel. He records Jesus' visits to Jerusalem at the feasts, his long conversations and discourses, and seven great miracles he calls "signs." John, more than the others, tells the reader when things happened: which feast, which day, sometimes which hour.

The two kinds of Gospel fit together. The Synoptic Gospels give the work in Galilee; John gives the visits to Jerusalem between. A harmony shows how.

In short: the first three tell mainly of Galilee; John tells mainly of the feasts at Jerusalem; together they give the whole.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the Synoptic Gospels and John describe the same ministry from different sides (Fit). The other reading can fairly answer that the differences in style and content are real. They are; but no event in John contradicts an event in the others, and several (the feeding of the five thousand, the walking on the sea, the anointing at Bethany, the last week) are told by both.

In Short: The Gospels are four witnesses to one life. Each was written by a real man guided by God, each selected what served its purpose, and the first three and the fourth describe the same ministry from different sides.

Chapter 2: Four Portraits

A. One Person, Four Views

Each Gospel presents Jesus Christ with its own emphasis. A reader who knows the emphasis of each will understand why a writer includes what he does, and why he leaves out what he does.

The Old Testament prophets spoke of the coming Messiah as "the Branch," a shoot springing from a cut-down tree. Four times the word is joined to a title, and the four titles match the four emphases of the Gospels:

> **Jeremiah 23:5** *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.*
>
> **Zechariah 3:8** *Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.*
>
> **Zechariah 6:12** *And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD:*
>
> **Isaiah 4:2** *In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.*

A King. A Servant. A Man. And the branch "of the LORD," his own Son. The four sections that follow take each Gospel in turn.

In short: the four Gospels present the King, the Servant, the Man and the Son of God, as the four "Branch" prophecies do.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — for the four emphases (Fit); Corroboration only — for the link with the four "Branch" prophecies. Each emphasis can be seen in the Gospel's own content, set out below. The match with the "Branch" passages is striking, but scripture does not draw the link itself, and a careful reader can fairly answer that it is an observation, not a teaching. It is offered as a help to the memory, not as a proof.

B. Matthew: The King

Matthew opens with the royal line: **"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1)**. David was Israel's king; Abraham was the one to whom the promises were given. The genealogy runs down through the kings of Judah.

Watch for these in Matthew:

- **"The kingdom of heaven."** Matthew uses the phrase more than thirty times; no other Gospel uses it at all.
- **"Son of David."** The royal title appears ten times in Matthew, against three each in Mark and Luke.
- **"That it might be fulfilled."** Matthew shows again and again that Jesus fulfilled what the prophets wrote of the King. Some form of "fulfilled" introduces an Old Testament quotation about a dozen times.
- **Royal events.** Only Matthew tells of the wise men who came asking, **"Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" (Matthew 2:2)**.
- **Teaching gathered by subject.** Matthew arranges much of Jesus' teaching into five long discourses (chapters 5-7, 10, 13, 18 and 24-25), like the laws of a king. This is why Matthew's order sometimes differs from Mark's and Luke's.

Matthew wrote with Israel in mind. He quotes the Old Testament often and explains little of Jewish custom, because his readers already knew it.

In short: Matthew presents the King of Israel, the son of David, fulfilling the prophets.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Matthew presents Christ as King (Fit). The counts can be checked in any concordance. A careful reader can fairly answer that Matthew also shows Christ as servant and as Son; the point is emphasis, not exclusion.

C. Mark: The Servant

Mark gives no genealogy at all. A servant's ancestry is not asked for; his work is what matters. Mark's key verse is Jesus' own description of his purpose:

> **Mark 10:45** *For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

Watch for these in Mark:

- **Action.** Mark is the shortest Gospel and the busiest. The word translated "straightway," "immediately," "forthwith" and "anon" appears about forty times in the Greek of Mark, far more than in all the other Gospels together.
- **Deeds more than discourses.** Mark records many miracles and fewer long teachings.

- **Detail.** Mark often adds small vivid touches the others omit: Jesus **"in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow" (Mark 4:38)**; the **"green grass"** at the feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:39).
- **Explanation for outsiders.** Mark explains Jewish customs (Mark 7:3-4) and translates Aramaic words (Mark 5:41; 7:34), so his first readers were not all Jews.

In short: Mark presents the Servant, at work, without a genealogy, moving quickly from deed to deed.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Mark presents Christ as Servant (Fit).

D. Luke: The Man

Luke traces the genealogy back past David and Abraham to the first man: **"which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God" (Luke 3:38)**. Jesus is presented as the true man, related to every human being.

Watch for these in Luke:

- **"An orderly account."** Luke says he wrote **"in order" (Luke 1:3)**, and he gives more dates and rulers than any other writer (Luke 2:1-2; 3:1-2).
- **Birth and childhood.** Only Luke tells of the birth of John the Baptist, the shepherds, the presentation in the temple, and the boy Jesus at twelve.
- **Prayer.** Luke records Jesus praying at the turning points of his life: at his baptism (3:21), before choosing the twelve (6:12), at the transfiguration (9:29). Words for prayer appear in Luke more than in any other Gospel.
- **The outcast and the overlooked.** Women, children, Samaritans, tax collectors and the poor appear often. Many of the best-known parables, the good Samaritan, the prodigal son, the Pharisee and the publican, are in Luke alone.
- **"The Son of man."** Jesus' own title for himself is frequent in all the Gospels, and fits Luke's emphasis especially well.

Luke was a companion of Paul (Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11), and he wrote the book of Acts as the second part of his account (Acts 1:1). He wrote to a man named Theophilus, probably a Gentile.

In short: Luke presents the Man, son of Adam, praying, compassionate, related to all.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Luke presents Christ as the Son of man (Fit).

E. John: The Son of God

John gives no genealogy of descent. He begins before the world: **"In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1)**. His stated purpose is that the reader may believe **"that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (John 20:31)**.

Watch for these in John:

- **Signs.** John records seven miracles that he calls signs, each showing who Jesus is: the water made wine (2:1-11), the nobleman's son (4:46-54), the man at Bethesda (5:1-9), the five thousand fed (6:1-14), the walking on the sea (6:16-21), the man born blind (9:1-7), and Lazarus raised (11:1-44).

- **"I am" sayings.** Jesus describes himself: the bread of life (6:35), the light of the world (8:12), the door (10:9), the good shepherd (10:11), the resurrection and the life (11:25), the way, the truth and the life (14:6), the true vine (15:1).
- **The Father and the Son.** John records more of what Jesus said about his Father than any other Gospel: that the Father sent him, that he does the Father's works and speaks the Father's words (John 5:19-30; 14:10).
- **"Verily, verily."** The doubled form appears twenty-five times, and only in John.
- **Time and place.** John names the feasts, the days and sometimes the hours. For a harmony, he provides the frame.

The opening of John (1:1-18) is treated in detail in the library's study *One God One Mediator*. For reading the harmony, it is enough to note John's own conclusion of that opening: **"the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14)**, and **"the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18)**.

In short: John presents the Son of God, sent by the Father, revealed through signs and his own words.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that John presents Christ as the Son of God (Fit). John 20:31 says so.

F. A Help to the Memory

Gospel	Presents him as	Genealogy	Key verse	Watch for
Matthew	The King	From Abraham, through David and the kings	Matthew 2:2	"Kingdom of heaven"; "that it might be fulfilled"
Mark	The Servant	None	Mark 10:45	"Straightway"; deeds; vivid detail
Luke	The Man	From Joseph back to Adam	Luke 19:10	Prayer; the outcast; dates and rulers
John	The Son of God	None of descent; "In the beginning"	John 20:31	Signs; "I am"; feasts and hours

Some readers also link the four Gospels with the four faces of the living creatures in Ezekiel 1:10 and Revelation 4:7: the lion, the ox, the man and the eagle. Early Christian writers made this link but did not agree which face belongs to which Gospel, and scripture does not say. It is mentioned here only because the reader may meet it.

In short: King, Servant, Man, Son of God.

Weighing it: Corroboration only — on the link with the four living creatures (Fit). Scripture never connects the living creatures with the Gospels.

In Short: Matthew presents the King, Mark the Servant, Luke the Man, and John the Son of God. Knowing each writer's emphasis explains what he includes and what he leaves out.

Chapter 3: The Four Writers

A. Whose Names Are on the Gospels

None of the four Gospels names its writer in its text. The titles "according to Matthew," "according to Mark," and so on were attached by the early churches, and every surviving manuscript that has a title gives these four names. What scripture itself says about each man is set out below. Where something comes from early history rather than scripture, the section says so.

In short: the names come from the earliest churches; scripture tells us about the men.

Weighing it: Corroboration only — on the authorship of each Gospel. The titles are early and unanimous, but they are history, not scripture. Nothing in the harmony depends on them.

B. Matthew

Matthew was a tax collector ("publican") at Capernaum, called by Jesus from his place of business:

> **Matthew 9:9** *And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.*

Mark and Luke call him Levi (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27). He made a great feast for Jesus in his house (Luke 5:29) and was chosen one of the twelve apostles (Matthew 10:3). A tax collector worked for the rulers, kept records and handled figures, and was despised by his own people. The man who wrote the Gospel of the King had been a servant of the king's enemies, and was called out of it.

In short: Matthew, also called Levi, a tax collector called to be one of the twelve.

Weighing it: Direct statement — on Matthew's calling.

C. Mark

Mark's full name was John Mark. His mother's house in Jerusalem was a meeting place of the early believers (Acts 12:12). He went with Paul and Barnabas on their first journey but left them partway (Acts 12:25; 13:13), and Paul refused to take him on the next (Acts 15:37-39). Later Paul wrote of him, **"Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry" (2 Timothy 4:11)**. He was the cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10), and Peter called him **"Marcus my son" (1 Peter 5:13)**.

The earliest Christian historians say that Mark wrote down what Peter preached. That is history, not scripture, but it fits Mark's eyewitness detail and his close tie with Peter.

The man who wrote the Gospel of the Servant had once failed in service, and was restored to it.

In short: John Mark, Barnabas' cousin, who failed and was restored, and was close to Peter.

Weighing it: Direct statement — on what scripture says of Mark; Corroboration only — on his link with Peter's preaching.

D. Luke

Luke was **"the beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14)** and Paul's companion. In the book of Acts, which he also wrote, the account changes from "they" to "we" at the points where Luke himself joined Paul's travels (Acts 16:10). He was with Paul at the end: **"Only Luke is with me" (2 Timothy 4:11)**.

Luke was not an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry. He says plainly that he gathered the accounts of those who were (Luke 1:2-3). The doctor's care shows in his precise descriptions and in his attention to the sick.

In short: Luke, the beloved physician and Paul's companion, who carefully gathered the eyewitness accounts.

Weighing it: Direct statement — on what scripture says of Luke. That Luke wrote both the third Gospel and Acts is shown by the address of both to Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1).

E. John

John was a fisherman of Galilee, the son of Zebedee and the brother of James (Matthew 4:21-22). With Peter and James he was one of the three closest to Jesus, present at the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:37), the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1) and in Gethsemane (Mark 14:33).

The Gospel of John never names John. Its writer calls himself **"the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21:20)**, and says, **"This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true" (John 21:24)**. He stood at the cross (John 19:26) and outran Peter to the tomb (John 20:2-4).

In short: John, son of Zebedee, one of the three closest to Jesus, the eyewitness "whom Jesus loved."

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that "the disciple whom Jesus loved" is John the son of Zebedee. The writer is an eyewitness and one of the inner circle; Peter is named beside him and James died early (Acts 12:2), which leaves John. A careful reader can fairly answer that the Gospel never says his name.

F. Which Was Written First?

Careful scholars disagree on the order in which the Gospels were written. Most today think Mark was first; the earliest Christian writers put Matthew first. John is generally held to be last. The question does not affect the harmony, which follows the order of the events, not of the writing.

In short: the order of writing is debated and does not matter for reading the harmony.

Weighing it: Neutral — on the order of writing.

In Short: Matthew the tax collector, Mark the restored servant, Luke the physician and John the beloved disciple each wrote what he saw or carefully gathered. Two were apostles and eyewitnesses; two were close companions of apostles.

Chapter 4: The World of the Gospels

A. The Land

The Gospels move through a small land. From Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south is about 150 miles; from the sea to the Jordan, about 50. In Jesus' day it was divided into regions:

- **Galilee**, in the north, around the Sea of Galilee: green, farmed and fished, with many towns. Jesus grew up at Nazareth and made his home at Capernaum (Matthew 4:13). Most of the Synoptic account takes place here.
- **Samaria**, in the middle, home of the Samaritans. **"The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9)**, and Jews travelling between Galilee and Judea often went around by the Jordan valley.
- **Judea**, in the south, the hill country around Jerusalem, with Bethlehem six miles to the south and Bethany two miles to the east (John 11:18).
- **Perea**, called **"beyond Jordan"** (Matthew 19:1), east of the river.
- **The Decapolis**, "the ten cities," east and south of the Sea of Galilee, largely Gentile (Mark 5:20; 7:31).

The **Sea of Galilee** is also called the lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1) and the sea of Tiberias (John 6:1). It is about thirteen miles long. Capernaum, Bethsaida and Chorazin lay on its northern shore.

From Galilee to Jerusalem was three or four days' walk. Jerusalem stands on a ridge about 2,500 feet high, which is why the Gospels say Jesus "went up" to Jerusalem and "came down" from it.

In short: Galilee in the north, Samaria in the middle, Judea in the south, Perea across the Jordan.

Weighing it: Narrative.

B. The Rulers

Rome ruled the land. The emperor **Augustus** reigned at Jesus' birth (Luke 2:1); **Tiberius** reigned through his ministry (Luke 3:1).

Herod the Great, king of Judea under Rome, ruled at Jesus' birth and ordered the killing of the children at Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16). He rebuilt the temple on a grand scale (John 2:20). At his death his kingdom was divided among three sons:

- **Archelaus** received Judea and Samaria (Matthew 2:22). Rome removed him in A.D. 6 and put Judea under a Roman governor.
- **Herod Antipas** received Galilee and Perea. He is Herod "tetrarch of Galilee" (Luke 3:1), who beheaded John the Baptist (Mark 6:17-28), whom Jesus called **"that fox" (Luke 13:32)**, and before whom Jesus was sent at his trial (Luke 23:7).
- **Philip** received the lands north-east of the Sea of Galilee (Luke 3:1), where Caesarea Philippi stood (Matthew 16:13).

Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea through the ministry, from about A.D. 26 to 36.

The **high priest** led the Jewish council. **Caiaphas** held the office through the ministry. His father-in-law **Annas** had held it before and was still honoured with the title, which is why Luke names **"Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests" (Luke 3:2)** and why Jesus was taken **"to Annas first" (John 18:13)**.

In short: Rome over all; Herod and then his sons; Pilate the governor; Annas and Caiaphas the high priests.

Weighing it: Narrative.

C. The People

- **Pharisees.** A party devoted to strict keeping of the law and of the traditions of the elders added to it (Mark 7:3-5). Respected by the people, often opposed to Jesus because he set aside their traditions.
- **Sadducees.** The priestly party, powerful in the temple. **"The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit" (Acts 23:8)**.
- **Scribes**, also called **lawyers.** Teachers and copyists of the law; most were Pharisees.
- **Herodians.** Supporters of Herod's family (Mark 3:6; 12:13).
- **The council**, or **Sanhedrin.** The ruling body of the Jews at Jerusalem, of seventy-one members under the high priest.
- **Publicans.** Jews who collected taxes for Rome, often dishonestly, and were counted with sinners (Matthew 9:10-11).
- **Samaritans.** People of mixed descent in Samaria, who worshipped at Mount Gerizim rather than Jerusalem (John 4:20).
- **Gentiles.** All who were not Israelites: Romans, Greeks, Syrians and others.

In short: knowing who each group was explains why they asked the questions they asked.

Weighing it: Narrative.

D. Temple and Synagogue

The **temple** at Jerusalem was the one place of sacrifice. It had courts open to Gentiles, to Israelite women, to Israelite men, and to priests, with the holy place and the most holy place within. Jesus taught in its courts, especially in **"Solomon's porch" (John 10:23)** along the eastern side.

The **synagogue** was the local meeting place in every town, for reading the scriptures, prayer and teaching on the sabbath. Any man could be invited to read and speak. That is how Jesus came to read Isaiah at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-17).

In short: sacrifice at the one temple; reading and teaching in the synagogue in every town.

Weighing it: Narrative.

In Short: The land was small, ruled by Rome through Herod's family and a Roman governor, with the high priest and the council over Jewish affairs. Knowing the places, rulers and parties helps the reader follow every section of the harmony.

Chapter 5: God's Calendar in the Gospels

A. The Day and the Hour

God's day begins at sunset. From the first chapter of the Bible, evening comes before morning: **"And the evening and the morning were the first day" (Genesis 1:5)**. The law fixed holy days the same way: **"from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath" (Leviticus 23:32)**. So a day in the Gospels runs from sunset to sunset.

The daylight was divided into twelve hours: **"Are there not twelve hours in the day?" (John 11:9)**. They were counted from sunrise, about 6 A.M.:

The Gospels say	Our time (about)
The third hour	9 A.M.
The sixth hour	Noon
The ninth hour	3 P.M.
The eleventh hour	5 P.M.

The night was divided into four watches (Mark 6:48; 13:35).

In short: the day begins at sunset; the hours of daylight are counted from sunrise.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that the day begins at evening and has twelve hours of light.

B. The Months and the Feasts

Israel's year was lunar: each month began with the new moon. God set the first month in the spring: **"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you" (Exodus 12:2)**. The month was called Abib (Exodus 13:4), and later Nisan (Esther 3:7).

God appointed feasts on fixed days (Leviticus 23). They are the clock of the Gospels:

Feast	Date	Our months (about)	In the Gospels
Passover	14th day of the 1st month	March-April	John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55
Unleavened Bread	15th-21st of the 1st month	March-April	Mark 14:1, 12
Pentecost (Weeks)	Fifty days from the firstfruits	May-June	(Acts 2:1)
Trumpets	1st of the 7th month	September-October	—
Day of Atonement	10th of the 7th month	September-October	—
Tabernacles	15th-22nd of the 7th month	September-October	John 7:2, 37
Dedication	25th of the 9th month	December	John 10:22
Purim	14th-15th of the 12th month	February-March	(possibly John 5:1)

Three times a year every man of Israel was to go up to the place God chose: **"in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles" (Deuteronomy 16:16)**. That is why the roads to Jerusalem were crowded at these feasts, and why Jesus is found there at them.

The feast of Dedication was not one of the feasts of the law. It remembered the cleansing of the temple in 164 B.C. after it had been defiled by a Syrian king. Purim, from the book of Esther, remembered the deliverance of the Jews in Persia.

In short: the feasts are fixed to the moon and the season, and they are the clock by which the Gospels can be timed.

Weighing it: Direct statement — for the dates of the feasts of the law.

C. The Sabbath and the High Day

The weekly sabbath was the seventh day, from sunset on our Friday to sunset on our Saturday. But the first and last days of the feasts were also sabbaths, whatever day of the week they fell on (Leviticus 23:7-8, 24, 39). John calls such a day a **"high day"** (John 19:31). So the Gospels can speak of a sabbath that is not the weekly one. The reader will meet this in the last week of the Lord's life.

In short: there were weekly sabbaths and feast sabbaths, and the Gospels speak of both.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that feast days were sabbaths (Leviticus 23:7, 24, 39).

D. The Seasons

Israel has two seasons more than four: a rainy season from about October to April and a dry season from May to September. The **"former rain"** comes in autumn and the **"latter rain"** in spring (Deuteronomy 11:14; Joel 2:23).

- **Barley** ripens around Passover; the first sheaf was waved before the LORD in the feast of unleavened bread (Leviticus 23:10-11).
- **Wheat** ripens around Pentecost.
- **Grapes and olives** are gathered in late summer and autumn, before Tabernacles.
- **Grass** is green from the winter rains into spring and brown by summer.
- **Winter** is cold and wet in the hills; at Dedication John notes, **"it was winter" (John 10:22)**.

Such details are clues to the time of year: disciples plucking ripe grain (Mark 2:23), the crowd sitting on **"green grass"** (Mark 6:39), people warming themselves at a fire at night (John 18:18).

In short: grain, grass and rain tell the season, and the Gospels mention them.

Weighing it: Narrative.

E. The Years

Scripture does not count years from the birth of Christ. That reckoning was devised more than five hundred years later and is known to be a few years off. The Gospels date events by rulers instead: **"in the days of Herod the king" (Matthew 2:1)**; **"in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar" (Luke 3:1)**. Turning these into our years requires history and calculation, and some uncertainty remains. The

companion study *How Long Did Christ Minister?* sets out the evidence. In this harmony every year is marked "about."

In short: the Gospels date by rulers, not by our calendar, so every year in this harmony is approximate.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

In Short: God's day begins at sunset; the hours are counted from sunrise; the feasts are fixed to the moon and the harvest. The feasts, the seasons and the rulers named in the Gospels are the clues to when things happened.

Chapter 6: Under the Law

A. Before Pentecost

Everything in the Gospels happened before the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Jesus was born, lived and ministered under the law of Moses:

> **Galatians 4:4** *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,*

He was circumcised on the eighth day and presented in the temple according to the law (Luke 2:21-24). He kept the feasts. He told the leper he healed to **"offer the gift that Moses commanded" (Matthew 8:4)**.

His ministry was directed to Israel:

> **Romans 15:8** *Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:*

When he sent out the twelve, he said, **"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:5-6)**. He said of himself, **"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24)**.

In short: the Gospels record a ministry under the law, to Israel, before Pentecost.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that Jesus was made under the law and ministered to Israel.

B. What This Means for the Reader

The reader of the Gospels is reading about the time of Christ, between the administration of the law and the administration of grace that began at Pentecost. Much that Jesus taught applies to every believer: the love of God, faith, prayer, forgiveness, humility. But some instructions were for Israel under the law at that time: the command to offer the gift Moses commanded, the sending of the twelve to Israel only, the keeping of the feasts. The epistles written after Pentecost give the church its own instructions.

So when reading the Gospels it helps to ask: to whom was this spoken, and under what law? That question does not make any part of the Gospels less true. It helps the reader understand each part rightly.

Jesus himself pointed forward to a change. He told his disciples that he had more to say than they could then bear, and that the spirit of truth would guide them into all truth (John 16:12-13). After his resurrection he commanded them to wait for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4).

In short: read the Gospels asking to whom each word was spoken and under what law; the epistles give the church its own instructions.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that some Gospel instructions belonged to Israel under the law (Fit). The verses in §A are direct statements. A careful reader can fairly answer that much of Jesus' teaching is plainly for all; that is true, and the point here is only that each word should be read in its setting. The administrations of scripture are set out in the library's study *The Seven Administrations of Scripture*.

In Short: The Gospels record the ministry of Christ under the law and to Israel, before Pentecost. Reading each word in its setting helps the reader understand it rightly.

Chapter 7: When the Accounts Differ

A. Four Honest Witnesses

When four honest witnesses describe one event, they never use exactly the same words. Each notices different things and records what serves his purpose. A court trusts such witnesses more, not less, than four who repeat each other word for word. The Gospels are like that.

Most apparent differences between the Gospels fall into one of a few kinds. Knowing them helps the reader see how the accounts fit.

In short: differences of detail are what honest witnesses produce.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

B. Each Records Part of the Whole

The clearest example is the writing Pilate set over the cross. Each Gospel gives it a little differently:

- **"THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Matthew 27:37)**
- **"THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Mark 15:26)**
- **"THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Luke 23:38)**
- **"JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS" (John 19:19)**

John explains part of the reason: **"it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin" (John 19:20)**. It was written three times, and each Gospel may give a different language, or a part of the whole. Put together, the full title reads: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." No writer is wrong; each gives part.

In short: one writer often gives part of what another gives in full.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the four wordings are parts of one title (Fit). A careful reader can fairly answer that we cannot know which words stood in which language. That is true, but every wording given is contained in the full title.

C. Similar Events, Different Times

Jesus travelled and taught for years, and some things happened more than once. He cleansed the temple at the first Passover (John 2:13-17) and again in the last week (Mark 11:15-17). He fed five thousand (Mark 6:44) and later four thousand (Mark 8:9), and he himself referred to both (Mark 8:19-20). A teacher repeats his teaching in different places, so similar sayings in different settings may be said twice, not misplaced once.

Where two accounts differ in time, place and details, the harmony considers whether they are two events before forcing them into one.

In short: some events and sayings were repeated, and the harmony keeps them apart.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that some events happened more than once (Fit). Jesus himself names two feedings (Mark 8:19-20).

D. Order by Subject

Matthew in particular gathers material by subject. Chapters 8 and 9, for example, bring together ten miracles from different times to show the King's power. Luke says he wrote "in order," and Mark generally follows the sequence of events. Where Matthew's order differs from Mark's and Luke's, the harmony usually follows Mark and Luke, and marks Matthew's passage †.

In short: where Matthew arranges by subject, the harmony follows the time order of Mark and Luke.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Matthew sometimes arranges by subject (Order). A careful reader can fairly answer that no Gospel states its own method, apart from Luke's "in order." The harmony marks each such placement so the reader can judge.

E. Summary and Translation

Jesus and his disciples usually spoke Aramaic, the language of the Jews of that day; the Gospels are written in Greek. Each writer gives the sense of what was said, sometimes in slightly different words. Mark several times keeps the Aramaic itself: **"Talitha cumi" (Mark 5:41)**; **"Ephphatha" (Mark 7:34)**; **"Abba, Father" (Mark 14:36)**. Words given in two forms are usually the same saying in translation, or two parts of a longer saying.

In short: the Gospels give the sense of words spoken in another language.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — on the language Jesus usually spoke (Fit). The Aramaic words preserved in Mark support it.

F. What the Harmony Does Not Do

The harmony does not change any text to make it fit, and it does not hide a difficulty. Where the order or the fit is uncertain, the grid marks it ◌ and a note gives the options. The reader can then read the passages and judge.

In short: no text is changed and no difficulty is hidden.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

In Short: Most differences between the Gospels are parts of a whole, separate events, arrangement by subject, or translation. The harmony shows these openly and marks every uncertain placement.

Part Two: The Harmony of the Gospels

How Each Section Is Laid Out

Each section of the harmony has three parts.

1. **Before You Read.** A commentary on the section: where the story stands, the people and places, the date and season, what to watch for in each Gospel, and any question of order or fit, with its weight. The passages the section covers are listed beside the heading.
2. **The Grid.** The events in order, with the references in each Gospel. Read across each line, starting with the bold reference.
3. **Notes.** Numbered notes under the grid explain any placement marked ○, or any passage told out of its time order.

The Stages of the Harmony

Sections	Stage	About
1-7	Before the ministry: the openings, the births, the childhood, John the Baptist	7 B.C.-A.D. 27
8-14	The beginning: the wilderness, the first disciples, the first Passover, Judea and Samaria	A.D. 27-28
15-34	The ministry in Galilee	A.D. 28-30
35-44	From the Passover of John 6 to the transfiguration	A.D. 30
45-60	The last six months: Tabernacles, Dedication, Perea, Lazarus, the last journey	A.D. 30-31
61-69	The last week before the Passover	A.D. 31
70-75	The last night and the cross	A.D. 31
76-77	The resurrection, the forty days and the ascension	A.D. 31

All dates are "about" (Introduction C). Where the year depends on a disputed reading, the period band in the grid says so.

Every Verse in Its Place

Every verse of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John appears once in the grid as a passage to be read. Where a Gospel only mentions or recalls an event told elsewhere, the reference is shown in (brackets) and is not counted twice. A reader who reads every reference in the grid, section by section, will have read all four Gospels through, in one order.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

Section 1: The Writers Begin

Before You Read Matt. 1:1 · Mark 1:1 · Luke 1:1–4 · John 1:1–18

Each Gospel begins in its own way, and each opening shows its writer's purpose (Chapter 2).

Matthew begins with a title like the opening of a royal record: **"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1)**. The words "the book of the generation" echo Genesis 5:1, **"This is the book of the generations of Adam."** Matthew is telling the reader that a new beginning has come, in the line of David the king and Abraham the father of the nation.

Mark begins with one sentence and goes straight to work: **"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1)**. Within two verses he is quoting the prophets about John the Baptist, and within nine Jesus is baptized.

Luke begins like a careful historian, with a formal preface to the man he is writing for. He tells Theophilus that many had already written accounts, that he himself had traced everything **"from the very first,"** and that he was writing **"in order"** so that Theophilus might **"know the certainty of those things"** he had been taught (Luke 1:3-4).

John begins before anything was made: **"In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1)**. "Word" is the Greek *logos*, meaning the spoken expression of a mind. God's purpose, expressed from the beginning, **"was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14)**. John's opening also introduces John the Baptist as the witness to the light (John 1:6-8, 15), which sets up everything that follows.

Watch for: how each opening fits its Gospel's emphasis: the King's ancestry, the Servant at work, the historian's order, the Son revealed.

Weighing it: Narrative.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
THE OPENINGS OF THE FOUR GOSPELS · before time, and the writers' own day					
1 ●	Matthew's title: "the son of David, the son of Abraham"	**1:1**	—	—	—
2 ●	Mark's title: "the beginning of the gospel"	—	**1:1**	—	—
3 ●	Luke's preface: written "in order" to Theophilus	—	—	**1:1-4**	—
4 ●	John's prologue: the Word, the light, and John's witness	—	—	—	**1:1-18**

Section 2: The Two Genealogies

Before You Read Matt. 1:2–17 · Luke 3:23–38

Two Gospels give the ancestry of Jesus, and they give it in two different ways.

Matthew goes down from Abraham to Jesus, in the form "Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob" (Matthew 1:2). He passes through David and then through **Solomon** and the kings of Judah, to Jacob, the father of Joseph. Then the pattern breaks:

> **Matthew 1:16** *And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.*

Matthew does not say "Joseph begat Jesus." In the Greek, "of whom" is feminine and singular: Jesus was born of Mary alone (Matthew 1:18-25 explains why).

Luke goes up from Jesus to Adam, in the form "which was the son of." He places it after the baptism, not at the birth:

> **Luke 3:23** *And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,*

Luke passes through David's son **Nathan**, not Solomon (Luke 3:31). Nathan and Solomon were both sons of David by Bathsheba (1 Chronicles 3:5). So from David to Joseph the two lists run through different families, and Matthew names Joseph's father as Jacob while Luke names Heli.

Why two lines? Two explanations are held by careful readers.

1. **Luke gives Mary's line.** Joseph was Heli's son by marriage, his son-in-law. Luke's **"as was supposed"** signals that Joseph was not Jesus' father by birth, and Luke's whole account of the birth (Luke 1-2) is told from Mary's side. On this reading Jesus is a descendant of David by blood through Mary and Nathan, and the legal heir of David's throne through Joseph, his legal father, and Solomon.
2. **Both lines are Joseph's.** One gives his legal descent and the other his natural descent, the two having been joined by a marriage under the law of the brother's widow (Deuteronomy 25:5-6).

One further point bears on the choice. Matthew's line runs through King Jechonias (Matthew 1:11-12), also called Coniah, of whom God said:

> **Jeremiah 22:30** *Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.*

No natural descendant of Jechonias could sit on David's throne. Jesus was not Joseph's natural son, so the curse does not touch him; but if Luke's line is also Joseph's, Jesus would have no natural descent from David at all. Mary's line through Nathan answers this.

Matthew's three fourteens. Matthew arranges the names in three groups of fourteen generations (Matthew 1:17): Abraham to David, David to the captivity, the captivity to Christ. To do so he leaves out names. Between Joram and Ozias (Uzziah) he passes over three kings, Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah (1 Chronicles 3:11-12). "Begat" in a Hebrew genealogy can mean "was the ancestor of." The pattern is a help to the memory, not a full list.

Women in Matthew's line. Matthew names four women besides Mary: Thamar, Rachab, Ruth and the wife of Urias, Bathsheba (Matthew 1:3, 5, 6). Each had an unusual story, and at least two, Rachab and Ruth, were not Israelites. The King's line includes outsiders received by grace.

Watch for: where each line passes through David's family; how Matthew 1:16 and Luke 3:23 both guard the virgin birth.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Luke gives the line of Mary (Fit). Luke's "as was supposed," his telling of the birth from Mary's side, and the curse on Jechonias favour it. A careful reader can fairly answer that Luke names Joseph, not Mary, and that genealogies were rarely traced through women. Both explanations keep the two lists true; neither requires any change to the text.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
THE ANCESTRY OF JESUS · from Adam and from Abraham					
5 ●	The line of the King: Abraham, David, Solomon, to Joseph "the husband of Mary"	**1:2-17**	—	—	—
6 ○	The line of the Man: from Jesus back through Nathan and David to Adam [1]	—	—	**3:23-38** †	—

[1] Luke gives the genealogy after the baptism, at the start of the ministry, to introduce the Man who now steps forward. It is placed here beside Matthew's so that the two can be compared.

Section 3: Two Announcements

Before You Read Luke 1:5–80

The setting. Luke dates the beginning of his account to **"the days of Herod, the king of Judæa" (Luke 1:5)**, Herod the Great (Chapter 4 B). Four hundred years had passed since the last of the prophets. Malachi had closed with a promise:

> **Malachi 4:5** *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: 4:6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*

Zacharias and Elisabeth. Zacharias was a priest **"of the course of Abia" (Luke 1:5)**. King David had divided the priests into twenty-four courses, and the course of Abijah was the eighth (1 Chronicles 24:10). Each course served at the temple for a week at a time, about twice a year, as well as at the great feasts. The priests of a course drew lots for the duties, and the honour of burning incense in the holy place might come to a priest once in a lifetime: **"his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord" (Luke 1:9)**. Elisabeth was also of the family of Aaron, and they were old and childless (Luke 1:6-7), like Abraham and Sarah.

The messenger. The angel **Gabriel** came to Zacharias at the altar of incense. Gabriel had come to Daniel five hundred years before with the prophecy of the seventy weeks (Daniel 9:21-27). Now he announced that the forerunner was about to be born. The child would go **"in the spirit and power of Elias" (Luke 1:17)**, the very words of Malachi's promise. Because Zacharias doubted, he could not speak until the child was named (Luke 1:20, 64).

Mary at Nazareth. "In the sixth month" of Elisabeth's pregnancy (Luke 1:26, 36), Gabriel was sent to Nazareth, a small town in the hills of Galilee, to Mary. She was **"espoused"** to Joseph, a man **"of the**

house of David" (Luke 1:27). Espousal (betrothal) was more binding than an engagement today: the couple were legally bound and called husband and wife, though they did not yet live together, and it could be ended only by divorce (Matthew 1:19). Gabriel told Mary she would conceive and bear a son, **"and shalt call his name JESUS" (Luke 1:31)**, who would receive **"the throne of his father David" (Luke 1:32)**.

Mary and Elisabeth. Mary went **"with haste"** to Elisabeth in the hill country of Judea (Luke 1:39), a journey of perhaps four days. Gabriel had told her that Elisabeth was her **"cousin"** (Luke 1:36), a relative. At Mary's greeting the unborn John **"leaped"** (Luke 1:41). Mary's song of praise (Luke 1:46-55) echoes Hannah's song at the birth of Samuel (1 Samuel 2:1-10). Mary stayed **"about three months"** (Luke 1:56), which brings the story to about the time of John's birth.

John born. When the child was named on the eighth day, the relatives expected "Zacharias." Elisabeth said "John," and Zacharias wrote, **"His name is John" (Luke 1:63)**. His tongue was loosed, and he prophesied of the salvation God was about to bring through the house of David, and of his son's part in it (Luke 1:68-79).

The date. Some readers have tried to fix the season of these events from the course of Abijah. If the year in which the courses began were known, Zacharias' week of service could be found, and from it the month of John's conception, and six months later Jesus'. But the starting point of the cycle in that year is not known, and each course served twice a year. The attempt cannot fix the season.

Watch for: the parallels between the two announcements (the same angel, a troubled hearer, "Fear not," a name given, a sign), and the contrast between Zacharias' doubt and Mary's **"be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38)**.

Weighing it: Corroboration only — on dating the births from the course of Abijah (Date). The facts about the courses are a direct statement (1 Chronicles 24), but the calculation depends on a starting point that scripture does not give.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
BEFORE THE BIRTH · about 7-3 B.C. · "in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa"					
7 ●	Gabriel announces John's birth to Zacharias in the temple	—	—	**1:5-25**	—
8 ●	"In the sixth month": Gabriel announces Jesus' birth to Mary at Nazareth	—	—	**1:26-38**	—
9 ●	Mary visits Elisabeth; Mary's song	—	—	**1:39-56**	—
10 ●	John born and named; Zacharias' prophecy; John grows in the deserts	—	—	**1:57-80**	—

Section 4: The Birth at Bethlehem

Before You Read Matt. 1:18–25 · Luke 2:1–38

Joseph. When Mary returned from Elisabeth, about three months pregnant, Joseph learned that she was with child. Matthew tells this from Joseph's side, as Luke tells the announcement from Mary's.

Joseph was **"a just man,"** and he resolved to end the betrothal quietly rather than shame her (Matthew 1:19). An angel told him in a dream that the child was **"of the Holy Ghost"** and that he was to name him Jesus, **"for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)**. "Jesus" is the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua, "the LORD saves." Matthew shows that it fulfilled Isaiah 7:14: **"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23)**. Joseph took Mary as his wife but **"knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son" (Matthew 1:25)**.

The census. Luke tells how the family came to be in Bethlehem. Augustus ordered that **"all the world should be taxed" (Luke 2:1)**, that is, enrolled in a register, and each went to his own city. Joseph, of the house of David, went from Nazareth to Bethlehem, **"the city of David"** (Luke 2:4), about ninety miles. Micah had named Bethlehem as the birthplace of the ruler of Israel (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:5-6).

Luke adds: **"And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria" (Luke 2:2)**. Cyrenius (Quirinius) is known from Roman history as governor of Syria in A.D. 6, when he held a census of Judea after Archelaus was removed (Luke mentions it in Acts 5:37). That is about ten years too late for a birth under Herod. Several solutions are offered: that Quirinius held an earlier office in Syria; that "first" means "before" (this enrolment was made *before* Quirinius was governor); or that the enrolment ordered under Herod was completed later. None is proved. Luke was careful with his rulers elsewhere, and the difficulty is in our knowledge of the history, which is incomplete.

The manger and the inn. "There was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). The word translated "inn" is the same word Luke uses for the **"guestchamber"** where the last supper was eaten (Luke 22:11): a guest room in a house, not a commercial inn. With the town crowded for the census, there was no space in the guest room, and the child was laid in a manger, a feeding trough for animals.

The shepherds. Shepherds **"abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night"** (Luke 2:8) received the first announcement, from an angel and a heavenly host. The sign given them was a baby **"wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12)**. They went with haste, found him, and spread the news (Luke 2:15-18). The King was first announced not to rulers but to working men.

The law kept. On the eighth day he was circumcised and named, as the law required (Leviticus 12:3; Luke 2:21). On the fortieth day Mary's purification was complete (Leviticus 12:2-4), and they brought him to the temple at Jerusalem, six miles away, to present the firstborn to the LORD (Exodus 13:2) and to offer **"A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons" (Luke 2:24)**. That was the offering the law allowed for those who could not afford a lamb (Leviticus 12:8). Joseph and Mary were poor.

Simeon and Anna. In the temple an old man, Simeon, who had been promised that he would see the Lord's Christ, took the child in his arms and blessed God: the child would be **"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2:32)**. He warned Mary, **"a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also" (Luke 2:35)**. Anna, a prophetess of great age, gave thanks and spoke of him to all who looked for redemption (Luke 2:36-38).

The date. The year of the birth is not certain. Jesus was born before Herod died (Matthew 2:1, 19). Most historians date Herod's death to 4 B.C.; some argue for 1 B.C. The wise men (Section 5) came some time after the birth, possibly as much as two years (Matthew 2:16). So the birth fell between about 6 and 2 B.C. Luke's **"about thirty years of age"** at the start of the ministry (Luke 3:23), about A.D. 27, fits any year in that range. The day and month are not given. December 25 was chosen as a feast centuries later and has no basis in scripture. Shepherds keeping flocks in the open at night has been taken to point

away from the coldest months; but flocks near Bethlehem may have been kept out in many seasons, and the detail cannot settle it.

Watch for: Matthew telling the story from Joseph's side and Luke from Mary's; the law kept in every detail; the poverty of the family; the Gentiles named in Simeon's song.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the birth fell between about 6 and 2 B.C. (Date). The limit is Herod's death, which is a direct statement of Matthew; its year in our calendar is history, and the two proposed years give the range. A careful reader can fairly answer that the range cannot be narrowed from scripture, which is true; this harmony leaves it open. **Neutral — on the season of the birth. Neutral — on the census of Quirinius;** the difficulty is real but rests on incomplete history, and no proposed solution is proved.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
THE BIRTH · about 6-2 B.C. · the season is not stated					
11 ○	An angel appears to Joseph in a dream; he takes Mary as his wife	**1:18-25**	—	—	—
12 ●	The decree of Augustus; to Bethlehem; Jesus born and laid in a manger	—	—	**2:1-7**	(1:14)
13 ●	Angels announce the birth to shepherds; they find the child	—	—	**2:8-20**	—
14 ●	The eighth day: circumcised and named Jesus	(1:25)	—	**2:21**	—
15 ●	The fortieth day: presented in the temple; Simeon and Anna	—	—	**2:22-38**	—

Section 5: The Wise Men, Egypt and Nazareth

Before You Read Matt. 2:1–23 · Luke 2:39–40

The wise men. Only Matthew tells of the wise men, the *magoi*, who came **"from the east to Jerusalem" (Matthew 2:1)**. In that day the word meant a learned class of Persia and Babylon, students of the heavens and of ancient writings. Daniel had once been made chief over the wise men of Babylon (Daniel 2:48), and the hope of Israel may have been known there since. Scripture does not say how many came; the number three has been drawn from the three gifts. They asked, **"Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Matthew 2:2)**. Balaam had prophesied, **"there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (Numbers 24:17)**.

Herod. Herod was an old man, jealous for his throne, who had killed members of his own family. The chief priests and scribes told him the Christ would be born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:4-6). He sent the wise men there, asking them to report back.

The house. The star went before them and stood over **"where the young child was" (Matthew 2:9)**. They came **"into the house"** (Matthew 2:11), not a stable, and found **"the young child"** with Mary. They gave him gold, frankincense and myrrh, gifts fit for a king, and returned home another way.

Egypt and Bethlehem. Warned in a dream, Joseph took the child and his mother to Egypt by night. The gold may have paid for the journey. Matthew sees in it the fulfilment of **"Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Matthew 2:15)**, quoting Hosea 11:1: as God once brought Israel his son out of Egypt, so now his own Son. Herod killed the boys of Bethlehem **"from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men" (Matthew 2:16)**. Bethlehem was a small town, and the number may have been a score or so; it was still a grief, and Matthew sets it beside Rachel weeping for her children (Jeremiah 31:15).

Nazareth. When Herod died, Joseph brought the family back. Archelaus, Herod's son, now ruled Judea, and he was known for cruelty, so Joseph went to Galilee and settled at Nazareth, where he and Mary had lived before (Luke 2:39). Matthew writes that this fulfilled what was **"spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene" (Matthew 2:23)**. No single prophet says those words, and Matthew says "prophets," plural. The Hebrew word *netzer*, "branch," is the root of Nazareth's name, and the prophets more than once call the Messiah the Branch: **"there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isaiah 11:1)**. The despised town, and the Branch from the stump of David's house, are both in view.

The order of events. Luke, after the presentation in the temple, says: **"when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth" (Luke 2:39)**. He does not mention the wise men or Egypt. The two accounts fit as follows. After the presentation (forty days), the family remained at Bethlehem for a time; the wise men came; they fled to Egypt; after Herod's death they returned to Nazareth. Luke passes over the interval and moves straight to the return. Several details support the wise men coming months after the birth, not on the night of it:

- They found the family in **"the house"** (Matthew 2:11), not the stable.
- Matthew calls Jesus **"the young child"** (*paidion*), where Luke at the birth calls him **"the babe"** (*brephos*, Luke 2:12, 16).
- Herod killed boys up to two years old, by the time the wise men had told him.
- At the presentation, Joseph and Mary offered the gift of the poor (Luke 2:24). If the wise men's gold had already come, they could have offered a lamb.

Watch for: the Gentile wise men worshipping the King while the King's own city is troubled (Matthew 2:3); each step of the child's early life tied to a prophecy.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the wise men came after the presentation, some months to two years after the birth (Order). The four details above point that way. A careful reader can fairly answer that Herod's "two years" may have been a wide margin for safety, and that Matthew 2:1 places the wise men's arrival **"when Jesus was born,"** which could mean soon after. Both readings keep every verse in both Gospels.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
EARLY CHILDHOOD · within about two years of the birth · until Herod's death					
16 ○	Wise men from the east; Herod troubled; they worship the child at the house in Bethlehem [1]	**2:1-12**	—	—	—
17 ○	The flight into Egypt	**2:13-15**	—	—	—
18 ○	Herod kills the children of Bethlehem	**2:16-18**	—	—	—
19 ●	Herod dies; the return; the family settles at Nazareth	**2:19-23**	—	2:39	—
20 ○	The child grows, filled with wisdom	—	—	**2:40**	—

[1] Placed after the presentation (event 15). Some place the wise men before it, soon after the birth; on that reading the family went to Egypt directly from Bethlehem and the presentation came first or was made before the flight. See "The order of events" above.

Section 6: The Boy in the Temple

Before You Read Luke 2:41–52

The Passover pilgrimage. "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover" (Luke 2:41). The law required the men to go up at the three pilgrim feasts (Deuteronomy 16:16); devout families went together. Families from Galilee travelled in large companies of relatives and neighbours, three or four days each way. A boy of twelve could walk with friends or other families, and it was natural that Joseph and Mary went **"a day's journey"** on the way home before they missed him (Luke 2:44).

Twelve years old. Jesus was nearing the age at which a Jewish boy took up the duties of the law for himself. After three days of searching they found him **"in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions" (Luke 2:46)**. The "doctors" were the teachers of the law, who taught in the temple courts. All who heard him **"were astonished at his understanding and answers" (Luke 2:47)**.

His first recorded words. When Mary said, **"thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing,"** he answered:

> **Luke 2:49** *And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*

Mary had said "thy father," meaning Joseph. Jesus answered with "my Father," meaning God. They did not understand (Luke 2:50). These are the first words of Jesus recorded in scripture, and they state the purpose of his whole life.

The silent years. "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them" (Luke 2:51). From twelve to about thirty the Gospels record nothing more. Later the people of Nazareth called him **"the carpenter" (Mark 6:3)** and **"the carpenter's son" (Matthew 13:55)**: he had learned and worked at Joseph's trade. The word means a builder or craftsman in wood or stone. The same verses name four brothers, **"James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas" (Matthew 13:55)**, and sisters. His

brothers did not believe in him during the ministry (John 7:5), though afterwards James and Jude did, and each wrote an epistle (James 1:1; Jude 1). Joseph is not mentioned again after the visit to the temple. At the cross Jesus gave his mother into John's care (John 19:26-27), which suggests that Joseph had died by then.

The date. If Jesus was born between about 6 and 2 B.C., he was twelve between about A.D. 7 and 11.

Watch for: "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). The Son of God grew up as a real boy, learning, obeying his parents, working with his hands.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Joseph had died before the ministry (Fit). He is never present in the ministry, while Mary and the brothers are (John 2:1-12; Mark 3:31), and at the cross Jesus provided for his mother. A careful reader can fairly answer that no verse records his death.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
THE YOUTH AT NAZARETH · about A.D. 7-11					
◆ **PASSOVER · Jesus twelve years old · Luke 2:41-42**					
21 ●	Jesus at twelve in the temple: "about my Father's business"	—	—	**2:41-50**	—
22 ●	Subject to his parents at Nazareth; increasing in wisdom and stature	—	—	**2:51-52**	—
23 ○	The years at Nazareth recalled: "the carpenter," his brothers and sisters	(13:55-56)	(6:3)	—	—

Section 7: The Voice in the Wilderness

Before You Read Matt. 3:1–17 · Mark 1:2–11 · Luke 3:1–22

The date. Luke fixes the beginning of John's ministry more carefully than any other event in the Gospels:

> **Luke 3:1** *Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, 3:2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.*

Six rulers are named. **The fifteenth year of Tiberius** is the year to be found. Tiberius became sole emperor in A.D. 14. Counted from then, his fifteenth year was A.D. 28/29, or 27/28 by the Jewish way of counting part of a year as a year. If counted from A.D. 12, when he began to share rule over the provinces with Augustus, it was A.D. 26/27. The companion study *How Long Did Christ Minister?* weighs these and places the baptism of Jesus in about A.D. 27. **"Annas and Caiaphas"** are named as high priests together for the reason given in Chapter 4 B.

John. The son of Zacharias had grown up **"in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel" (Luke 1:80)**. He was to drink no wine (Luke 1:15). He wore camel's hair and a leather girdle and ate locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3:4), as Elijah had dressed (2 Kings 1:8). He preached in the wilderness of Judea,

the barren land between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, and baptized in the Jordan, at **"Bethabara beyond Jordan"** (John 1:28) and later **"in Aenon near to Salim"** (John 3:23).

The prophecies. All four Gospels apply Isaiah 40:3 to John: **"The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Mark 1:3)**. Mark also quotes Malachi 3:1, **"Behold, I send my messenger before thy face" (Mark 1:2)**. John himself, asked who he was, answered with Isaiah's words (John 1:23).

His message. John preached **"the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4)**. "Repent" means to change one's mind and turn. Immersion in water was the sign. The crowds came from all Judea and Jerusalem. To the Pharisees and Sadducees he said that descent from Abraham was not enough (Matthew 3:7-9). Luke alone records his practical answers to the crowds, the publicans and the soldiers: share, do not take more than is due, do not extort (Luke 3:10-14). Above all he pointed away from himself to one coming after him, who would **"baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Luke 3:16)**.

Jesus baptized. Jesus came from Nazareth to be baptized. John protested, and Jesus answered:

> **Matthew 3:15** *And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.*

Jesus had no sin to repent of. In being baptized he took his place with the people he came to save, and he was publicly anointed for his work. As he came up from the water, the spirit descended **"like a dove"** and a voice came from heaven. Peter later said of this: **"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts 10:38)**. "Christ" means "anointed." Jesus later read in the synagogue at Nazareth, **"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me" (Luke 4:18)**, quoting Isaiah 61:1.

The voice from heaven. Matthew gives the words as **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17)**; Mark and Luke give **"Thou art my beloved Son"** (Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22). This is the kind of difference described in Chapter 7: Mark and Luke give the words as spoken to Jesus; Matthew gives them as a declaration to those who heard. The sense is the same.

What John's Gospel adds. The Gospel of John does not narrate the baptism. It records John the Baptist's later testimony about it: **"I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him" (John 1:32)**, and that God had told John this would be the sign of the one who baptizes with the Holy Ghost (John 1:33-34).

John's imprisonment. Luke finishes his account of John's preaching by telling, in advance, how Herod Antipas later put him in prison (Luke 3:19-20). It is told here to close John's story before Jesus' begins; in time it came months later, after the events of John 1-3 (John 3:24 says John was **"not yet cast into prison"**). The grid marks it †.

Watch for: John's humility (**"whose shoes I am not worthy to bear" (Matthew 3:11)**); the Father's voice declaring his Son, and the spirit given to him; Luke alone noting that Jesus was praying (Luke 3:21).

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the baptism took place in about A.D. 27 (Date). It rests on the fifteenth year of Tiberius and "about thirty," weighed in the companion study. A careful reader can fairly answer that other reckonings of Tiberius' reign move it by a year or two. **Reasonable inference — that Luke 3:19-20 is told in advance (Order),** on the direct statement of John 3:24.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST · about A.D. 27 · "the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar"					
24 ●	The word of God comes to John in the wilderness; the rulers named	—	—	**3:1-2**	—
25 ●	John preaches repentance: "the voice of one crying in the wilderness"	3:1-6	1:2-6	**3:3-6**	(1:23)
26 ●	John warns the Pharisees and Sadducees, the crowds, the publicans and the soldiers	3:7-10	—	**3:7-14**	—
27 ●	John points to one mightier, who will baptize with the Holy Ghost	3:11-12	1:7-8	**3:15-18**	(1:26-27)
28 ○	Luke tells John's later imprisonment in advance	—	—	3:19-20 †	—
29 ●	Jesus baptized; the spirit descends; the voice from heaven	**3:13-17**	1:9-11	3:21-22	(1:32-34)

Section 8: The Temptation in the Wilderness

Before You Read Matt. 4:1–11 · Mark 1:12–13 · Luke 4:1–13

Straight from the Jordan. Mark joins the temptation to the baptism with one word: **"And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness" (Mark 1:12)**. Matthew says Jesus was **"led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matthew 4:1)**. The same spirit that had just come upon him at the Jordan now led him out to be tested. The wilderness of Judea lies between the Jordan valley and the hills of Jerusalem: bare limestone, ravines and scrub, with no towns. Mark alone adds that he **"was with the wild beasts" (Mark 1:13)**.

Forty days. Israel had been tested forty years in the wilderness. Moses had said to them, **"thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee" (Deuteronomy 8:2)**. Israel failed that test again and again. Now the Son of God was tested forty days, and every answer he gave came from the same chapters of Deuteronomy that speak of Israel's testing.

The three temptations. The devil came to him when he was hungry.

1. **Bread.** "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." He answered from Deuteronomy 8:3: **"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4)**.
2. **The pinnacle of the temple.** The devil quoted scripture himself, Psalm 91:11-12, leaving out the words "in all thy ways," and urged him to throw himself down. He answered from Deuteronomy 6:16: **"It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:7)**.
3. **The kingdoms of the world.** The devil showed him **"all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" (Matthew 4:8)**, and offered them for one act of worship. Luke records the devil's claim: **"for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it" (Luke 4:6)**. Jesus did not dispute the claim. Later he called the devil **"the prince of this world" (John 14:30)**. He answered from

Deuteronomy 6:13: **"Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10)**.

Each temptation invited him to act apart from his Father's word: to provide for himself, to test God's promise, to take the kingdom without the cross. Each time he answered **"It is written."** He met the adversary as any man of God may meet him, with the written word believed and spoken. **"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15)**.

The order of the temptations. Matthew and Luke give the last two in different order. Matthew has the temple second and the kingdoms third; Luke has the kingdoms second and the temple third. Matthew joins them with time words: **"Then"** (Matthew 4:5) and **"Again"** (Matthew 4:8). Matthew's account also ends naturally with **"Get thee hence"** and **"Then the devil leaveth him" (Matthew 4:11)**. Luke joins them with a plain "and," which does not claim a sequence. Luke may have closed with the temple because Jerusalem is where his Gospel climbs and ends.

"For a season." Luke adds: **"he departed from him for a season" (Luke 4:13)**. The contest was not over. It would return in the voices of men, even of Peter (Matthew 16:23), and at the end, in **"your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53)**.

Watch for: each answer taken from Deuteronomy; the devil quoting scripture out of its setting; angels ministering to him at the end (Matthew 4:11; Mark 1:13).

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Matthew gives the temptations in their order of time (Order). His "then" and "again," and the dismissal "Get thee hence" closing the account, favour it. A careful reader can fairly answer that Matthew's "again" can mean "on another occasion" without fixing the sequence. Either way both accounts record the same three temptations, and the grid places the event once.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
THE BEGINNING OF THE MINISTRY · about A.D. 27-28 · after the baptism					
30 ●	Led by the spirit into the wilderness; forty days; three temptations; angels minister [1]	**4:1-11**	1:12-13	4:1-13	—

[1] Matthew and Luke give the second and third temptations in different order. Matthew ties them with "then" and "again" (Matthew 4:5, 8); Luke uses plain "and." See "The order of the temptations" above.

Section 9: John's Witness and the First Disciples

Before You Read John 1:19–51

Where John's Gospel takes up the story. The Gospel of John does not narrate the baptism or the temptation. It begins its account of the ministry with John the Baptist's testimony, which came after both. When John says **"I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him" (John 1:32)**, he speaks of the baptism as past. The forty days in the wilderness fall between the baptism and these days at **"Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing" (John 1:28)**.

Four days counted. John marks the days carefully:

- **The first day.** Priests and Levites came from Jerusalem to ask John who he was. He said, **"I am not the Christ"** (John 1:20), nor Elias, nor **"that prophet"** promised by Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15). He was only **"the voice of one crying in the wilderness" (John 1:23)**.
- **"The next day"** (John 1:29). Seeing Jesus coming, John said, **"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)**. Every Israelite knew the lamb of the daily sacrifice and the Passover lamb whose blood saved the firstborn in Egypt. John named the man to whom they pointed.
- **"Again the next day"** (John 1:35). John said it again, and two of his disciples followed Jesus. One was Andrew. The other is not named, and he is usually taken to be John, the writer of the Gospel, who never names himself. It was **"about the tenth hour" (John 1:39)**, about four in the afternoon (Chapter 5 A). Andrew found his brother Simon and said, **"We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" (John 1:41)**. Jesus gave Simon a new name: **"thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone" (John 1:42)**. Cephas is Aramaic; Peter is the Greek of it.
- **"The day following"** (John 1:43). Jesus found Philip of Bethsaida, and Philip found Nathanael. Nathanael doubted: **"Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46)**. Jesus called him **"an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" (John 1:47)**, and told him he had seen him under the fig tree. Nathanael answered, **"Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49)**.

Jacob's ladder. Jesus answered Nathanael with a promise: **"Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John 1:51)**. The words recall Jacob's dream at Bethel, where Jacob saw a ladder **"and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it" (Genesis 28:12)**. Nathanael, the Israelite without guile, is told that the Son of man is the meeting place of heaven and earth. "Son of man" was the name Jesus used most often of himself (Daniel 7:13).

The first disciples. These men were not yet called to leave their work. They had been disciples of John the Baptist; they met Jesus, believed, and went with him for a time. The call to leave their nets came later, in Galilee (Section 17).

Watch for: each disciple bringing another (Andrew brings Simon, Philip brings Nathanael); the titles given to Jesus in one chapter: Lamb of God, Son of God, Messias, King of Israel, Son of man.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that the temptation came before John 1:19-51 (Order). Mark places the temptation "immediately" after the baptism (Mark 1:12), and John 1:32-34 speaks of the baptism as already past. A careful reader can fairly answer that John never mentions the temptation; that is true, but nothing in John 1 leaves room for forty days in the wilderness within the four days he counts.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
31 ●	John answers the priests and Levites: "I am not the Christ"	—	—	—	**1:19-28**
32 ●	"The next day": "Behold the Lamb of God"	—	—	—	**1:29-34**
33 ●	"Again the next day": Andrew and another disciple follow; Simon named Cephas	—	—	—	**1:35-42**
34 ●	"The day following": Philip and Nathanael	—	—	—	**1:43-51**

Section 10: The Wedding at Cana

Before You Read John 2:1–12

"The third day." John continues his count: **"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there" (John 2:1)**. Cana lay in the hills of Galilee a few miles north of Nazareth; it was Nathanael's town (John 21:2). Jesus and his disciples were invited. Mary is never named in John's Gospel; she is always "the mother of Jesus."

A wedding feast. A wedding in Israel was a feast that could last a week, and the bridegroom's family was responsible for it. To run out of wine was a public shame. Mary told Jesus, **"They have no wine" (John 2:3)**. He answered:

> **John 2:4** *Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.*

"Woman" was a respectful form of address, not a rude one; Jesus used the same word from the cross when he gave his mother into John's care (John 19:26). "What have I to do with thee?" is a Hebrew idiom meaning "what is that to you and me?" His work would be directed by his Father, not by family request. "Mine hour" runs through John's Gospel as the hour of his death and glory (John 7:30; 12:23; 13:1; 17:1). Mary understood that he would act. She said to the servants, **"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (John 2:5)**.

Water into wine. Six stone waterpots stood there **"after the manner of the purifying of the Jews"** (John 2:6), for washing hands and vessels under the tradition of the elders. Each held "two or three firkins," some twenty to thirty gallons. At his word the servants filled them to the brim, drew out, and carried to the governor of the feast. The governor did not know where it came from, and said to the bridegroom, **"thou hast kept the good wine until now" (John 2:10)**.

"The beginning of miracles." John calls the miracles of Jesus **"signs"**: works that point beyond themselves. This one he names as the first:

> **John 2:11** *This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.*

John records seven such signs before the cross, and he states his purpose in recording them at the end of his Gospel (John 20:30-31). The first was done quietly, for a household, and few knew of it except the servants and the disciples.

Capernaum. Afterwards Jesus went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers and his disciples, **"and they continued there not many days" (John 2:12)**. Capernaum, on the north shore of the sea of Galilee, would later become his home (Section 16). "Down" is exact: Cana lies in the hills, Capernaum on the lake, some seven hundred feet below sea level.

Watch for: the water of the old purifying replaced by the best wine, saved until last; the servants who knew; the disciples who believed.

Weighing it: Narrative. The only judgment in this section is that "Woman" is respectful, which rests on the same word at John 19:26 — **Reasonable inference — on the tone of John 2:4 (Fit).** A careful reader can fairly answer that the words still set a distance between the mother's request and the Son's obedience to his Father; that is true, and it is part of the point.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
35 ●	"The third day": water made wine at Cana, "the beginning of miracles"	—	—	—	**2:1-11**
36 ●	A few days at Capernaum with his mother, brothers and disciples	—	—	—	**2:12**

Section 11: The First Passover

Before You Read John 2:13–25

Up to Jerusalem. "And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem" (John 2:13). This is the first of the Passovers John names, and the first frame-post of this harmony (Introduction C). Every man of Israel was to come up to the feast (Deuteronomy 16:16), and Jerusalem filled with pilgrims from the whole land and from abroad.

The court of the temple. Pilgrims needed animals for sacrifice and the right coins for the temple tax, which had to be paid in the silver of Tyre. A market had grown up within the temple courts, in the large outer court open to Gentiles. Jesus found **"those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting" (John 2:14)**. He made a whip of small cords, drove out the animals, poured out the changers' money and overturned their tables, and said to the dove-sellers:

> **John 2:16** *And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.*

He called the temple **"my Father's house,"** as he had at twelve (Luke 2:49). His disciples remembered Psalm 69:9: **"The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (John 2:17)**.

"Destroy this temple." The Jews asked for a sign of his authority. He answered:

> **John 2:19** *Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*

They took him to mean the building: **"Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" (John 2:20)**. John explains: **"But he spake of the temple of his body" (John 2:21)**.

Even his disciples did not understand it until **"he was risen from the dead"** (John 2:22). Three years later, at his trial, false witnesses twisted these words against him (Mark 14:57-58), and at the cross men mocked him with them (Mark 15:29).

Forty-six years. Herod the Great began rebuilding the temple in the eighteenth year of his reign, about 20/19 B.C., according to Josephus. Forty-six years from then reaches about A.D. 27/28. The companion study *How Long Did Christ Minister?* uses this as one anchor for the date of this Passover, about A.D. 28 or 29.

Two cleansings. Matthew, Mark and Luke record a cleansing of the temple in the last week (Section 63). John records one at the first Passover. The two accounts differ: John's has the whip of cords, the oxen and sheep, the words "house of merchandise," and a demand for a sign answered with "Destroy this temple." The later one has the words **"My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matthew 21:13)**, quoting Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11, and leads directly to the plot to kill him. Jesus opened and closed his public ministry in Jerusalem with the same act.

Believing on signs. Many believed in his name at the feast, **"when they saw the miracles which he did" (John 2:23)**. These miracles are not described. But **"Jesus did not commit himself unto them... for he knew what was in man" (John 2:24-25)**: belief that rests only on wonders may not last (John 6:26, 66).

Watch for: "my Father's house"; the first saying about three days; the disciples understanding only after the resurrection.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the temple was cleansed twice (Fit). The settings, the words spoken and the outcomes differ, and John places his account by a dated Passover. A careful reader can fairly answer that John may have placed a single cleansing at the beginning for his own purpose. But John's account is fixed by a time word and a feast, and the forty-six years fit the beginning of the ministry, not its end. **Reasonable inference — for about A.D. 28 or 29 (Date),** from the forty-six years and the companion study.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
FROM THE FIRST PASSOVER · about A.D. 28 or 29					
◆ **PASSOVER · the first of the ministry · spring · John 2:13**					
37 ●	The first cleansing of the temple: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" [1]	—	—	—	**2:13-22**
38 ●	Many believe at the feast, seeing the miracles	—	—	—	**2:23-25**

[1] Distinct from the cleansing in the last week (Section 63). See "Two cleansings" above.

Section 12: Nicodemus

Before You Read John 3:1–21

A ruler by night. "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews" (John 3:1). A ruler was a member of the council, the Sanhedrin (Chapter 4 C). He came by night, perhaps from caution, perhaps for a quiet hour. He began politely: **"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2)**. He spoke of the signs at the Passover (Section 11).

"Ye must be born again." Jesus went straight past the compliment:

> **John 3:3** *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

The word translated "again" (*anōthen*) can also mean "from above" (it is so translated in John 3:31). Nicodemus took it in the first sense and asked how a grown man could enter his mother's womb. Jesus explained that the birth he meant is **"of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5)**: **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6)**. Like the wind, the spirit cannot be seen, but its effect can (John 3:8).

"A master of Israel." Jesus said, **"Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" (John 3:10)**. The prophets had promised a new heart and a new spirit: **"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you" (Ezekiel 36:26)**. A teacher of Israel should have known the promise. Its fulfilment was still future. John says later that **"the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39)**. The new birth Jesus described to Nicodemus became available after his death, resurrection and ascension, when the promised spirit was poured out at Pentecost (Acts 2:32-33; 1 Peter 1:3, 23).

The serpent lifted up. Jesus pointed to the account of the brass serpent in Numbers 21:8-9, where whoever looked at it lived:

> **John 3:14** *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

"Lifted up" in John means the cross (John 12:32-33). Then follows the best-known verse of the Bible, **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)**: the gift of the Son is God's own act of love.

Where do the words of Jesus end? The Greek has no quotation marks. Some readers take Jesus' words to Nicodemus as running to the end of verse 21; others take them as ending at verse 15, with verses 16-21 John's own reflection on them. Either way the words stand in scripture with the same authority.

Nicodemus afterwards. He appears twice more: defending Jesus' right to a hearing before the council (John 7:50-51), and bringing a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes to bury him (John 19:39). The man who came by night came in the open at the end.

Watch for: "born again" and "from above"; the brass serpent as a picture of the cross; light and darkness (John 3:19-21), with Nicodemus coming by night.

Weighing it: Neutral — on where Jesus' words end in John 3 (Fit). Both readings are held, and the text decides nothing either way. **Strong inference — that the new birth was promised here and given after Pentecost (Fit),** on the direct statement of John 7:39 and Acts 2:32-33; a careful reader can fairly answer that Jesus speaks to Nicodemus as though he should understand it already, which is true of the promise, not of its fulfilment.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
39 ●	Nicodemus comes by night: "Ye must be born again"; "God so loved the world"	—	—	—	**3:1-21**

Section 13: John's Last Witness

Before You Read John 3:22–4:3

Two ministries side by side. After the Passover, **"came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judæa; and there he tarried with them, and baptized" (John 3:22)**. John adds a correction later: **"Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples" (John 4:2)**. At the same time John the Baptist was baptizing **"in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there" (John 3:23)**. The site is uncertain; it was probably in the Jordan valley, where springs are plentiful.

"Not yet cast into prison." John adds a note that matters for the order of the whole harmony: **"For John was not yet cast into prison" (John 3:24)**. Matthew and Mark begin their account of Jesus' ministry in Galilee after John's imprisonment (Matthew 4:12; Mark 1:14). John's Gospel shows that before that, there was a ministry in Judea of some months, which the other three pass over. This is why the harmony places John 1:19-4:42 between the baptism and the Galilean ministry.

"He must increase." John's disciples came to him troubled: the one he had baptized was now baptizing, and **"all men come to him" (John 3:26)**. John answered with a picture from a wedding. The bride belongs to the bridegroom; the bridegroom's friend rejoices to hear his voice.

> **John 3:29** *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.*

These are the last recorded words of John the Baptist about Jesus in this Gospel. The verses that follow (John 3:31-36) may continue John's words or be the writer's comment; again the Greek has no quotation marks. They end with a plain contrast: **"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36)**.

Leaving Judea. When the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard he made and baptized more disciples than John, **"He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee" (John 4:3)**. Matthew links the move to John's arrest: **"Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee" (Matthew 4:12)**. Both reasons stand together: the growing hostility of the Pharisees in Judea, and the silencing of John by Herod. The road to Galilee led through Samaria (Section 14).

How long in Judea? John does not say. If the saying about **"four months, and then cometh harvest" (John 4:35)** marks the season, Jesus left Judea in winter, eight months or so after the Passover (Section 14).

Watch for: John's joy, not envy; the note that John was not yet in prison; the Pharisees' attention turning from John to Jesus.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that a ministry in Judea came before John's imprisonment (Order). John 3:24 says so. **Reasonable inference — that the Galilean ministry of Matthew and Mark begins after John 4:43 (Order).** Matthew 4:12 and Mark 1:14 tie its start to John's imprisonment; a careful reader can fairly answer that the return to Galilee in John 4:3 and in Matthew 4:12 could be two journeys, but the grid's order keeps every verse in sequence either way.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
40 ●	Jesus' disciples baptize in Judea; John at Aenon: "He must increase, but I must decrease"	—	—	—	**3:22-36**
41 ●	Jesus leaves Judea for Galilee, the Pharisees having heard of his disciples [1]	(4:12)	(1:14)	—	**4:1-3**

[1] Matthew and Mark connect the departure with John's imprisonment (Matthew 4:12; Mark 1:14). Their own accounts of the return to Galilee are in Section 15.

Section 14: The Woman of Samaria

Before You Read John 4:4–42

"He must needs go through Samaria." The direct road from Judea to Galilee ran through the hill country of Samaria, a journey of about three days. Many Jews went around it, by the Jordan valley, to avoid the Samaritans. John says Jesus **"must needs go through Samaria" (John 4:4)**: the short road, and an appointment.

The Samaritans. When Assyria carried away the northern kingdom of Israel, it settled people from other lands in its cities (2 Kings 17:24). They mixed with the Israelites who remained and learned to fear the LORD while still serving their own gods (2 Kings 17:33). In Jesus' day the Samaritans held only the five books of Moses as scripture, worshipped on Mount Gerizim, where they had once had a temple, and looked for a coming prophet. Jews and Samaritans despised each other: **"the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9)**.

Jacob's well. Jesus came to Sychar, near the ground Jacob gave to Joseph (Genesis 48:22; Joshua 24:32). The well is still there, deep and fed by springs. Wearied, he sat by it about **"the sixth hour" (John 4:6)**, noon. A woman came to draw water at the hottest hour, alone.

Living water. He asked her for a drink, and then offered her **"living water" (John 4:10)**, which in its plain sense meant running water from a spring. He meant more: **"whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14)**. He told her she had had five husbands and that the man

she now had was not her husband. She turned to the old dispute: where should men worship, on Gerizim or at Jerusalem?

> **John 4:23** *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

He also said, **"salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22)**: the promises came through Israel. When she spoke of the Messias who would come and tell all things, he answered, **"I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:26)**. It is the plainest statement of who he was that he made to anyone before the end of his ministry, and it was made to a Samaritan woman of poor reputation.

Fields white to harvest. The disciples returned with food and were surprised to find him speaking with a woman. He told them, **"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34)**, and pointed to the fields:

> **John 4:35** *Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.*

Even as he spoke, the men of Sychar were coming out across the fields toward him.

The season. If "four months, and then cometh harvest" describes the time of year, the barley harvest at Passover was four months off, and it was about December or January. If it is a proverb about the time from sowing to reaping, it tells nothing of the season. The companion study rates the question neutral for the length of the ministry.

"The Saviour of the world." The Samaritans believed, first because of the woman's word, then because of his own, and said, **"this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John 4:42)**. He stayed with them two days. Later, when the twelve were sent out, they were told not to enter any Samaritan city (Matthew 10:5); but after Pentecost the gospel went to Samaria first of all (Acts 1:8; 8:5-14).

Watch for: a Jew asking a Samaritan woman for water; living water and the water of the well; the woman leaving her waterpot (John 4:28).

Weighing it: Neutral — on the season of John 4:35 (Date). Both readings are held, and neither can be proved. The grid's period band says "possibly winter" for that reason.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
THROUGH SAMARIA · possibly winter, "four months" before harvest					
42 ●	At Jacob's well: living water; "God is a Spirit"; "I that speak unto thee am he"	—	—	—	**4:4-26**
43 ●	The disciples return; "the fields… are white already to harvest"	—	—	—	**4:27-38**
44 ●	Many Samaritans of Sychar believe: "this is indeed the Christ"	—	—	—	**4:39-42**

Section 15: The Return to Galilee

Before You Read Matt. 4:12, 17 · Mark 1:14–15 · Luke 4:14–15 · John 4:43–54

In the power of the spirit. Luke opens the Galilean ministry in four words of strength: **"And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee" (Luke 4:14)**. John adds that the Galileans received him, **"having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast" (John 4:45)**. The Passover of John 2 had prepared his welcome. John also records Jesus' own saying, **"a prophet hath no honour in his own country" (John 4:44)**, which Nazareth would soon prove (Section 16).

The message. Matthew and Mark give the heart of his preaching:

> **Mark 1:14** *Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

"The kingdom of God" was the kingdom promised to Israel by the prophets, the rule of God through his anointed king on David's throne (Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 2:44). Matthew, writing especially for Jewish readers, usually says **"the kingdom of heaven"** (Matthew 4:17). The two names mean the same kingdom: Jesus uses them side by side in Matthew 19:23-24. It was "at hand" because the King was present and offering it to Israel.

The Galilean ministry. From here to Section 34 the harmony follows Jesus' work in Galilee, centred on Capernaum and the towns around the lake. It is the longest part of his ministry and occupies the larger part of Matthew, Mark and Luke. John records only a little of it, because John follows chiefly what Jesus did and said at Jerusalem.

The nobleman's son. Jesus came again to Cana. A nobleman (the Greek word means an officer of the king, that is, of Herod Antipas) came up from Capernaum, some twenty miles away, and begged him to come down and heal his son, who was at the point of death. Jesus said, **"Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe" (John 4:48)**. The man pressed him: **"Sir, come down ere my child die" (John 4:49)**. Jesus answered:

> **John 4:50** *Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.*

He believed before he saw. On the way home his servants met him with the news, and the fever had left the boy **"at the seventh hour" (John 4:52)**, about one in the afternoon, the very hour Jesus spoke. **"This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judæa into Galilee" (John 4:54)**. Both of John's Galilean signs so far were done at Cana, and both were done by a word.

Watch for: the power of the spirit at the start of the ministry; the nobleman believing the word before the sign; healing at a distance of twenty miles.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that Matthew 4:12, 17, Mark 1:14-15, Luke 4:14-15 and John 4:43-45 describe the same return to Galilee (Order). All four place the return at the start of the Galilean ministry, and John's note that John the Baptist was not yet in prison (John 3:24) shows that the imprisonment Matthew and Mark mention came between. A careful reader can fairly answer that the Gospels do not say so in one sentence; but no other return to Galilee in this period is recorded.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
THE MINISTRY IN GALILEE · about A.D. 28-30					
45 ●	Into Galilee in the power of the spirit: "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"	4:12, 17	1:14-15	4:14-15	**4:43-45**
46 ●	At Cana: the nobleman's son healed at Capernaum, "the second miracle"	—	—	—	**4:46-54**

Section 16: Rejected at Nazareth

Before You Read Matt. 4:13–16 · Luke 4:16–30

"As his custom was." Luke tells of a sabbath at Nazareth, **"where he had been brought up" (Luke 4:16)**. Jesus went into the synagogue, **"as his custom was"**, and stood up to read. A synagogue service had a reading from the law and a reading from the prophets, and any man of the congregation might be asked to read and to speak. The scroll of Isaiah was handed to him, and he found the place now called Isaiah 61:

> **Luke 4:18** *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 4:19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*

He stopped there, in the middle of a sentence. Isaiah goes on: **"and the day of vengeance of our God" (Isaiah 61:2)**. The day of vengeance belongs to another time; the companion study *How Long Did Christ Minister?* (Chapter 2) examines what the "acceptable year" means. He rolled up the scroll, sat down, the posture of a teacher, and said, **"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21)**.

"Is not this Joseph's son?" The people wondered at his gracious words, but they knew him as the son of a local craftsman. Jesus anticipated their demand: **"Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country" (Luke 4:23)**. The words show that some works had already been done at Capernaum (John 2:12; 4:46-54) before this visit. He reminded them that in Elijah's day the prophet was sent to a widow of Sarepta in Sidon, and in Elisha's day the only leper cleansed was Naaman the Syrian (1 Kings 17:9; 2 Kings 5:14): God's grace had gone to Gentiles when Israel refused it.

Cast out. They were filled with wrath, thrust him out of the city, and led him to **"the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong" (Luke 4:29)**. Nazareth sits in a bowl of hills with steep slopes. **"But he passing through the midst of them went his way" (Luke 4:30)**. His hour had not come.

To Capernaum. Matthew records the result: **"leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim" (Matthew 4:13)**. Matthew sees it as the fulfilment of Isaiah 9:1-2, where the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, the first to be carried away by Assyria, is promised a great light:

> **Matthew 4:16** *The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.*

Capernaum was a busy town on the trade road, with a customs house (Mark 2:14) and a garrison with a centurion (Luke 7:2). From here on it is called **"his own city" (Matthew 9:1)**.

Two visits to Nazareth. Matthew and Mark record a later visit to Nazareth (Section 32), in which the people again ask, "Is not this the carpenter?" Some readers think Luke tells that same visit early, as a picture of the whole ministry. But the two accounts differ: in Luke the people try to kill him, and he passes through them; in Mark he stays long enough to heal a few sick folk and marvels at their unbelief (Mark 6:5-6). Mark's visit comes after the raising of Jairus' daughter. The harmony takes them as two visits.

Watch for: where Jesus stopped reading in Isaiah 61; the Gentiles in his sermon; the first attempt on his life, in his own town.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Jesus was rejected at Nazareth twice (Fit). The details and the outcomes differ, and Mark's visit is fixed later by its setting. A careful reader can fairly answer that Luke often arranges by subject at the opening of a section, and may have brought the one visit forward. Both readings keep every verse.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
47 ○	In the synagogue at Nazareth: "This day is this scripture fulfilled"; they try to cast him down [1]	—	—	**4:16-30**	—
48 ○	He leaves Nazareth and dwells at Capernaum, "by the sea coast"	**4:13-16**	—	—	—

[1] Distinct from the later visit to Nazareth in Section 32. See "Two visits to Nazareth" above.

Section 17: Fishers of Men

Before You Read Matt. 4:18–22 · Mark 1:16–20 · Luke 5:1–11

Men he already knew. Simon, Andrew, James and John had met Jesus months before, at the Jordan (Section 9). They had believed and gone with him for a time, and then returned to their trade. Now came the call to leave it.

At the nets. Mark tells it in a few lines. Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw Simon and Andrew casting a net into the sea, **"for they were fishers" (Mark 1:16)**.

> **Mark 1:17** *And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. 1:18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.*

A little farther on he saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee, mending their nets in the boat, and called them; they left their father **"with the hired servants" (Mark 1:20)**. Zebedee's family had a business large enough to hire men. Fishing on the lake was done mainly at night, with casting nets from the shore and larger nets from boats.

The great catch. Luke tells more. The crowd pressed on Jesus by the lake of Gennesaret (Luke's name for the sea of Galilee). He saw two boats drawn up and the fishermen washing their nets. He got into Simon's boat, asked him to push out a little, and taught the people from it. Then he told Simon to put out into the deep and let down the nets.

> **Luke 5:5** *And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.*

The nets broke with the catch, and both boats began to sink. Simon fell at Jesus' knees: **"Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8)**. Jesus answered, **"Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men" (Luke 5:10)**. They brought the boats to land, **"forsook all, and followed him" (Luke 5:11)**.

One call or two? Most readers take Luke's account as the same call that Matthew and Mark tell briefly. The men, the place, the saying about catching men, and the result (they left all and followed) are the same. Matthew and Mark give the call; Luke gives the event that led to it. Others take Luke's account as a second, later call, because in Matthew and Mark the men are casting and mending their nets, while in Luke they have finished and are washing them, and because Luke tells it after the sabbath at Capernaum, while Mark tells it before. The grid follows Mark's order and marks Luke's account †.

Watch for: Peter's obedience before understanding, "at thy word"; his sense of sin in the presence of holiness; the promise turning fishermen into fishers of men (Jeremiah 16:16 uses the same picture).

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Luke 5:1-11 is the same call as Matthew 4:18-22 and Mark 1:16-20 (Fit). The persons, the place, the saying and the outcome agree. A careful reader can fairly answer that the details of the nets differ and Luke's order differs; that is true, and it is why the grid marks the placement ○. **Reasonable inference — that Mark's order is the order of time (Order),** since Mark ties the sabbath at Capernaum directly to the call with "straightway" (Mark 1:21).

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
49 ○	The call of four fishermen: "I will make you fishers of men"; the great catch [1]	4:18-22	1:16-20	**5:1-11** †	—

[1] Luke's account adds the great catch of fish and Jesus teaching from Peter's boat. Most readers take it as the same call told more fully; some take it as a second, later call. See "One call or two?" above.

Section 18: A Sabbath at Capernaum

Before You Read Matt. 8:14–17 · Mark 1:21–34 · Luke 4:31–41

One day at Capernaum. Mark gives a full sabbath day in the life of Jesus, from the morning synagogue to the evening crowd at the door. Luke follows the same order.

In the synagogue. "And straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught" (Mark 1:21). The people noticed the difference at once:

> **Mark 1:22** *And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.*

The scribes taught by quoting the opinions of earlier teachers. Jesus spoke on his own authority, given him by his Father (John 7:16; 12:49).

The unclean spirit. A man with an unclean spirit cried out: **"Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24)**. Jesus did not accept testimony from such a source: **"Hold thy peace, and come out of him" (Mark 1:25)**. The spirit threw the man down and came out, and Luke the physician notes that it **"hurt him not" (Luke 4:35)**. The people asked, **"What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him" (Mark 1:27)**. This is the first casting out of a spirit recorded in Mark. The Gospels treat such spirits as real, personal beings, servants of the adversary, distinct from ordinary sickness, though they could cause it.

Peter's house. From the synagogue they went to the house of Simon and Andrew. Simon was married (1 Corinthians 9:5), and his wife's mother lay sick of a fever; Luke calls it **"a great fever" (Luke 4:38)**. Jesus took her by the hand and lifted her up, **"and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them" (Mark 1:31)**. Her first act on being healed was to serve.

At sunset. The sabbath ended at sunset (Chapter 5 A). Until then no one would carry a sick person through the streets. **"And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils" (Mark 1:32)**. The whole town gathered at the door. Luke adds that **"he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them" (Luke 4:40)**. He did not allow the devils to speak, **"because they knew him" (Mark 1:34)**. Matthew sees in these healings the fulfilment of Isaiah 53:4: **"Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matthew 8:17)**.

Matthew's arrangement. Matthew tells the healing of Peter's wife's mother and the evening healings in chapter 8, after the Sermon on the Mount, among a group of miracles (Chapter 7 D). Mark and Luke both place them on this sabbath, before the first tour of Galilee. The grid follows Mark and Luke and marks Matthew's verses †.

Watch for: authority in teaching and authority over spirits; the townspeople waiting for sunset to carry their sick; a healed woman rising to serve.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that these three events fell on one sabbath at Capernaum (Order). Mark ties them together with "straightway," "forthwith" and "at even, when the sun did set," and Luke agrees. A careful reader can fairly answer that Matthew places two of them later; but Matthew gives no time word tying them to the Sermon on the Mount.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
50 ●	In the synagogue at Capernaum: the man with an unclean spirit	—	1:21-28	**4:31-37**	—
51 ●	Peter's wife's mother healed of a fever	8:14-15 †	**1:29-31**	4:38-39	—
52 ●	At sunset, when the sabbath ended: many healed	8:16-17 †	**1:32-34**	4:40-41	—

Section 19: The First Tour of Galilee

Before You Read Matt. 4:23–25, 8:2–4 · Mark 1:35–45 · Luke 4:42–44, 5:12–16

Before dawn. After the crowded evening at Peter's door, Mark records:

> **Mark 1:35** *And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.*

The Gospels often show Jesus praying alone, especially before great choices (Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18). Simon and the others found him and said, **"All men seek for thee" (Mark 1:37)**. Capernaum wanted him to stay. He answered, **"Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth" (Mark 1:38)**. Luke gives it as **"I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent" (Luke 4:43)**. His purpose was to preach; the healings went with the preaching and confirmed it.

Through all Galilee. Matthew summarizes the tour in words he will use again (Matthew 9:35):

> **Matthew 4:23** *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.*

Galilee was thickly populated, with many towns and villages. His fame went through **"all Syria"**, the Roman province to the north, and great crowds followed him from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and **"from beyond Jordan" (Matthew 4:25)**.

The leper. In one of the cities a leper came to him. Leprosy in scripture covered a range of skin diseases, and the law required the leper to live apart and cry **"Unclean, unclean"** (Leviticus 13:45-46). Luke the physician says the man was **"full of leprosy" (Luke 5:12)**. He knelt and said, **"If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean" (Mark 1:40)**. He did not doubt the power, only the willingness.

> **Mark 1:41** *And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.*

Under the law, touching a leper made a man unclean. Here the touch went the other way: the leper was cleansed. Jesus then told him to say nothing, but to **"shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them" (Mark 1:44)**. The law of Leviticus 14 provided for the cleansing of a leper, but it was rarely if ever needed. A cleansed leper standing before the priest was a testimony that something new had come.

The silence broken. The man told everyone, and Jesus **"could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places" (Mark 1:45)**. Several times Jesus asked those he healed to keep silent. Crowds who came for wonders hindered the preaching, and popular excitement about a king could bring the work to a premature end (John 6:15). **"And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed" (Luke 5:16)**.

Watch for: prayer before dawn and prayer in the wilderness; preaching as the purpose; the law kept even in a miracle of grace.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the leper was healed during this first tour (Order). Mark and Luke place it here; Matthew tells it after the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 8:2-4 †), and his "when he

was come down from the mountain" (Matthew 8:1) may introduce his group of miracles rather than fix the time. A careful reader can fairly answer that Matthew's time word supports his order. The harmony follows the two Gospels that agree.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
53 ●	Prayer before dawn; "let us go into the next towns"; preaching in all Galilee	4:23-25	**1:35-39**	4:42-44	—
54 ○	A leper cleansed: "I will; be thou clean"	8:2-4 †	**1:40-45**	5:12-16	—

Section 20: Authority to Forgive

Before You Read Matt. 9:2–17 · Mark 2:1–22 · Luke 5:17–39

Opposition begins to gather. This section and the next two show the religious leaders watching Jesus with growing hostility. Mark sets five disputes in a row (Mark 2:1-3:6): over forgiveness, over eating with sinners, over fasting, over the grain fields, and over healing on the sabbath. The last ends with a plot to kill him.

Through the roof. Back at Capernaum, **"it was noised that he was in the house" (Mark 2:1)**, and the house and the doorway filled. Luke notes that Pharisees and doctors of the law had come **"out of every town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem" (Luke 5:17)**. Four men carried a paralysed man on a pallet. Unable to reach the door, they climbed to the flat roof, took up the tiles, and let him down in front of Jesus.

> **Mark 2:5** *When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.*

The scribes reasoned silently, **"why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark 2:7)**. Jesus answered their thoughts: which is easier, to say "thy sins be forgiven" or to say "Arise, and take up thy bed"? Anyone can say the first; the second can be checked. **"But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Mark 2:10)**, he told the man to rise, and he did.

Authority given. Matthew records how the crowd understood it: **"they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men" (Matthew 9:8)**. Jesus forgave as **"the Son of man"**, by authority his Father had given him (John 5:27; 17:2). The scribes were right that only God can forgive sins; they had not seen that God was doing it through the man he had sent.

Matthew called. Jesus passed the customs office at Capernaum and saw Levi, son of Alphaeus, called Matthew in the first Gospel (Matthew 9:9; Mark 2:14). Publicans collected tolls and taxes for Herod or for Rome and were despised as traitors and cheats. **"Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him" (Luke 5:27-28)**. Levi made a great feast and invited many publicans and sinners. The Pharisees complained to the disciples, and Jesus answered:

> **Mark 2:17** *When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

Matthew alone adds, **"go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice" (Matthew 9:13)**, quoting Hosea 6:6.

Fasting. John's disciples and the Pharisees fasted often; the Pharisees fasted twice a week (Luke 18:12). The law commanded only one fast, on the day of atonement. Why did Jesus' disciples not fast? He answered with a wedding picture: **"Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?" (Mark 2:19)**. But **"the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days" (Mark 2:20)**. This is the first hint in Mark of his death. Then two short parables: new cloth is not sewn on an old garment, and new wine is not put into old wineskins (**"bottles"** in the KJV). What he brought would not be patched onto the old forms of religion. Luke adds a dry observation about human nature: **"No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better" (Luke 5:39)**.

Watch for: the faith of the four friends; the scribes' silent thoughts answered aloud; Jesus at table with the despised; the first word of the bridegroom taken away.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that the power to forgive was given to the Son of man by God (Fit). Matthew 9:8 states it as the crowd's understanding, and John 5:27 states it in Jesus' own words. A careful reader can fairly answer that the scribes' objection, "who can forgive sins but God only?", is left unanswered in words; but the answer given is the act, done so that they might know what authority "the Son of man" had received.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
55 ●	The paralytic let down through the roof: "Thy sins be forgiven thee"	9:2-8 †	**2:1-12**	5:17-26	—
56 ●	Matthew (Levi) called; the feast with publicans and sinners	9:9-13	**2:13-17**	5:27-32	—
57 ●	The question of fasting; new wine and old bottles	9:14-17	**2:18-22**	5:33-39	—

Section 21: The Feast at Jerusalem

Before You Read John 5:1–47

An unnamed feast. "After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem" (John 5:1). John does not say which feast. Some copies read "the feast," which would most naturally mean the Passover; most read "a feast." The companion study *How Long Did Christ Minister?* (Chapter 5 B) weighs the candidates: Passover, Purim, Pentecost or Tabernacles. It judges the feast probably not a Passover, since John names the Passover plainly everywhere else, but finds the question open. On this verse turns the choice between a ministry of about two and a half years and about three and a half.

Bethesda. Near the sheep gate was a pool called Bethesda, with five porches (John 5:2). The remains of a double pool with colonnades have been found near the church of St Anne in Jerusalem. A great number of sick, blind, lame and withered lay there waiting for the water to move. Verse 4 explains that an angel troubled the water at a certain season, and the first to step in was healed. The verse is in the KJV and in most later manuscripts, but not in several of the oldest; some think it a note explaining the

people's belief, added to the text. Verse 7 shows the belief either way: the sick man had no one to put him in **"when the water is troubled."**

Thirty-eight years. One man had been infirm thirty-eight years, as long as Israel wandered in the wilderness after Kadesh (Deuteronomy 2:14). Jesus asked him, **"Wilt thou be made whole?" (John 5:6)**. The man complained that no one helped him. Jesus said, **"Rise, take up thy bed, and walk" (John 5:8)**, and immediately he was made whole and walked.

The sabbath. It was the sabbath, and the Jews told the man it was not lawful to carry his bed. Jeremiah had forbidden carrying burdens on the sabbath (Jeremiah 17:21), and the elders had built many rules on that command. Later Jesus found the man in the temple and told him, **"Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14)**.

"My Father worketh hitherto." The Jews persecuted Jesus and sought to kill him because he did these things on the sabbath. He answered, **"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17)**. They took this as a claim to be **"equal with God" (John 5:18)**. That was their charge. His answer, which follows, describes a Son who does nothing apart from his Father:

> **John 5:19** *Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.*

All that he has is given: the Father **"hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (John 5:27)**. The Son does the Father's works and is to be honoured as the Father's representative (John 5:23).

Four witnesses. He named those who testified of him: John the Baptist (John 5:33), the works the Father had given him to finish (John 5:36), the Father himself (John 5:37), and the scriptures: **"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39)**. Last of all, Moses: **"had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me" (John 5:46)**.

Watch for: the question "Wilt thou be made whole?"; the first plot to kill him in John's Gospel; a Son who does "nothing of himself."

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the feast of John 5:1 was not a Passover (Date), following the companion study. A careful reader can fairly answer that some manuscripts read "the feast" and that an early writer counted it a Passover; the question is open, and the grid's band says so. **Reasonable inference — that John 5:18 records the Jews' charge and John 5:19-30 Jesus' answer to it (Fit).** A careful reader can fairly answer that John narrates verse 18 in his own voice; but the reason he gives is the Jews' reason for seeking to kill him, and Jesus' answer that follows grounds everything he does in the Father.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
◆ "A FEAST OF THE JEWS" · the feast is not named; possibly a Passover · John 5:1					
58 ○	The man healed at the pool of Bethesda on the sabbath [1]	—	—	—	**5:1-15**
59 ●	The Jews seek to kill him; "the Son can do nothing of himself"; four witnesses	—	—	—	**5:16-47**

[1] The feast is not named. Its identity, and so the length of the ministry, is weighed above and in the companion study.

Section 22: Lord of the Sabbath

Before You Read Matt. 12:1–21 · Mark 2:23–3:12 · Luke 6:1–11

The grain fields. "And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands" (Luke 6:1). "Corn" in the KJV means grain, here barley or wheat. Ripe ears place the event in spring, between Passover and Pentecost (Chapter 5 D). Luke's "second sabbath after the first" is a single, unusual Greek word, missing from several old manuscripts; it may mean the second of the seven sabbaths counted from Passover to Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-16).

The charge. The law allowed a hungry traveller to pluck ears from a neighbour's field (Deuteronomy 23:25). The Pharisees objected only because it was the sabbath: in their rules, plucking was reaping and rubbing was threshing. Jesus answered from scripture:

- **David.** When David fled from Saul he ate the shewbread, which only priests could eat (1 Samuel 21:1-6). Mark says it was **"in the days of Abiathar the high priest" (Mark 2:26)**. In 1 Samuel the priest at Nob was Ahimelech, Abiathar's father; Abiathar was there and soon after became high priest (1 Samuel 22:20). "In the days of Abiathar" may mean in the time of the well-known high priest, as one might say "in the days of King David" of events before he was crowned.
- **The priests. "Have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?" (Matthew 12:5)**. **"But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple" (Matthew 12:6)**.
- **Mercy.** Again, as at Levi's feast, he quoted Hosea 6:6 (Matthew 12:7).

> **Mark 2:27** *And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: 2:28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.*

The withered hand. On another sabbath, in the synagogue, there was a man whose right hand was withered (Luke 6:6). The scribes and Pharisees watched to see whether Jesus would heal him, so that they might accuse him. He called the man to stand out in the middle and asked them, **"Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?" (Mark 3:4)**. They were silent. Mark records his look: **"with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts" (Mark 3:5)**. He told the man to stretch out his hand, and it was restored. Matthew adds his argument: any of them would lift a sheep out of a pit on the sabbath, **"How much then is a man better than a sheep?" (Matthew 12:12)**.

The first plot in Mark. "And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him" (Mark 3:6). The Herodians were supporters of Herod's family; they and the Pharisees were usually opponents. They joined against Jesus.

By the sea. Jesus withdrew to the sea, and a great multitude followed from Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond Jordan, and Tyre and Sidon (Mark 3:7-8). He asked for a small boat to be kept ready because of the press. Matthew sees him fulfilling Isaiah 42:1-4, the gentle Servant:

> **Matthew 12:18** *Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.*

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench" (Matthew 12:20).

The season and the year. The grain fields fall between the first Passover (John 2:13) and the Passover at the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:4). If they were in the spring before the feeding, they are in the same spring as the feeding, though all three Gospels place much between them. If they were a spring earlier, they suggest another year in the ministry, and so four Passovers. The companion study (Chapter 6 A) weighs this. The grid gives "about A.D. 29 or 30."

Watch for: the Lord of the sabbath; anger and grief together; the gentle Servant of Isaiah 42.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the grain fields were in spring, between Passover and Pentecost (Date), from the ripe grain. **Neutral — on the year of the grain fields (Date);** the order of the Gospels points to an earlier spring than the feeding, but the text does not settle it. A careful reader can fairly answer either way, and the grid leaves both years open.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
SPRING · grain ripe in the fields · about A.D. 29 or 30					
60 ●	Disciples pluck grain on "the second sabbath after the first"	12:1-8	2:23-28	**6:1-5**	—
61 ●	The man with the withered hand healed on another sabbath	12:9-14	**3:1-6**	6:6-11	—
62 ●	He withdraws to the sea; great crowds; "Behold my servant"	**12:15-21**	3:7-12	—	—

Section 23: The Twelve Chosen

Before You Read Mark 3:13–19 · Luke 6:12–16

A night of prayer. "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). When it was day he called his disciples and chose twelve of them. Of all the choices in his ministry, Luke shows this one made after the longest recorded prayer.

Why twelve? Mark gives the purpose: **"he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils" (Mark 3:14-15)**. First to be with him, then to be sent. Luke adds that he named them **"apostles" (Luke 6:13)**,

meaning "sent ones." The number matched the twelve tribes of Israel, and Jesus later promised that they would **"sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28)**. Like his own ministry at this time, theirs was to Israel (Matthew 10:5-6).

The lists. The twelve are named four times (Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13). The order varies, but the names fall into three groups of four, and each group always begins with the same man:

Group	Always first	Others in the group
First	Simon Peter	Andrew, James and John, the sons of Zebedee
Second	Philip	Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew
Third	James the son of Alphaeus	Thaddaeus (Lebbaeus), also called Judas the brother of James; Simon the Canaanite (Zelotes); Judas Iscariot

Several men have two names:

- **Bartholomew** is probably **Nathanael** (John 1:45). Bartholomew is always paired with Philip in the first three Gospels; Nathanael was brought by Philip in John, which never names Bartholomew.
- **Thaddaeus** (Mark 3:18), also called **Lebbaeus** (Matthew 10:3), is **"Judas the brother of James"** in Luke (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), and **"Judas... not Iscariot"** in John (John 14:22).
- **Simon the Canaanite** (Matthew 10:4) is **Simon Zelotes** (Luke 6:15). "Canaanite" here is not the people of Canaan but an Aramaic word meaning "zealous," which Luke translates.

James and John were surnamed **Boanerges, "The sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17)**. Peter's name always comes first. Judas Iscariot always comes last, with a note: **"which also was the traitor" (Luke 6:16)**. "Iscariot" probably means "man of Kerioth," a town in Judea (Joshua 15:25); the others were Galileans.

Ordinary men. At least four were fishermen; one was a publican; one had been a zealot, of the party that wanted to drive out Rome. They were not scholars (Acts 4:13). Their fitness lay in being with him.

Watch for: prayer before the choice; "that they should be with him"; Judas chosen with the rest after a night of prayer.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Bartholomew is Nathanael (Fit). The pairing with Philip in three lists and Philip's bringing of Nathanael in John favour it; a careful reader can fairly answer that no verse says so. **Direct statement — that Thaddaeus and Judas the brother of James are the same man (Fit),** since each list has twelve names and only this place differs.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
63 ●	A night in prayer; the twelve chosen and named apostles	(10:2-4)	3:13-19	**6:12-16**	—

Section 24: The Sermon on the Mount

Before You Read Matt. 5:1–8:1 · Luke 6:17–49

The setting. "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them" (Matthew 5:1-2). He sat, as teachers did, and taught his disciples, with the crowds listening (Matthew 7:28). Luke places the sermon just after the choosing of the twelve: Jesus **"came down with them, and stood in the plain" (Luke 6:17)**, and healed many before he spoke. Matthew gives the sermon at length, three chapters; Luke gives a shorter form, thirty verses.

One sermon or two? Matthew says "a mountain," Luke "the plain." The Greek of Luke 6:17 means "a level place," which may be a plateau on the mountainside. Both begin with blessings and end with the two builders, and most of Luke's material has a parallel in Matthew's. Most readers take them as one sermon, which Matthew gives more fully. Others take them as two, since Jesus surely repeated his teaching. The grid places them together.

The beatitudes. The sermon opens with nine blessings in Matthew, four in Luke followed by four woes. "Blessed" (Greek *makarios*) means happy, fortunate, favoured by God. Each blessing turns the world's values upside down: the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the hungry for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted. **"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5)** is Psalm 37:11. Luke's woes are the other side: **"Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation" (Luke 6:24)**.

The law fulfilled. Jesus stated his relation to the law before he taught anything about it:

> **Matthew 5:17** *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

The jot is the smallest Hebrew letter, *yod*; the tittle a small stroke that distinguishes one letter from another. He then said that his disciples' righteousness must exceed **"the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" (Matthew 5:20)**.

"But I say unto you." Six times he set **"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time"** beside **"But I say unto you"** (Matthew 5:21-44): on murder and anger, adultery and lust, divorce, oaths, retaliation, and love of neighbour. Some of what "was said" is the law itself (Exodus 20:13); some is the teachers' addition to it: **"Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy" (Matthew 5:43)**, of which the second half is in no law. In each he carried the command back from the act to the heart. He was speaking under the law, to Israel (Chapter 6), and the law was still in force; but its heart, love of God and neighbour, holds for every believer.

Love your enemies. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44), that they might be children of the Father who sends rain on the just and the unjust.

In secret. Alms, prayer and fasting were to be done for the Father who sees in secret, not to be seen of men. Here Matthew gives the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). Luke records the same prayer on another occasion, when a disciple asked to be taught (Luke 11:1-4, Section 50).

Treasure and trust. Treasure on earth or in heaven; the single eye; **"Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24)** (mammon is an Aramaic word for wealth). "Take no thought" in the KJV means "do not be anxious." The birds and the lilies are fed and clothed by the Father: **"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33)**.

Judging, asking, choosing. Judge not; the mote and the beam; ask, seek, knock. The golden rule sums up the law and the prophets (Matthew 7:12). Then a choice: the strait gate and the narrow way, or the broad way; false prophets known by their fruits; **"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21)**; and the wise and foolish builders, on rock or on sand.

Authority. "For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:29).

Watch for: "Ye have heard… But I say unto you"; "your Father" again and again; every section of the sermon turning from outward act to the heart.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Matthew 5-7 and Luke 6:17-49 record one sermon (Fit). The opening, the close, the order and most of the content agree, and "a level place" can be on a mountain. A careful reader can fairly answer that Luke places much of Matthew's material elsewhere in his Gospel (the Lord's prayer, Luke 11:2-4; the birds and lilies, Luke 12:22-31), which shows that Jesus taught the same things more than once. That is true; the grid treats the shared sermon as one occasion and the other passages as separate teaching.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
64 ●	The crowds gather; he goes up into the mountain and teaches [1]	5:1-2	—	**6:17-19**	—
65 ●	The beatitudes (and in Luke, the woes)	**5:3-12**	—	6:20-26	—
66 ●	Salt of the earth; light of the world	**5:13-16**	—	—	—
67 ●	Not to destroy the law but to fulfil it	**5:17-20**	—	—	—
68 ●	Anger, adultery, divorce and oaths: "ye have heard… but I say unto you"	**5:21-37**	—	—	—
69 ●	Turn the other cheek; love your enemies	**5:38-48**	—	6:27-36	—
70 ●	Alms, prayer and fasting in secret; the Lord's prayer	**6:1-18**	—	—	—
71 ●	Treasure in heaven; the single eye; God and mammon; take no thought	**6:19-34**	—	—	—
72 ●	Judge not; the mote and the beam	**7:1-6**	—	6:37-42	—
73 ●	Ask, seek, knock; the golden rule; the strait gate	**7:7-14**	—	—	—
74 ●	Known by their fruits; the two builders	**7:15-27**	—	6:43-49	—
75 ●	The people astonished at his authority; the crowds follow	**7:28-8:1**	—	—	—

[1] Matthew sets the sermon on "a mountain"; Luke has Jesus come down from the mountain and stand "in the plain" (Luke 6:17), a level place. Most take them as one sermon; see "One sermon or two?" above.

Section 25: The Centurion and the Widow's Son

Before You Read Matt. 8:5–13 · Luke 7:1–17

The centurion. When Jesus had finished the sermon, he entered Capernaum. A centurion, an officer over a hundred soldiers, had a servant **"who was dear unto him"** lying sick and ready to die (Luke 7:2). The centurion was a Gentile, probably in the service of Herod Antipas. The elders of the Jews spoke for him: **"he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue" (Luke 7:5)**.

"Speak the word only." As Jesus came near, the centurion sent friends with a message:

> **Matthew 8:8** *The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. 8:9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.*

He understood authority: as he gave orders because he was under Rome's authority, so Jesus could command sickness because he was under God's. Jesus marvelled: **"Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matthew 8:10)**. Matthew adds a warning: many would come from east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, while **"the children of the kingdom shall be cast out" (Matthew 8:12)**.

One account or two? In Matthew the centurion comes and speaks to Jesus himself. In Luke he sends first the elders and then friends, and never meets Jesus. Scripture often speaks of a man doing what he does through others. John says Jesus **"made and baptized more disciples than John"**, and then adds, **"Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples" (John 4:1-2)**. Matthew tells the event as the centurion's own request; Luke tells how it was carried. Both report the same words, the same faith and the same healing.

Nain. "And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain" (Luke 7:11). Nain lay about twenty-five miles southwest of Capernaum, on the slope of the hill of Moreh. At the gate he met a funeral: **"a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow" (Luke 7:12)**. With her son gone, she was alone and without support.

> **Luke 7:13** *And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. 7:14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.*

The dead man sat up and began to speak, **"And he delivered him to his mother" (Luke 7:15)**. The people said, **"That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people" (Luke 7:16)**. On the other side of the same hill lay Shunem, where Elisha had raised a mother's only son (2 Kings 4:32-37), and Elijah had raised a widow's son at Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17-24). The people saw the likeness.

Watch for: a Gentile's faith greater than Israel's; the word only; compassion before the miracle; the first raising of the dead in the Gospels.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that Matthew and Luke record the same healing of the centurion's servant (Fit). The place, the man, the words and the outcome are the same, and John 4:1-2 shows the way of speaking that explains the difference. A careful reader can fairly answer that Matthew says the centurion came "unto him"; that is the very idiom in question.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
76 ●	The centurion's servant healed: "I have not found so great faith"	8:5-13	—	**7:1-10**	—
77 ●	At Nain: the widow's son raised	—	—	**7:11-17**	—

Section 26: John's Question from Prison

Before You Read Matt. 11:2–30 · Luke 7:18–35

John in prison. John the Baptist had been in Herod's prison for some months. Josephus names the fortress of Machaerus, east of the Dead Sea. His disciples brought him news of Jesus' works, and he sent two of them with a question:

> **Matthew 11:3** *And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?*

Why did John ask? He had pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God and heard the voice from heaven. But he had also preached a coming one with an axe at the root of the trees and a fan in his hand to burn the chaff (Matthew 3:10-12). Now he heard of healing and preaching, not of judgment, and he himself lay in prison. He may have been troubled; or he may have sent his disciples so that they might hear the answer for themselves. Scripture does not say which. It does show that he took his question to Jesus.

The answer. Luke records that **"in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits" (Luke 7:21)**. Then Jesus sent the messengers back with what they had seen, in words from Isaiah (Isaiah 35:5-6; 61:1):

> **Matthew 11:5** *The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 11:6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

Like his reading at Nazareth (Section 16), the answer speaks of healing and good news and says nothing of "the day of vengeance." The judgment John preached was real, but its day had not yet come.

Jesus' witness to John. When the messengers had gone, Jesus spoke to the crowd about John. They had not gone into the wilderness to see a reed shaken by the wind, or a man in soft clothing, but a prophet, **"and more than a prophet" (Matthew 11:9)**: the messenger of Malachi 3:1. **"Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matthew 11:11)**. And, **"if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come" (Matthew 11:14)**. John came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17), though he was not Elijah returned (John 1:21).

The children in the market. That generation was like children who would neither dance to a pipe nor mourn to a lament. John came fasting, and they said he had a devil; the Son of man came eating and drinking, and they called him **"a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matthew 11:19)**. Luke adds that the common people and publicans, baptized by John, **"justified God"**, while the Pharisees and lawyers **"rejected the counsel of God against themselves" (Luke 7:29-30)**.

Woes and rest. Matthew sets next the woes on Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, which had seen most of his mighty works and not repented; Tyre, Sidon and even Sodom would have repented (Matthew 11:20-24). Then a thanksgiving that the Father had hidden these things from the wise and revealed them to babes; and an invitation:

> **Matthew 11:27** *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

Watch for: a great man's honest question; the answer given in works and scripture; "delivered unto me of my Father."

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Matthew 11:20-30 follows John's question in time (Order). Matthew introduces the woes with "Then" (Matthew 11:20) and the thanksgiving with "At that time" (Matthew 11:25). A careful reader can fairly answer that Luke gives the same woes and thanksgiving at the return of the seventy (Luke 10:13-15, 21-22). Jesus may have spoken them twice, or one Gospel arranges by subject; the grid keeps each where its writer placed it.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
78 ●	John sends from prison: "Art thou he that should come?"; Jesus' witness to John	**11:2-19**	—	7:18-35	—
79 ○	Woes on the cities of Galilee; "Come unto me, all ye that labour" [1]	**11:20-30**	—	—	—

[1] Luke gives similar woes and thanksgiving at the return of the seventy (Luke 10:13-15, 21-22, Section 48). Matthew may have gathered them here by subject, or the words were spoken twice.

Section 27: The Woman Who Was a Sinner

Before You Read Luke 7:36–8:3

At Simon's table. A Pharisee named Simon invited Jesus to eat with him. At such a meal the guests reclined on couches around a low table, leaning on the left elbow, with their feet stretched out behind them. The house was open, and others could come in and watch.

The woman. "And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner" (Luke 7:37), learned that Jesus was there and came with an alabaster box of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, washed his feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them. Luke does not name her or her sin. The town knew her.

Simon's thought. "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner" (Luke 7:39). Jesus answered the thought with a parable. A creditor had two debtors, one owing five hundred pence, the other fifty, and forgave both. Which would love him more? Simon answered, "he, to whom he forgave most." Then Jesus turned to the woman and showed Simon what he had left undone: no water for his feet, no kiss of greeting, no oil for his head. She had done all three.

> **Luke 7:47** *Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.*

Her love was the evidence of forgiveness, not the price of it; the parable shows love following forgiveness. Jesus said to her, **"Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke 7:50)**. The guests asked among themselves, **"Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" (Luke 7:49)**, the same question the scribes had raised at Capernaum (Section 20).

Who was she? Scripture does not say. Later tradition identified her with Mary Magdalene, but there is no basis for it: Mary Magdalene is introduced in the very next paragraph as a new person, one **"out of whom went seven devils" (Luke 8:2)**, and nothing connects her with this woman. Nor is she Mary of Bethany, who anointed Jesus at another time and place (Section 61).

The women who ministered. Luke then describes a tour through **"every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God" (Luke 8:1)**, with the twelve and certain women whom he had healed:

> **Luke 8:3** *And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.*

Joanna's husband managed the household of Herod Antipas. These women supported the ministry from their own means. They followed him to the end: they stood by the cross, saw where he was laid, and were the first at the empty tomb (Luke 23:49, 55; 24:10).

Watch for: what Simon left undone; love that follows forgiveness; women named among those who followed and supported him.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that this anointing is distinct from the anointing at Bethany (Fit). The place (Galilee, not Bethany), the time (the middle of the ministry, not six days before the last Passover), the woman (a sinner of the city, not Mary the sister of Lazarus) and the complaint (about her character, not the cost) all differ. A careful reader can fairly answer that both hosts are named Simon (Mark 14:3); the name was among the commonest of the day.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
80 ●	In Simon the Pharisee's house: a woman anoints his feet; "her sins, which are many, are forgiven" [1]	—	—	**7:36-50**	—
81 ●	Through every city and village with the twelve and the women who ministered to him	—	—	**8:1-3**	—

[1] Distinct from the anointing at Bethany in the last week (Section 61).

Section 28: The Charge of Beelzebub

Before You Read Matt. 12:22–50 · Mark 3:20–35 · Luke 8:19–21

"He is beside himself." Jesus came into a house, and the crowd pressed in so that they could not even eat. Mark alone records the reaction of those closest to him:

> **Mark 3:21** *And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.*

"His friends" translates a phrase meaning "those belonging to him," his family. Ten verses later his mother and brothers arrive outside, asking for him (Mark 3:31). His brothers did not believe in him during the ministry (John 7:5).

The charge of Beelzebub. A man blind and dumb, possessed with a devil, was brought and healed, and the people asked, **"Is not this the son of David?" (Matthew 12:23)**. The Pharisees, with scribes come down from Jerusalem (Mark 3:22), had an answer ready: **"This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils" (Matthew 12:24)**. Beelzebub (Baal-zebub, "lord of flies," a god of the Philistines, 2 Kings 1:2) was a name for Satan.

The answer. A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand; if Satan casts out Satan, his kingdom is finished. No one can plunder a strong man's house unless he first binds the strong man. And:

> **Matthew 12:28** *But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.*

The sin not forgiven. Then a solemn warning: all sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven (Matthew 12:31-32; Mark 3:28-29). Mark gives the reason it was spoken: **"Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit" (Mark 3:30)**. These men saw the plain work of God's spirit and called it the work of the devil. To call God's power the devil's, knowingly, is to shut the door through which forgiveness comes. The words were spoken to them, about what they had just said.

A tree and its fruit. Words reveal the heart: **"For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:37)**.

The sign of Jonah. Some asked for a sign. He refused any but one:

> **Matthew 12:40** *For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

This is the one sign he gave of himself, and he named its length exactly. The harmony returns to it at the resurrection (Section 76). The men of Nineveh repented at Jonah's preaching, and the queen of the south came to hear Solomon; **"behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Matthew 12:42)**. An unclean spirit cast out and returning with seven worse is a picture of **"this wicked generation" (Matthew 12:45)**, cleaned up outwardly and empty within.

His true family. His mother and brothers stood outside and sent for him. He looked at those sitting around him:

> **Mark 3:34** *And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! 3:35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.*

Luke tells this after the parables (Luke 8:19-21); Mark ties it to this day. The grid follows Mark and marks Luke †.

Watch for: two opposite misjudgments of Jesus on one day, "beside himself" from his family and "Beelzebub" from his enemies; the sign of Jonah's three days and three nights.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that the sin not forgiven is defined by Mark 3:30 (Fit). Mark states why the warning was given. A careful reader can fairly answer that Matthew 12:32 speaks more generally of "whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost"; but the setting in both Gospels is this charge. **Reasonable inference — that "his friends" in Mark 3:21 means his family (Fit),** from the arrival of his mother and brothers in Mark 3:31.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
82 ●	His friends go out to lay hold on him: "He is beside himself"	—	**3:20-21**	—	—
83 ●	"He casteth out devils by Beelzebub"; blasphemy against the Holy Ghost	**12:22-37**	3:22-30	—	—
84 ●	A sign sought: the sign of the prophet Jonas	**12:38-45**	—	—	—
85 ●	His mother and brothers: "whosoever shall do the will of my Father"	12:46-50	**3:31-35**	8:19-21 †	—

Section 29: Parables by the Sea

Before You Read Matt. 13:1–52 · Mark 4:1–34 · Luke 8:4–18

"The same day." Matthew ties the parables to the day of the Beelzebub charge: **"The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side" (Matthew 13:1)**. The crowd was so great that he got into a boat and taught them from the water, the people standing on the shore. A cove near Capernaum forms a natural amphitheatre where a voice carries from the water to a large crowd.

Parables. A parable sets an everyday picture beside a spiritual truth: a farmer sowing, a woman baking, a fisherman sorting his catch. Jesus used them more and more from this point on. The disciples asked why.

> **Matthew 13:11** *He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.*

He quoted Isaiah 6:9-10, of a people who hear and do not understand because their heart has grown dull (Matthew 13:14-15). The parables revealed truth to those who wanted it and veiled it from those who had already refused the plain word, as the Beelzebub charge had shown. A "mystery" in scripture is a secret now made known to those to whom God reveals it.

The sower. A sower scattered seed: some by the wayside, eaten by birds; some on stony ground, springing up and withering; some among thorns, choked; some on good ground, bearing thirty, sixty and a hundredfold. Jesus explained it himself: **"The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11)**. The four soils are four kinds of hearers. Mark adds the lamp: a candle is not put under a bushel; **"Take heed what ye hear" (Mark 4:24)**, or as Luke has it, **"Take heed therefore how ye hear" (Luke 8:18)**.

The seed growing secretly. Mark alone gives a short parable of seed that grows **"he knoweth not how" (Mark 4:27)**, the blade, then the ear, then the full corn, until the harvest. The growth belongs to God.

The kingdom parables. Matthew gathers seven:

1. **The sower** (Matthew 13:3-9).
2. **The tares**: an enemy sows weeds among the wheat; both grow together until the harvest (Matthew 13:24-30).
3. **The mustard seed**: the smallest of seeds becomes a tree where birds lodge (Matthew 13:31-32).
4. **The leaven** hidden in three measures of meal (Matthew 13:33).
5. **The treasure** hid in a field (Matthew 13:44).
6. **The pearl** of great price (Matthew 13:45-46).
7. **The net** that gathers every kind, sorted at the end (Matthew 13:47-50).

Matthew sees in this teaching the fulfilment of Psalm 78:2: **"I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 13:35)**. In the house Jesus explained the tares: the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom, the tares the children of the wicked one, the enemy the devil, the harvest **"the end of the world" (Matthew 13:39)** (the Greek is "the end of the age"). He closed with the householder who brings out of his treasure **"things new and old" (Matthew 13:52)**.

Luke's order. Luke gives the sower without a time word and tells the visit of Jesus' mother and brothers after it (Luke 8:19-21). Matthew and Mark both place the mother and brothers before the parables on the same day.

Watch for: Jesus explaining his own parables, the key to reading the rest; an enemy at work in the field; the harvest at the end of the age.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that the parables by the sea were spoken on the day of the Beelzebub charge (Order). Matthew 13:1 says "the same day," and Mark 4:35 ties the evening crossing of the lake to the same day. A careful reader can fairly answer that Matthew 13 gathers parables by subject and some may have been spoken on other days; that is possible for the later ones (Matthew 13:36 moves into the house), and the grid keeps them in Matthew's sequence.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
86 ●	From a boat: the parable of the sower	**13:1-9**	4:1-9	8:4-8	—
87 ●	Why parables; the sower explained; the candle under a bushel	**13:10-23**	4:10-25	8:9-18	—
88 ●	The seed growing secretly	—	**4:26-29**	—	—
89 ●	The tares, the mustard seed and the leaven; "without a parable spake he not"	**13:24-35**	4:30-34	—	—
90 ●	The tares explained; the treasure, the pearl, the net, the householder	**13:36-52**	—	—	—

Section 30: The Storm and the Gadarenes

Before You Read Matt. 8:18, 23–9:1 · Mark 4:35–5:20 · Luke 8:22–39

"Let us pass over." "And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side" (Mark 4:35). After a day of teaching from the boat, they set out across the lake as he was, **"And there were also with him other little ships" (Mark 4:36)**. Matthew tells this after the sermon and the centurion (Matthew 8:18, 23-27); Mark fixes it to the evening of the parable day. The grid follows Mark and marks Matthew †.

The storm. The sea of Galilee lies in a deep basin surrounded by hills, and winds can funnel down the valleys and raise sudden, violent storms. Fishermen who knew the lake were afraid for their lives. Jesus was asleep in the stern **"on a pillow" (Mark 4:38)**: the only place in the Gospels where he is said to sleep. They woke him: **"Master, carest thou not that we perish?" (Mark 4:38)**.

> **Mark 4:39** *And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 4:40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?*

They asked one another, **"What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (Mark 4:41)**. The psalmist had written of the LORD, **"He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still" (Psalm 107:29)**. The man asleep in the boat spoke, and the sea obeyed God's word in his mouth.

The country of the Gadarenes. They landed on the eastern shore, in Gentile country, the region of the Decapolis, the ten Greek cities. Herds of swine, unclean to Israel, fed on the hillsides. A man possessed with unclean spirits met him from the tombs, where he lived; he had broken every chain and cried night and day, cutting himself with stones (Mark 5:3-5). The spirits knew Jesus at once: **"What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God?" (Mark 5:7)**. Asked his name, the man answered, **"My name is Legion: for we are many" (Mark 5:9)**. A Roman legion numbered several thousand men. The spirits begged to be sent into the swine, and the herd, **"about two thousand" (Mark 5:13)**, ran down a steep place into the sea.

Sent home. The townspeople came and found the man **"sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind" (Mark 5:15)**, and were afraid, and begged Jesus to leave. The man asked to go with him, but Jesus said:

> **Mark 5:19** *Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.*

He published it through the Decapolis, **"and all men did marvel" (Mark 5:20).** In Israel Jesus often told the healed to keep silent; here, among Gentiles, where no crowd would make him king, he sent the man to tell. Jesus then crossed back **"into his own city" (Matthew 9:1)**.

Two men or one? Matthew says there were two possessed men, in **"the country of the Gergesenes" (Matthew 8:28)**; Mark and Luke tell of one man in **"the country of the Gadarenes"**. Mark and Luke follow the one who spoke, was named Legion, and asked to go with Jesus; they do not say he was alone. The place names differ also in the manuscripts: Gadara was the chief city of the district, and Gergesa (or Gerasa) a town by the shore within it.

Watch for: the only sleep of Jesus recorded; wind and sea obeying; a Gentile sent home to tell.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Mark and Luke tell of the more prominent of two men (Fit). Neither says "only one," and Matthew's two include the one they describe. A careful reader can fairly answer that this explanation is not stated; but nothing in any account contradicts it. **Strong inference — that the storm followed the day of parables (Order),** on Mark's "the same day, when the even was come."

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
91 ●	"Let us pass over": the storm stilled	8:18, 23-27 †	**4:35-41**	8:22-25	—
92 ●	In the country of the Gadarenes: Legion cast out; the swine	8:28-9:1 †	**5:1-20**	8:26-39	—

Section 31: Jairus' Daughter

Before You Read

Matt. 9:18–34 · Mark 5:21–43 · Luke 8:40–56

Back across the lake. When Jesus returned to the western shore, the people were waiting for him (Luke 8:40). Two of the greatest miracles of the Galilean ministry followed, one inside the other.

Jairus. A ruler of the synagogue, the man responsible for its services, fell at his feet: **"My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live" (Mark 5:23)**. She was about twelve years old (Mark 5:42). Jesus went with him, and the crowd thronged him.

The woman. In the crowd was a woman who had had an issue of blood twelve years, as long as Jairus' daughter had been alive. Under the law such a woman was unclean, and whatever she touched became unclean (Leviticus 15:25-27); she was shut out from worship and from ordinary company. Mark is blunt: she **"had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse" (Mark 5:26)**. Luke, himself a physician, says only that she had **"spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any" (Luke 8:43)**. She came behind and touched the border of his garment, the tassel the law commanded every Israelite to wear (Numbers 15:38), and was healed at once.

"Who touched my clothes?" Jesus knew that **"virtue had gone out of him" (Mark 5:30)**, and stopped. The disciples thought the question absurd in such a crowd. The woman came trembling and told him all the truth. He did not let her slip away healed but unnamed and still ashamed:

> **Mark 5:34** *And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.*

"Only believe." While he spoke, word came from Jairus' house: **"Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?" (Mark 5:35)**. Jesus said to Jairus at once, **"Be not afraid, only believe" (Mark 5:36)**. He took only Peter, James and John, the first time these three are set apart, and put out the mourners, who laughed at him for saying, **"the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth" (Mark 5:39)**. Scripture often calls death sleep (John 11:11-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14): a real death, from which there will be a waking. He took her by the hand:

> **Mark 5:41** *And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.*

She rose and walked, and he told them to give her something to eat.

Matthew's shorter account. In Matthew, the ruler says at the start, **"My daughter is even now dead" (Matthew 9:18)**. Matthew tells the event briefly and gives the situation as it stood by the time Jesus arrived, leaving out the messengers. Mark and Luke tell it as it unfolded.

Two blind men and a dumb man. Matthew alone adds that as Jesus left, two blind men followed him, crying, **"Thou son of David, have mercy on us" (Matthew 9:27)**. He touched their eyes: **"According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29)**. Then a dumb man possessed with a devil was healed, and the crowds said, **"It was never so seen in Israel"**, while the Pharisees repeated their charge: **"He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils" (Matthew 9:33-34)**.

Watch for: twelve years of illness and a girl of twelve; faith in a touch and faith in a word; death called sleep.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Matthew condenses the account of Jairus' daughter (Fit). He omits the messengers and gives the ruler's plea in the light of the outcome. A careful reader can fairly answer that this is an explanation, not a statement of the text; but Matthew is consistently briefer than Mark in narrative, and the event, the persons and the outcome are the same.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
93 ●	Jairus' plea; the woman healed on the way; the daughter raised	9:18-26	**5:21-43**	8:40-56	—
94 ○	Two blind men healed; a dumb man possessed with a devil	**9:27-34**	—	—	—

Section 32: The Last Visit to Nazareth

Before You Read Matt. 13:53–58 · Mark 6:1–6

Home again. Jesus came to **"his own country"** (Mark 6:1), Nazareth, with his disciples, and taught in the synagogue on the sabbath. This was probably his last visit. The first had ended with an attempt to throw him from the hill (Section 16).

"Is not this the carpenter?" The people were astonished at his wisdom and his works, and then offended:

> **Mark 6:3** *Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.*

They knew his trade, his mother, his four brothers and his sisters, and could not believe that one so ordinary was more. Matthew gives it as **"Is not this the carpenter's son?" (Matthew 13:55)**: both were true. Calling a man "the son of Mary" rather than of his father may have carried a sneer at his birth.

His brothers and sisters. The plain reading of these verses is that Mary and Joseph had other children after Jesus. Luke calls Jesus Mary's **"firstborn son" (Luke 2:7)**, and Matthew says Joseph **"knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son" (Matthew 1:25)**. Later traditions made them cousins, or Joseph's children by an earlier marriage, in order to keep Mary a virgin all her life. Scripture says nothing of either. Two of the brothers, James and Judas, became leaders in the church after the resurrection (Acts 1:14; Galatians 1:19).

Without honour. Jesus answered with a proverb:

> **Mark 6:4** *But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.*

Unbelief limits. "And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them" (Mark 6:5). Matthew puts it, **"he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matthew 13:58)**. Mark records something said of Jesus only twice: **"he marvelled because of their unbelief" (Mark 6:6)**. The other time he marvelled was at a Gentile centurion's faith (Matthew 8:10).

Watch for: familiarity breeding contempt; the names of his family; what unbelief kept from Nazareth.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Jesus' brothers and sisters were children of Mary and Joseph (Fit). "Firstborn," "till," and the naming of brothers with his mother point that way. A careful reader can fairly answer that "brother" in Hebrew usage can mean a near relative (Genesis 14:16), and that "firstborn" names the child who opens the womb whether others follow or not (Exodus 13:2). That is true; but nothing in scripture requires the wider meaning here, and the people of Nazareth name the brothers together with his mother.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
95 o	Teaching in the synagogue at Nazareth: "Is not this the carpenter?"	**13:53-58**	6:1-6	—	—

Section 33: The Twelve Sent Out

Before You Read Matt. 9:35–11:1 · Mark 6:7–13 · Luke 9:1–6

Sheep without a shepherd. Jesus went through all the cities and villages of Galilee, teaching, preaching and healing (Matthew 9:35).

> **Matthew 9:36** *But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. 9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; 9:38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*

The next thing he did was to send out the twelve.

Two by two. Mark says he sent them forth **"by two and two" (Mark 6:7)**, with power over unclean spirits. The law required two witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15), and two together could help each other. Matthew lists the twelve here in pairs (Matthew 10:2-4).

To Israel only.

> **Matthew 10:5** *These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 10:6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

Their message was his: **"The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 10:7)**. They were to heal the sick, cleanse lepers, raise the dead and cast out devils: **"freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8)**. This commission was limited to Israel, as his own ministry then was (Chapter 6). After the resurrection the commission went to **"all nations" (Matthew 28:19)**.

Travelling light. They were to go without money, without a bag for provisions, without a second coat, depending on the hospitality of those who received them, **"for the workman is worthy of his meat" (Matthew 10:10)**. Matthew says, **"Provide neither gold, nor silver... Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves"** (Matthew 10:9-10); Mark says they should take **"nothing for their journey, save a staff only" (Mark 6:8)**. The word in Matthew means "procure" or "acquire": they were not to get extra equipment for the trip. They went with the staff and sandals they had, and nothing more. Where they were not received, they were to shake off the dust of their feet as a testimony (Mark 6:11).

Further ahead. Matthew's chapter goes beyond this first journey. Jesus warned of being brought before governors and kings, scourged in synagogues, hated of all men (Matthew 10:17-22). The words reach to their later work and beyond. He comforted them: not a sparrow falls without the Father, and **"the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:30)**. He warned that his coming would divide households: **"I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34)**. And he promised that a cup of cold water given to one of these little ones in a disciple's name would not lose its reward (Matthew 10:42).

They went. "And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them" (Mark 6:12-13). Jesus himself went on teaching and preaching in their cities (Matthew 11:1).

Watch for: compassion before commission; "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; the twelve doing the same works he did.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that this commission was limited to Israel (Fit). Matthew 10:5-6 says so. **Reasonable inference — that Matthew's "provide... nor yet staves" and Mark's "save a staff only" agree (Fit),** on the meaning of the verb in Matthew 10:9. A careful reader can fairly answer that the verb applies most naturally to money, and the two lists may simply be worded differently; either way, the sense of both is to go without extra provision.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
96 ●	Through all the cities: "The harvest truly is plenteous"	**9:35-38**	—	—	—
97 ●	The twelve sent two by two, with power over unclean spirits; their charge	**10:1-42**	6:7-11	9:1-5	—
98 ●	They go out preaching and healing	11:1	**6:12-13**	9:6	—

Section 34: The Death of John the Baptist

Before You Read Matt. 14:1–12 · Mark 6:14–29 · Luke 9:7–9

Herod's fear. Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, ruled Galilee and Perea as tetrarch (Chapter 4 B). The work of Jesus and of the twelve going through his territory reached his court. People were saying that Jesus was Elijah, or one of the prophets. Herod had his own answer:

> **Mark 6:16** *But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.*

His conscience had not let him forget John. Luke adds that Herod **"desired to see him" (Luke 9:9)**; he did, at the end (Luke 23:8), and Jesus would not speak to him.

Looking back. Matthew and Mark now tell how John had died. Mark gives it at length.

Why John was imprisoned. Herod had married Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, who was still living. John told him plainly, **"It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife" (Mark 6:18)**, for the law forbade it (Leviticus 18:16; 20:21). Herodias wanted John dead, but Herod held back:

> **Mark 6:20** *For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.*

Herod listened to John, respected him, and kept him alive; he would not give up Herodias.

The birthday feast. On Herod's birthday he gave a supper for his lords, captains and chief men of Galilee. The daughter of Herodias danced and pleased him, and he swore to give her whatever she asked, **"unto the half of my kingdom" (Mark 6:23)**. She went to her mother, who told her what to ask: the head of John the Baptist in a charger, a large dish. Herod was **"exceeding sorry"** (Mark 6:26), but for his oath's sake and for the guests he sent an executioner to the prison. John's disciples took up his body, buried it, **"and went and told Jesus" (Matthew 14:12)**.

From history. Josephus, writing late in the first century, also records that Herod put John to death, at the fortress of Machaerus, because he feared John's influence over the people. He names the daughter of Herodias as Salome. He calls Herodias' first husband Herod; several sons of Herod the Great bore the family name Herod beside their own, and this was not Philip the tetrarch of Luke 3:1.

When? John's death is told here because Herod's words bring it to mind; it had happened some time before. The news of it may be one reason Jesus withdrew across the lake (Matthew 14:13), which leads into the next section.

Watch for: a guilty conscience; a man who heard the truth gladly and did not obey it; the forerunner dying for plain speaking, as the one he went before would also.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that John's death came some time before Herod's words of Mark 6:14-16 (Order). Mark and Matthew introduce the account with "For" (Mark 6:17; Matthew 14:3), explaining Herod's words rather than continuing the story. A careful reader can fairly answer that Matthew 14:13 ("When Jesus heard of it") may tie the news closely to the feeding; that fits a death not long before, and the grid allows for it.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
99 ●	Herod hears of Jesus: "It is John, whom I beheaded"	14:1-2	**6:14-16**	9:7-9	—
100 ●	How John was imprisoned and beheaded (told looking back) [1]	14:3-12	**6:17-29**	—	—

[1] Told at this point to explain Herod's fear. John's imprisonment came earlier (Luke 3:19-20, Section 7), and his death some time before this.

Section 35: Five Thousand Fed

Before You Read

Matt. 14:13–23 · Mark 6:30–46 · Luke 9:10–17 · John 6:1–15

The Passover near. John sets the time: **"And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh" (John 6:4)**. This is the second of the three Passovers John names, about A.D. 30, a year before the cross. The companion study shows that the verse stands in every manuscript, and that the **"green grass"** of Mark 6:39 and the **"much grass"** of John 6:10 agree with the season.

Come apart and rest. The twelve returned from their journey and told Jesus all they had done. He said, **"Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat" (Mark 6:31)**. They crossed by boat toward Bethsaida (Luke 9:10), at the north end of the lake. But the crowds saw them go and ran around the shore ahead of them. Jesus did not send them away:

> **Mark 6:34** *And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.*

"Whence shall we buy bread?" As evening came the disciples wanted to send the people to buy food. Jesus said, **"Give ye them to eat" (Mark 6:37)**. John adds that he tested Philip: **"Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (John 6:5)**, **"for he himself knew what he would do" (John 6:6)**. Philip answered that two hundred pennyworth would not be enough; a penny, the Roman denarius, was a labourer's pay for a day (Matthew 20:2). Andrew found a lad with **"five barley loaves, and two small fishes" (John 6:9)**. Barley bread was the food of the poor; the barley harvest came at Passover.

The feeding. He made the people sit down in companies, by hundreds and by fifties, on the green grass. He took the loaves and fishes, looked up to heaven, blessed, broke, and gave to the disciples to set before the people. All ate and were filled, and they gathered **"twelve baskets full of the fragments" (Mark 6:43)**. There were **"about five thousand men, beside women and children" (Matthew 14:21)**. This is the only miracle before the resurrection told in all four Gospels.

"That prophet." The people said, **"This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world" (John 6:14)**, the prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15). Moses had fed Israel with manna in the wilderness; here was bread in the wilderness again, at Passover time.

> **John 6:15** *When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.*

That is why Matthew and Mark say he **"constrained his disciples to get into a ship"** (Matthew 14:22) and sent them ahead while he dismissed the crowd. He would not be made king by a crowd fed on bread. He went up to pray alone.

Watch for: compassion on the weary and the crowds; five loaves in the hands of the Lord; the crowd wanting a king but not the kingdom he preached.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that the feeding took place near a Passover (Date), on John 6:4 and the green grass. **Reasonable inference — for about A.D. 30 (Date),** a year before the final Passover; a careful reader can fairly answer that the year depends on the date of the cross, which the companion study places in A.D. 31 on the Wednesday reading of "three days and three nights."

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
THE YEAR BEFORE THE CROSS · about A.D. 30					
◆ **PASSOVER · "the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh" · spring · John 6:4**					
101 ●	The apostles return; "Come ye yourselves apart"; the crowds follow	14:13-14	**6:30-34**	9:10-11	6:1-3
102 ●	Five thousand men fed with five loaves and two fishes	14:15-21	6:35-44	9:12-17	**6:4-13**
103 ●	They would take him by force to make him king; he goes up into a mountain alone	14:22-23	6:45-46	—	**6:14-15**

Section 36: Walking on the Sea

Before You Read Matt. 14:24–36 · Mark 6:47–56 · John 6:16–21

The fourth watch. The disciples rowed against the wind through the night. Jesus, praying on the mountain, saw them **"toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them" (Mark 6:48)**. In the fourth watch, between three and six in the morning (Chapter 5 A), he came to them walking on the sea. John says they had rowed **"about five and twenty or thirty furlongs" (John 6:19)**, three or four miles, into the middle of the lake. Mark adds a detail: he **"would have passed by them" (Mark 6:48)**.

"It is I." They thought it was a spirit and cried out. He spoke at once:

> **Matthew 14:27** *But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.*

Peter on the water. Matthew alone tells what followed. Peter said, **"Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water" (Matthew 14:28)**. Jesus said, "Come." Peter walked on the water toward him; but when he saw the wind he was afraid, began to sink, and cried, **"Lord, save me" (Matthew 14:30)**. Jesus caught him: **"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matthew 14:31)**. When they came into the boat the wind ceased, and those in the boat worshipped him, saying, **"Of a truth thou art the Son of God" (Matthew 14:33)**.

Hearts hardened. Mark gives a different view of the disciples' state: **"For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened" (Mark 6:52)**. Matthew records their worship, Mark their slowness. Both were true of the same men in the same night: they confessed what they saw and still did not understand what the loaves had shown them. John adds that when they received him into the boat, **"immediately the ship was at the land whither they went" (John 6:21)**.

Peter's walk and Mark's silence. Mark, whose Gospel early writers connected with Peter's preaching, does not mention Peter walking on the water. If that connection is right, Peter did not tell this story of himself.

Gennesaret. They landed on the plain of Gennesaret, a fertile stretch of the western shore south of Capernaum. The people knew him at once and ran through the whole region bringing the sick on beds:

> **Mark 6:56** *And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.*

Watch for: the Lord watching from the mountain while they toil; "it is I"; faith and fear in the same man within moments.

Weighing it: Narrative. The accounts agree on every point they share; each adds what the others leave out. **Corroboration only — on Mark's silence about Peter's walk (Fit);** the connection between Mark and Peter comes from early writers, not from scripture, and is stated here as history only.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
104 ●	Jesus walks on the sea; Peter walks to meet him	**14:24-33**	6:47-52	—	6:16-21
105 ●	At Gennesaret, as many as touched him were made whole	14:34-36	**6:53-56**	—	—

Section 37: The Bread of Life

Before You Read John 6:22–71

The crowd finds him. The next day the crowd that had been fed found the disciples' boat gone and Jesus not with them. They took boats to Capernaum and found him there, and asked when he had come. He went to the heart of the matter:

> **John 6:26** *Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth." He told them to labour for food that endures to everlasting life, which the Son of man would give them. They asked what they must do to work the works of God. **"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29)**.

Manna. They asked for a sign, reminding him that their fathers ate manna in the wilderness: **"He gave them bread from heaven to eat" (John 6:31)**, quoting Psalm 78:24. Jesus answered that it was not Moses but his Father who gives the true bread from heaven.

> **John 6:35** *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

He had come to do his Father's will: **"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38)**. The Father's will was that everyone who sees the Son and believes on him should have everlasting life, and be raised up at the last day (John 6:40).

"Came down from heaven." In this discourse the same words are used of the manna (John 6:31-33, 41, 50, 58): bread that came from heaven because God gave it, not because it had been in heaven before. Jesus speaks of himself as the true bread that God has given and sent. The library's study *One God One Mediator* weighs this kind of language at length.

His flesh and his blood. The Jews murmured: was this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? He went further: **"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53)**. They took it literally and were offended. He explained:

> **John 6:63** *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

To eat his flesh and drink his blood is to receive him and his death by believing, as verse 35 had said: coming is eating, believing is drinking. The discourse was given at Passover time, when Israel ate the lamb whose blood had saved them.

Many turn back. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). The crowd that wanted to make him king the day before now left him. He turned to the twelve: **"Will ye also go away?" (John 6:67)**.

> **John 6:68** *Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 6:69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.*

Jesus answered with a hard word: **"Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70)**. He knew it was Judas.

Watch for: "I am the bread of life," the first of the "I am" sayings in John; eating as believing; the turning point in the Galilean ministry.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that eating his flesh and drinking his blood means believing on him (Fit), on Jesus' own explanation in John 6:35 and 6:63. A careful reader can fairly answer that the words were later connected with the Lord's supper; the supper was not yet instituted, and Jesus explained these words in terms of believing. **Reasonable inference — that "came down from heaven" means sent and given by God (Fit),** from the use of the same words of the manna in the same discourse; a careful reader can fairly answer that John 6:62, **"What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?"**, points to a prior existence in heaven. That verse is weighed in the companion study named above.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
106 ●	In the synagogue at Capernaum: "I am the bread of life"	—	—	—	**6:22-59**
107 ●	Many disciples go back; Peter: "thou hast the words of eternal life"	—	—	—	**6:60-71**

Section 38: The Traditions of Men

Before You Read Matt. 15:1–20 · Mark 7:1–23 · John 7:1

Galilee, not Judea. "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him" (John 7:1). Between this Passover and the feast of Tabernacles six months later, Jesus stayed in the north. Matthew and Mark fill those months: disputes with leaders from Jerusalem, journeys to Gentile regions, and the training of the twelve.

Unwashed hands. Pharisees and scribes **"which came from Jerusalem" (Mark 7:1)** saw some of the disciples eat bread with unwashed hands. Mark explains the custom for readers who did not know it: the Pharisees and all the Jews washed their hands carefully before eating, **"holding the tradition of the elders" (Mark 7:3)**, and washed cups, pots, brass vessels and tables. This was not hygiene; it was a ritual of the elders' tradition, not of the law of Moses.

"In vain do they worship me." Jesus answered with Isaiah 29:13:

> **Mark 7:6** *He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. 7:7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

Corban. He gave an example. God commanded, "Honour thy father and thy mother." But the elders taught that if a man declared his goods **"Corban, that is to say, a gift"** (Mark 7:11), dedicated to God, he was free from using them to support his parents. So they were **"Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition" (Mark 7:13)**. The library's study *In Vain Do They Worship Me* takes up this principle at length.

What defiles. He called the crowd: **"There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man" (Mark 7:15)**. In the house the disciples asked what he meant. Food goes into the stomach and out again, **"purging all meats" (Mark 7:19)**. What comes out of the heart defiles: evil thoughts, adulteries, murders, thefts, covetousness, deceit, pride, foolishness (Mark 7:21-22). Matthew adds his word about the Pharisees: **"Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind" (Matthew 15:14)**.

Under the law. Jesus here was answering the elders' tradition about washing, not abolishing the food laws of Moses, which were still in force. Peter, years later, could still say, **"I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean" (Acts 10:14)**. The full freedom from those laws was made known after Pentecost (Acts 10:15; Romans 14:14; Colossians 2:16).

Watch for: tradition set beside the word of God; honour from the lips with the heart far away; the heart as the source of defilement.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Jesus' words in Mark 7 answer the tradition of the elders and did not then set aside the food laws (Fit). The dispute began over washing (Mark 7:2-5), and Peter's later words in Acts 10:14 show the disciples did not take it otherwise. A careful reader can fairly answer that many translations render the end of Mark 7:19 as Mark's own comment, "making all foods clean"; the KJV reads it as part of Jesus' description of digestion, and the Greek allows both.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
108 ●	He walks in Galilee, for the Jews in Judea sought to kill him	—	—	—	**7:1**
109 ●	Unwashed hands: "in vain they do worship me"; what defiles a man	15:1-20	**7:1-23**	—	—

Section 39: Among the Gentiles

Before You Read Matt. 15:21–39 · Mark 7:24–8:10

Out of Israel. Jesus now went outside the land of Israel for the only time recorded in his ministry, **"into the borders of Tyre and Sidon" (Mark 7:24)**, the Gentile coastland to the northwest. He **"would have no man know it"**, seeking rest and time with the twelve; but he could not be hid.

The woman of Canaan. A woman came to him crying for her daughter, **"grievously vexed with a devil" (Matthew 15:22)**. Mark calls her **"a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation" (Mark 7:26)**: Greek in language

and culture, born in the Phoenician part of the province of Syria. Matthew calls her **"a woman of Canaan" (Matthew 15:22)**, using the old name of Israel's ancient enemies. Both are true. She called him **"thou son of David"**, the title of Israel's king.

Silence, then a hard word. At first he answered nothing. The disciples asked him to send her away. He said, **"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24)**. She came and worshipped him: **"Lord, help me" (Matthew 15:25)**. He said:

> **Matthew 15:26** *But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. 15:27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. 15:28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

The word for "dogs" here means little dogs, household pets, not the wild scavengers of the streets. She accepted his word as true and found grace in it: the children are fed first, but the crumbs are for the dogs under the table. His ministry was to Israel (Chapter 6), and he said so; but her faith reached the blessing before its time. Of the two Gentiles whose faith he praised as great, one was this woman and the other the centurion (Section 25).

Decapolis. He returned by a long way round, through Sidon and down to the region of the Decapolis, east of the lake (Mark 7:31), where the man of the tombs had been sent home to tell what the Lord had done (Section 30). There they brought him a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. Jesus took him aside from the crowd, put his fingers in his ears, spat, touched his tongue, looked up to heaven and sighed:

> **Mark 7:34** *And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.*

A deaf man could not hear words; Jesus spoke to him in signs he could feel. **"He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak" (Mark 7:37)**, as Isaiah had promised (Isaiah 35:5-6). Matthew adds that great crowds brought the lame, blind, dumb and maimed, **"and they glorified the God of Israel" (Matthew 15:31)**, a phrase that suggests a crowd largely Gentile.

Four thousand. The crowd had been with him three days and had nothing to eat. He had compassion: **"if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way" (Mark 8:3)**. With seven loaves and a few small fishes he fed **"four thousand men, beside women and children" (Matthew 15:38)**, and they took up seven baskets of fragments. Then he crossed by boat to Dalmanutha, which Matthew calls Magdala (Mark 8:10; Matthew 15:39).

Two feedings. This is not the feeding of the five thousand told twice. The numbers of people, loaves and baskets differ; the crowd here had been with him three days; and the baskets are a different word, a large hamper like the one in which Paul was let down from the wall (Acts 9:25). Jesus himself named both feedings, with both numbers and both kinds of basket (Mark 8:19-20).

Watch for: a Gentile woman's humble, persistent faith; healing done with signs a deaf man could feel; bread for Gentiles too.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that the five thousand and the four thousand were two feedings (Fit), on Jesus' own words in Mark 8:19-20. A careful reader can fairly answer little against it. **Direct statement — that his ministry was then to Israel (Fit),** in his own words, Matthew 15:24.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
110 ●	In the borders of Tyre and Sidon: the Syrophenician woman's daughter	**15:21-28**	7:24-30	—	—
111 ●	In Decapolis: the deaf man with an impediment; many healed	15:29-31	**7:31-37**	—	—
112 ●	Four thousand fed with seven loaves	**15:32-39**	8:1-10	—	—

Section 40: The Leaven of the Pharisees

Before You Read Matt. 16:1–12 · Mark 8:11–26

A sign from heaven. Back on the western shore, the Pharisees, now joined by the Sadducees, came tempting him for **"a sign from heaven" (Matthew 16:1)**. The two parties disagreed on most things (Chapter 4 C); they agreed against him. Mark records his response: **"And he sighed deeply in his spirit" (Mark 8:12)**. He answered them from their own weather lore:

> **Matthew 16:2** *He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. 16:3 And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?*

They could read the sky and could not read the works done before their eyes. As before (Section 28), he refused any sign but **"the sign of the prophet Jonas" (Matthew 16:4)**, and left them.

The leaven. In the boat the disciples found they had forgotten bread; they had only one loaf (Mark 8:14). Jesus said, **"Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod" (Mark 8:15)**; Matthew has **"of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matthew 16:6)**. Leaven works unseen through a whole lump of dough, and in scripture it often pictures a corrupting influence (1 Corinthians 5:6-8). They thought he was rebuking them for forgetting bread. He reminded them of the two feedings:

> **Mark 8:19** *When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. 8:20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.*

"How is it that ye do not understand?" (Mark 8:21). Then they understood that he meant **"the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matthew 16:12)**. Mark's "leaven of Herod" points to the worldly politics of the Herodians, with whom the Pharisees had already joined against him (Mark 3:6).

The blind man of Bethsaida. At Bethsaida a blind man was brought. Jesus led him by the hand out of the town, spat on his eyes, laid hands on him, and asked if he saw anything. He said:

> **Mark 8:24** *And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.*

Jesus laid hands on him again, and he saw every man clearly. He sent him home with the word, **"Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town" (Mark 8:26)**.

Seeing in stages. This is the only healing in the Gospels done in two stages. Mark places it between the disciples' failure to understand (Mark 8:21) and Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:29). The disciples too saw partly before they saw clearly, and even after the confession Peter still did not see the cross (Mark 8:32-33).

Watch for: discerning the sky and not the times; leaven working unseen; a man who saw in two stages, set beside disciples who were learning to see.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Mark places the two-stage healing as a picture of the disciples' partial sight (Fit). Its setting between Mark 8:21 and 8:29 supports it. A careful reader can fairly answer that Mark does not say so; the healing stands as a real event whatever its place teaches. The healing in stages was not a failure of power, since the man was fully restored.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
113 ●	The Pharisees and Sadducees seek a sign; "no sign… but the sign of the prophet Jonas"	**16:1-4**	8:11-13	—	—
114 ●	"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees"	**16:5-12**	8:14-21	—	—
115 ●	At Bethsaida: a blind man healed in two stages	—	**8:22-26**	—	—

Section 41: Peter's Confession

Before You Read Matt. 16:13–28 · Mark 8:27–9:1 · Luke 9:18–27

Caesarea Philippi. Jesus took the twelve to the far north, to **"the towns of Cæsarea Philippi" (Mark 8:27)**, at the foot of Mount Hermon, where one of the springs of the Jordan flows from a cave. Philip the tetrarch had rebuilt the city and named it for Caesar. A shrine to the Greek god Pan stood by the cave. Here, at the edge of the land, Jesus asked the question on which everything turned. Luke notes that he had been praying alone (Luke 9:18).

"Whom say ye that I am?" He asked first what men said. Some said John the Baptist, some Elias, some Jeremias or one of the prophets. Then:

> **Matthew 16:15** *He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*

The confession was revelation from the Father, not a conclusion Peter reached by himself.

"Upon this rock." Jesus went on: **"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18)**. "Peter" is *petros*, a stone; "rock" is *petra*, a mass of rock. Readers take "this rock" in three ways: Peter himself, as the first to confess; the truth Peter confessed, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; or Christ himself, the rock on whom all is built (1 Corinthians 3:11; 1 Peter 2:4-8). Nothing in the verse speaks of successors to Peter. "Church" (*ekklēsia*) means an assembly called out; the same word is used of Israel

gathered at Sinai, **"the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38)**. The word alone does not say which assembly is meant. "Hell" here is *hadēs*, the grave: death would not overcome what he built.

The keys. He gave Peter **"the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 16:19)**. Peter used them: he opened the door of the gospel to Israel at Pentecost (Acts 2) and to Gentiles at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10). Then Jesus charged them to tell no man that he was the Christ (Matthew 16:20); the crowds would have made the word mean an earthly king.

The first plain word of the cross.

> **Matthew 16:21** *From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.*

Mark gives it as **"after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31)**. The harmony returns to how these phrases fit together at the resurrection (Section 76). Peter took him aside and rebuked him: **"Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee" (Matthew 16:22)**. The man who had just spoken by revelation from the Father now spoke the adversary's thought:

> **Matthew 16:23** *But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*

It was the temptation of the wilderness again: the kingdom without the cross (Section 8).

Take up the cross. Then to all: **"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24)**. **"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26)**. He closed with a promise: **"There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matthew 16:28)**. All three Gospels follow this saying at once with the transfiguration.

Watch for: the turning point of the ministry, "From that time forth"; revelation and rebuke in the same hour; the cross named for the first time.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Matthew 16:28 was fulfilled at the transfiguration (Fit). All three Gospels set the transfiguration directly after it, and Peter later wrote of having seen **"his majesty"** on **"the holy mount"** (2 Peter 1:16-18). A careful reader can fairly answer that "coming in his kingdom" may point further ahead. **Neutral — on which reading of "this rock" is right (Fit);** each has its defenders, and the verse itself does not settle it.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
116 ●	At Caesarea Philippi: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"	**16:13-20**	8:27-30	9:18-21	—
117 ●	He foretells his death and resurrection; "take up his cross, and follow me"	**16:21-28**	8:31-9:1	9:22-27	—

Section 42: The Transfiguration

Before You Read Matt. 17:1–13 · Mark 9:2–13 · Luke 9:28–36

"After six days." Matthew and Mark both say **"after six days"** (Matthew 17:1; Mark 9:2); Luke says **"about an eight days after these sayings" (Luke 9:28)**. Luke counts inclusively, the day of the saying and the day of the event both counted, and says "about." Jesus took Peter, James and John, the three who had seen Jairus' daughter raised, up a high mountain apart. The mountain is not named. Mount Hermon, near Caesarea Philippi, is the likeliest; tradition later chose Tabor in Galilee, which had a fortress on its summit at the time.

Transfigured. Luke says it happened **"as he prayed" (Luke 9:29)**. His face shone as the sun and his clothing became white as the light. Moses and Elias appeared with him, the law and the prophets, and Luke alone says what they spoke of:

> **Luke 9:31** *Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.*

"Decease" is *exodos*, departure: the word used of Israel leaving Egypt.

Peter's offer. The three disciples had been heavy with sleep. Waking, Peter said, **"Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias" (Matthew 17:4)**. Luke adds, **"not knowing what he said" (Luke 9:33)**. He would have set Jesus beside Moses and Elijah as equals.

The voice from the cloud. A bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of it:

> **Matthew 17:5** *While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*

At the baptism the Father had spoken the first part (Section 7). Now he added "hear ye him," the words Moses used of the prophet God would raise up: **"unto him ye shall hearken" (Deuteronomy 18:15)**. The disciples fell on their faces. When they looked up, they saw **"no man, save Jesus only" (Matthew 17:8)**.

"Tell the vision to no man." Coming down, Jesus charged them: **"Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead" (Matthew 17:9)**. He called what they had seen a "vision" (*horama*), the word used of the visions of Peter and Paul in Acts (Acts 10:17; 16:9). The library's study *Where Are the Dead Right Now?* weighs what this means for the appearance of Moses and Elijah.

"Elias is come already." The disciples asked why the scribes said Elijah must come first (Malachi 4:5). Jesus answered that Elijah would indeed come and restore all things, but **"That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed" (Matthew 17:12)**. **"Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist" (Matthew 17:13)**. Mark records their puzzle over **"what the rising from the dead should mean" (Mark 9:10)**.

Remembered. Peter wrote of it years later:

> **2 Peter 1:16** *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

Watch for: prayer before glory; his departure discussed in the midst of glory; "hear ye him"; "Jesus only."

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that "after six days" and "about an eight days after" describe the same interval (Fit), counted exclusively and inclusively, with Luke's "about." A careful reader can fairly answer little against it. **Direct statement — that Jesus called what the disciples saw a vision (Fit),** Matthew 17:9; what follows from the word is weighed in the companion study, not here.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
118 ●	"After six days": transfigured before Peter, James and John; Moses and Elias	**17:1-8**	9:2-8	9:28-36	—
119 ●	Coming down: "Elias is come already"	**17:9-13**	9:9-13	—	—

Section 43: The Boy the Disciples Could Not Heal

Before You Read Matt. 17:14–23 · Mark 9:14–32 · Luke 9:37–45

Below the mountain. While Jesus was on the mountain, the other nine disciples had failed. Coming down the next day (Luke 9:37), Jesus found a great crowd and scribes disputing with the disciples. A father ran to him: **"Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit" (Mark 9:17)**. Matthew records his words as **"he is lunatick, and sore vexed" (Matthew 17:15)**: subject to seizures, which threw him into the fire and into the water. The disciples could not cast it out.

"O faithless generation." Jesus said, **"O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me" (Matthew 17:17)**. When the boy was brought, the spirit threw him into a convulsion. The father pleaded, **"if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us" (Mark 9:22)**.

> **Mark 9:23** *Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. 9:24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*

The father had put the "if" on Jesus' power; Jesus put it back on believing. The father's answer is one of the most honest prayers in scripture. Jesus rebuked the spirit, and the boy, after one more convulsion, lay as dead, until Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up.

Why could we not? In the house the disciples asked why they had failed. Matthew gives the answer as **"Because of your unbelief" (Matthew 17:20)**: faith as a grain of mustard seed would remove mountains. Mark gives **"This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting" (Mark 9:29)**. Jesus had spent the night on the mountain in prayer while they argued with scribes below.

Sickness and spirits. The Gospels usually distinguish sickness from possession (Mark 1:32-34). Here the seizures were caused by a spirit, and Jesus dealt with the spirit. Matthew names the symptoms; Mark and Luke name the cause.

The second word of the cross. They passed through Galilee, and Jesus would not have anyone know it, **"For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men,**

and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day" (Mark 9:31). Luke adds that the saying **"was hid from them, that they perceived it not" (Luke 9:45)**. **"And they were exceeding sorry" (Matthew 17:23)**, and afraid to ask him.

Watch for: the glory on the mountain and the struggle in the valley on successive days; "help thou mine unbelief"; the disciples still not understanding the cross.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Matthew's "lunatick" and Mark's "dumb spirit" describe the same condition from two sides (Fit), the symptoms and their cause. A careful reader can fairly answer that Matthew 17:18 also speaks of the devil departing; so Matthew too names the cause, and the accounts agree.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
120 ●	The boy with a dumb spirit: "If thou canst believe"	17:14-21	**9:14-29**	9:37-43	—
121 ●	Through Galilee: he again foretells his death	17:22-23	9:30-32	**9:44-45**	—

Section 44: Lessons at Capernaum

Before You Read Matt. 17:24–18:35 · Mark 9:33–50 · Luke 9:46–50

The tribute money. At Capernaum the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter: **"Doth not your master pay tribute?" (Matthew 17:24)**. This was the half-shekel the law required of every man of Israel for the service of the tabernacle (Exodus 30:13-16), collected yearly for the temple. Peter said yes. In the house Jesus asked him:

> **Matthew 17:25** *He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? 17:26 Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.*

The temple was his Father's house; the Son owed no tax to it. **"Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them"** (Matthew 17:27), Peter was to cast a hook and find in the first fish's mouth a piece of money, a stater, worth two half-shekels: **"that take, and give unto them for me and thee."**

Who is the greatest? On the road the disciples had disputed among themselves who should be greatest (Mark 9:33-34). In the house he asked what they had been discussing, and they were silent. He sat down and called the twelve:

> **Mark 9:35** *And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.*

He set a little child in the middle of them, took the child in his arms, and said, **"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3)**. Whoever received such a child in his name received him.

The man who was not with us. John said they had seen a man casting out devils in Jesus' name and had forbidden him, **"because he followeth not us" (Mark 9:38)**. Jesus said, **"Forbid him not"**, **"For he that is not against us is on our part" (Mark 9:39-40)**.

Offences. Whoever causes one of these little ones to stumble would be better drowned with a millstone. If a hand, foot or eye causes stumbling, better to lose it than be cast into **"hell fire"** (Mark 9:43-47), Gehenna, the valley outside Jerusalem where refuse was burned. Matthew adds the parable of the lost sheep: **"it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish" (Matthew 18:14)**. Luke gives the same parable on another occasion, to Pharisees who complained that he received sinners (Luke 15:3-7).

A brother who trespasses. Matthew alone gives steps for a wrong between brothers: go to him alone; if he will not hear, take one or two more, as the law required witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15); then tell it to **"the church"** (Matthew 18:17), the assembly of disciples. And: **"where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20)**.

Seventy times seven. Peter asked how often he must forgive a brother: seven times? **"I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:22)**. Then the parable of the servant forgiven ten thousand talents, a sum beyond paying, who would not forgive a fellow servant a hundred pence, a few months' wages. Forgiveness received is to be passed on.

Watch for: the Son free and yet paying; greatness as service; forgiveness without counting.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the lost sheep of Matthew 18 and of Luke 15 were spoken on two occasions (Fit). The settings, hearers and applications differ: disciples and little ones in Matthew, Pharisees and sinners in Luke. A careful reader can fairly answer that one Gospel may have moved it; a teacher repeating a story to different hearers is equally likely.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
122 ●	The tribute money in the fish's mouth	**17:24-27**	—	—	—
123 ●	Who is the greatest; a little child; the man casting out devils; offences	**18:1-14**	9:33-50	9:46-50	—
124 ●	A brother who trespasses; seventy times seven; the unforgiving servant	**18:15-35**	—	—	—

Section 45: Going Up to Tabernacles

Before You Read Matt. 8:19–22 · Luke 9:51–62 · John 7:2–10

Six months to the cross. The feast of Tabernacles fell in the seventh month, September or October (Chapter 5 B). From here to the final Passover is about six months. John follows Jesus to Jerusalem at Tabernacles and Dedication; Luke follows a long journey toward Jerusalem; Matthew and Mark take up the story again in Perea and Judea near the end.

His brothers' challenge. As the feast drew near, his brothers urged him: **"Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest" (John 7:3)**. If he wanted to be

known, he should show himself to the world. John adds plainly, **"For neither did his brethren believe in him" (John 7:5)**.

> **John 7:6** *Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready.*

He let them go up to the feast. Then he went up too, **"not openly, but as it were in secret" (John 7:10)**. He went, but not as a public show, and not with the pilgrim crowds.

"He stedfastly set his face." Luke marks a great turning point in his Gospel:

> **Luke 9:51** *And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,*

"Received up" (*analēpsis*, a taking up) is the ascension; Luke uses the verb from the same root for it in Acts 1:2, 11 and 22. From here to Luke 19:28 Luke describes Jesus on the way to Jerusalem.

A Samaritan village. Messengers went ahead to a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him, and the village would not receive him, **"because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:53)**. James and John, the sons of thunder, asked, **"Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" (Luke 9:54)**. He turned and rebuked them: **"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:55-56)**. (These last words are in the KJV and many manuscripts, but not in several of the oldest.)

The cost of following. On the way, three men spoke of following him. Matthew tells of two of them earlier, before the storm on the lake (Matthew 8:19-22); Luke places them here, and the grid follows Luke.

> **Luke 9:58** *And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*

To one who wished first to bury his father, **"Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:60)**. To one who wished first to say farewell at home, **"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62)**.

Luke's journey. Luke 9:51-19:28 is often called Luke's travel account. It has few time words and many teachings found only in Luke. Luke mentions the journey to Jerusalem several times (Luke 13:22; 17:11; 18:31). John shows that in these months Jesus went up to Jerusalem at least twice, at Tabernacles and at Dedication, came again to Bethany to raise Lazarus, and withdrew to Ephraim before the last Passover (John 7:10; 10:22, 40; 11:7, 54). Luke's account may gather material from several of these journeys under the one great movement toward the cross. The harmony keeps Luke's material in Luke's own order and marks most of its placements ○ (probable).

Watch for: "my time is not yet come"; the face set toward Jerusalem; the price of following a man with nowhere to lay his head.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Luke 9:51 marks the final departure from Galilee at about the time of Tabernacles (Order). John 7:10 records a departure for Jerusalem at that time, and Luke's "when the time was come" fits the last half-year. A careful reader can fairly answer that Luke 9:51 may mark a later departure, perhaps after Dedication; the grid marks the placements in Luke's journey ○ for that reason.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
THE LAST SIX MONTHS · about A.D. 30-31					
◆ **TABERNACLES · autumn · John 7:2**					
125 ●	His brothers: "Depart hence, and go into Judæa"; "my time is not yet come"	—	—	—	**7:2-9**
126 ●	He goes up "as it were in secret"; set his face to go to Jerusalem; a Samaritan village refuses him [1]	—	—	9:51-56	**7:10**
127 ○	Would-be followers: "Foxes have holes"	8:19-22 †	—	**9:57-62**	—

[1] Some place Luke 9:51 at a later departure from Galilee. See "Luke's journey" above.

Section 46: At the Feast of Tabernacles

Before You Read John 7:11–8:59

The feast of Tabernacles. For seven days Israel lived in booths of branches to remember the wilderness (Leviticus 23:39-43). By the time of Jesus two ceremonies had been added, described in the Mishnah. Each morning a priest drew water from the pool of Siloam in a golden vessel and poured it out at the altar. And in the court of the women great lamps were lit at night, lighting the whole city. Both stand behind what Jesus said at this feast.

"Where is he?" The Jews sought him at the feast, and the people murmured: **"some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people" (John 7:12)**. In the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. They marvelled: **"How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John 7:15)**. He had not studied under the rabbis.

> **John 7:16** *Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. 7:17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

He reminded them of the man healed at Bethesda (Section 21): they circumcised on the sabbath to keep the law, so why were they angry that he made a man whole on the sabbath? **"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24)**. The rulers sent officers to take him.

Living water. On the last day, after a week of water poured out at the altar:

> **John 7:37** *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 7:38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

John's note is plain: the gift was still to come, after he was glorified. It came at Pentecost (Acts 2:33).

"Never man spake like this man." The officers returned without him. Asked why, they said, **"Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46)**. Nicodemus spoke up in the council: **"Doth our law judge any man,**

before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" (John 7:51). They mocked him: **"Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" (John 7:52)**. They forgot Jonah, of Gath-hepher in Galilee (2 Kings 14:25).

The woman taken in adultery. John 7:53-8:11 is in the KJV and in most later manuscripts, but it is absent from the oldest manuscripts of John, and some copies place it elsewhere, one after Luke 21:38. Many careful readers think it a true account preserved outside the original text of John; others hold it original. The harmony keeps it in its KJV place. The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman taken in the act. The law required both the man and the woman to die (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22), and the man was not brought. They meant to trap Jesus between mercy and the law. He wrote on the ground, then said:

> **John 8:7** *So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*

They went out one by one, from the eldest. **"Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11)**.

The light of the world. Near the great lamps of the feast he said, **"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12)**. He spoke **"in the treasury" (John 8:20)**, in the court of the women where the lamps stood. A long dispute followed. **"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)**. They claimed Abraham as father; he said that if they were Abraham's children they would do Abraham's works, and **"Ye are of your father the devil" (John 8:44)**, who was a murderer and a liar from the beginning.

"Before Abraham was." "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). They mocked: he was not yet fifty. He answered, **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58)**. They took up stones to cast at him, and he hid himself and went out of the temple.

Watch for: water and light, the two ceremonies of the feast, taken up by Jesus; the spirit "not yet given"; the growing anger that ends in stones.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that John 7:53-8:11 was not part of the original text of John, though it may record a true event (Fit). Its absence from the oldest manuscripts and its wandering position support this. A careful reader can fairly answer that it is in the great majority of later manuscripts and has long been read as scripture; the harmony keeps it and notes the question. **Mixed, stated per point — on John 8:58 (Fit).** Some read "before Abraham was, I am" as a claim to have existed before Abraham, pointing to the stones that followed; others read it as Christ's place in God's purpose before Abraham, as Abraham "saw" his day by promise (Hebrews 11:13) and Christ was **"foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:20)**. The words "I am" are the ordinary Greek for "I am he," used by the healed blind man of himself in the next chapter (John 9:9). The question is weighed in full in the library's study *One God One Mediator*.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
128 ●	In the midst of the feast: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me"	—	—	—	**7:11-36**
129 ●	The last day of the feast: "rivers of living water"; officers sent to take him	—	—	—	**7:37-52**
130 ○	The woman taken in adultery [1]	—	—	—	**7:53-8:11**
131 ●	"I am the light of the world"; "before Abraham was, I am"	—	—	—	**8:12-59**

[1] On the manuscripts of this passage, see "The woman taken in adultery" above.

Section 47: The Man Born Blind

Before You Read John 9:1–10:21

"Who did sin?" As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. The disciples asked a question common in their day:

> **John 9:2** *And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 9:3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*

They assumed that suffering must be punishment for someone's sin. Jesus rejected the assumption for this man. The second half of verse 3 is read in two ways. As the KJV punctuates it, the man was born blind so that God's works might be shown in him. But the Greek has no punctuation, and the words "he was born blind" are not repeated in it. Another reading joins the clause to the next verse: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him, I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day" (John 9:3-4). On that reading, Jesus says why he will heal, not why the man was blind.

Siloam. "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:5). He spat on the ground, made clay, anointed the man's eyes, and said, **"Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.)" (John 9:7)**. The pool was the one from which the water of the feast had just been drawn (Section 46). The man went, washed, and came seeing.

The investigation. It was the sabbath. The neighbours brought him to the Pharisees, who were divided: **"This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" (John 9:16)**. They questioned his parents, who were afraid, **"for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue" (John 9:22)**. They questioned the man again and demanded that he call Jesus a sinner. His answer is famous:

> **John 9:25** *He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*

He grew bolder as they grew angrier: **"Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind" (John 9:32)**. They cast him out.

"Dost thou believe?" Jesus found him. **"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" (John 9:35)**. The man asked who he was, that he might believe. **"Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee" (John 9:37)**. **"And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him" (John 9:38)**. The man who could not see came to see, and the men who claimed to see were made blind (John 9:39-41).

The good shepherd. Jesus went straight on, speaking to the same Pharisees who had cast out one of his sheep. Ezekiel had condemned the shepherds of Israel who fed themselves and not the flock (Ezekiel 34:2-10). **"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9)**.

> **John 10:11** *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*

The hireling flees when the wolf comes; the good shepherd lays down his life. **"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold" (John 10:16)**. He lays down his life of his own will, **"This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:18)**. Again the Jews were divided: **"He hath a devil, and is mad"**; or, **"Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" (John 10:20-21)**.

Watch for: the sixth sign in John's Gospel; a beggar's growing faith; the first recorded casting out of the synagogue; the shepherd laying down his life.

Weighing it: Mixed, stated per point — on John 9:3 (Fit). That the man's blindness was not the result of his or his parents' sin is a direct statement. Whether the rest of the verse gives the purpose of the blindness or the purpose of the healing depends on punctuation that the Greek does not supply. The second reading avoids making God the cause of a man's blindness for the sake of a display, and fits verse 4's "I must work"; a careful reader can fairly answer that the KJV reading is the more usual one and is also grammatical.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
132 ●	A man blind from birth healed: "one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see"	—	—	—	**9:1-41**
133 ●	"I am the good shepherd"; division among the Jews	—	—	—	**10:1-21**

Section 48: The Seventy

Before You Read Luke 10:1–24

Seventy more. "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come" (Luke 10:1). Some manuscripts read seventy-two. The twelve had been sent in Galilee (Section 33); these went ahead of Jesus on his journey, preparing the towns he would visit. The number recalls the seventy elders who shared Moses' burden (Numbers 11:16), and the seventy nations of Genesis 10 in the Hebrew text.

Their charge. It was much like the charge to the twelve: **"The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)**. They went as lambs among wolves, without purse or shoes, greeting no one on the road, saying at each house, **"Peace be to this house" (Luke 10:5)**, eating what was set before them, healing the sick and saying, **"The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:9)**. On towns that

refused them, Jesus pronounced woes: Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum (Luke 10:13-15). Matthew records the same woes after John's question (Matthew 11:20-24, Section 26).

The return. They came back rejoicing:

> **Luke 10:17** *And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. 10:18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.*

He had given them power **"over all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10:19)**. But he turned their joy in another direction: **"rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20)**.

Jesus rejoices. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit" (Luke 10:21), the only time the Gospels say so. He thanked the Father for hiding these things from the wise and prudent and revealing them to babes. **"All things are delivered to me of my Father" (Luke 10:22)**. And to the disciples privately: **"many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them" (Luke 10:24)**.

When and where? Luke gives no time or place beyond "after these things." John shows Jesus in Judea and Jerusalem from Tabernacles to Dedication (John 7:10-10:39). The mission of the seventy, sent "before his face" into the towns he would visit, fits a journey through Judea and Perea in those months.

Watch for: more labourers sent into the harvest; Satan falling; joy in names written in heaven, more than in power.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the seventy were sent in the months between Tabernacles and Dedication (Order). Luke places them early in his journey account, and John shows Jesus in the south at that time. A careful reader can fairly answer that Luke's journey account has few time words; the grid marks the placement ○.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
134 ○	The seventy sent two by two; woes on the cities	—	—	**10:1-16**	—
135 ○	The seventy return; "rejoice, because your names are written in heaven"	—	—	**10:17-24**	—

Section 49: The Good Samaritan; Martha and Mary

Before You Read Luke 10:25–42

"What shall I do?" A lawyer, an expert in the law of Moses, stood up to test Jesus: **"Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25)**. Jesus asked what the law said. The lawyer answered with Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18: love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind, and your neighbour as yourself. **"This do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:28)**, Jesus said, echoing Leviticus 18:5.

"And who is my neighbour?" The lawyer, **"willing to justify himself" (Luke 10:29)**, wanted the word defined, and limited. Jesus answered with a story.

The road to Jericho. A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, a road that drops more than three thousand feet in about seventeen miles through barren hills, a known haunt of robbers. Thieves stripped him, wounded him, and left him half dead. A priest came by and passed on the other side; so did a Levite, a servant of the temple. Both may have feared defilement from a body that might be dead (Numbers 19:11). Then a Samaritan came, one of the people the Jews despised (Section 14). He had compassion, bound up the man's wounds with oil and wine, set him on his own beast, brought him to an inn, and left two pence with the host, with a promise to pay whatever more was spent.

> **Luke 10:36** *Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? 10:37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.*

The lawyer could not bring himself to say "the Samaritan." Jesus had turned the question around: not "who is my neighbour?" but "to whom will I be a neighbour?"

Martha and Mary. "Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house" (Luke 10:38). John tells us that Martha and Mary lived at Bethany, two miles from Jerusalem, with their brother Lazarus (John 11:1, 18). Mary sat at Jesus' feet, the place of a disciple, and heard his word. Martha was **"cumbered about much serving" (Luke 10:40)**, and complained that her sister had left her to serve alone.

> **Luke 10:41** *And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: 10:42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

"Careful" in the KJV means full of care, anxious. He did not rebuke Martha's service, but her anxiety and her complaint.

Watch for: a question meant to limit love answered with a story that removes the limits; a despised Samaritan as the example; one thing needful.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the village of Luke 10:38 was Bethany, near Jerusalem (Order). John places Martha and Mary there (John 11:1), and it fits Jesus' presence near Jerusalem between Tabernacles and Dedication. A careful reader can fairly answer that Luke does not name the village and that it comes early in his journey account; the grid marks the placement ○.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
136 ○	A lawyer's question; the good Samaritan	—	—	**10:25-37**	—
137 ○	At Martha's house: "Mary hath chosen that good part"	—	—	**10:38-42**	—

Section 50: Teaching on Prayer

Before You Read Luke 11:1–54

"Lord, teach us to pray." Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said, **"Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1)**. He gave them a shorter form of the prayer recorded in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:9-13). Luke's version has five requests: that the Father's name be hallowed, his kingdom come, daily bread given, sins forgiven, and his children led not into temptation but delivered from evil (Luke 11:2-4).

The friend at midnight. A man goes to a friend at midnight to borrow three loaves for an unexpected guest. The friend is in bed with his children and will not get up; **"yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth" (Luke 11:8)**. "Importunity" means shameless persistence. If a reluctant friend gives for that reason, how much more the Father who is not reluctant at all. **"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Luke 11:9)**. A father does not give his son a stone for bread:

> **Luke 11:13** *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

Where Matthew has **"good things"** (Matthew 7:11), Luke names the best gift, the gift of holy spirit, promised before Pentecost to those who asked.

Beelzebub again. Jesus cast out a dumb devil. Some said he did it by Beelzebub; others asked for a sign from heaven. His answer is close to his answer in Galilee (Section 28): a kingdom divided falls; a strong man must first be overcome. Luke has **"if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you" (Luke 11:20)**. Pharaoh's magicians had said of a plague they could not copy, **"This is the finger of God" (Exodus 8:19)**. A woman in the crowd called out, **"Blessed is the womb that bare thee" (Luke 11:27)**. He answered, **"Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:28)**. Then the sign of Jonas, the queen of the south, and the light of the body.

At the Pharisee's table. A Pharisee invited him to dinner and marvelled that he did not first wash. Jesus said, **"Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness" (Luke 11:39)**. Woes followed: on Pharisees who tithed mint and rue and passed over judgment and the love of God; who loved the chief seats; who were like hidden graves that men walk over without knowing. A lawyer protested, and Jesus turned to the lawyers: they loaded men with burdens and would not lift a finger; they built the tombs of the prophets their fathers killed; they had taken away **"the key of knowledge" (Luke 11:52)**. From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias, the first and last martyrs of the Hebrew Bible's order (Genesis 4:8; 2 Chronicles 24:20-21), it would be required of that generation. After this the scribes and Pharisees **"began to urge him vehemently" (Luke 11:53)**, lying in wait to catch something out of his mouth.

Watch for: prayer taught by example and by story; the Father's gift of holy spirit to those who ask; hearing and keeping the word as the true blessing.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the Beelzebub charge of Luke 11 is a second occasion, distinct from Matthew 12 and Mark 3 (Fit). The setting differs (Judea or Perea on the journey, not a house in Galilee with his family outside), and the same charge from the same opponents could well be

made twice. A careful reader can fairly answer that Luke may have placed the Galilean event here; much of the wording is close. The grid places it in Luke's order and marks it ○.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
138 ○	"Lord, teach us to pray"; the friend at midnight; ask, seek, knock	—	—	**11:1-13**	—
139 ○	The charge of Beelzebub answered; the sign of Jonas; the light of the body [1]	—	—	**11:14-36**	—
140 ○	At a Pharisee's table: woes on the Pharisees and lawyers	—	—	**11:37-54**	—

[1] Much of this is close to Matthew 12:22-45 (Section 28). It may be a second occasion, or Luke's placement of the same one; see "Luke's journey" above.

Section 51: Warnings to Disciples and Crowd

Before You Read Luke 12:1–13:21

An innumerable multitude. Luke 12 opens with a crowd of **"an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another" (Luke 12:1)**. Jesus spoke first to his disciples, with the crowd listening, and then to the crowd.

Fear and confession. "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Luke 12:1). What is hidden will be revealed. Do not fear those who can only kill the body. Five sparrows were sold for two farthings (Matthew 10:29 has two for a farthing: buy two farthings' worth and a fifth was thrown in), yet not one is forgotten before God. Whoever confesses the Son of man before men, he will confess before the angels of God. Brought before synagogues and rulers, they need not plan their defence: **"For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say" (Luke 12:12)**.

The rich fool. A man in the crowd asked Jesus to make his brother divide the inheritance. **"Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke 12:14)**. Then: **"Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15)**. A rich farmer planned bigger barns and years of ease. God said to him, **"Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:20)**. Then to the disciples, as in the Sermon on the Mount: the ravens, the lilies, seek the kingdom. **"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32)**.

Watch. Be like servants waiting for their lord's return from a wedding, loins girded, lamps burning. A householder who knew when the thief would come would watch. The faithful and wise steward feeds the household in due season; the one who says, "My lord delayeth his coming," and beats the servants, will be cut off. **"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48)**.

Fire and division. "I am come to send fire on the earth" (Luke 12:49). **"But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50)**: his coming sufferings. His coming would divide households. To the crowds: they could read the sky and wind, but not the time they were living in.

Repent or perish. Some told him of Galileans **"whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices" (Luke 13:1)**, killed at the temple. Were they worse sinners? No; nor were the eighteen killed when the tower in Siloam fell. **"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3)**. Neither event is recorded elsewhere. Then the parable of the fig tree: three years the owner sought fruit and found none; the dresser asked for one more year, to dig and dung it, and if it bore nothing, then cut it down.

Loosed from Satan's bond. On a sabbath in a synagogue was a woman who had **"a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together" (Luke 13:11)**. Jesus called her: **"Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity" (Luke 13:12)**, laid hands on her, and she stood straight and glorified God. The ruler of the synagogue was indignant and told the people to come on the six working days. Jesus answered that each of them loosed his ox on the sabbath to water it:

> **Luke 13:16** *And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?*

Jesus named the source of her bondage. Peter later summed up his ministry the same way: he went about **"healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38)**.

Watch for: the leaven of hypocrisy; life not in possessions; servants waiting; one more year for the fig tree; the binder named.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that this woman's infirmity was a bond of Satan (Fit), Luke 13:11, 16. **Corroboration only — that the fig tree's "three years" pictures the years of the ministry (Date);** the picture fits a ministry of more than two years, but the parable may simply describe a fig tree given every chance, and it cannot fix the length.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
141 ○	The leaven of the Pharisees; fear not; confess me before men	—	—	**12:1-12**	—
142 ○	The rich fool; "take no thought for your life"	—	—	**12:13-34**	—
143 ○	Watch: the faithful and wise steward	—	—	**12:35-48**	—
144 ○	"I am come to send fire"; discerning the time	—	—	**12:49-59**	—
145 ○	The Galileans slain by Pilate; the tower in Siloam; the barren fig tree	—	—	**13:1-9**	—
146 ○	A woman bowed eighteen years healed on the sabbath; mustard seed and leaven	—	—	**13:10-21**	—

Section 52: The Feast of Dedication

Before You Read John 10:22–42

The feast of Dedication. "And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter" (John 10:22). The feast fell on the 25th of the ninth month, Kislev, in December, and lasted eight days. It remembered the cleansing and rededication of the temple in 164 B.C., after the Syrian king Antiochus

Epiphanes had defiled it (Chapter 5 B). It was also called the feast of lights; today it is Hanukkah. It was not one of the feasts of the law, and Jesus' presence at it shows him honouring the house of God.

Solomon's porch. "And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch" (John 10:23), a long colonnade along the east side of the temple court, sheltered from the winter weather. Later the apostles would gather there (Acts 3:11; 5:12).

"Tell us plainly." The Jews surrounded him: **"How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly" (John 10:24)**. He answered that he had told them, and the works he did in his Father's name bore witness. They did not believe because they were not his sheep.

> **John 10:27** *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 10:29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 10:30 I and my Father are one.*

"One." The word "one" (*hen*) is neuter in Greek: not "one person" but "one thing," one in purpose and work. The sheep are held in the Son's hand and in the Father's hand; the two hands do one work. Jesus prayed later for his disciples **"that they may be one, as we are" (John 17:11)**, and **"that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:21)**. The disciples were to be one in the same sense.

Stones again. The Jews took up stones, **"because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (John 10:33)**. Jesus answered from Psalm 82:6: **"Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" (John 10:34)**. If scripture called the judges of Israel "gods," to whom the word of God came, how could they accuse him of blasphemy:

> **John 10:36** *Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?*

His own statement of what he had claimed was this: "I am the Son of God," the one the Father sanctified and sent. He told them to believe the works, **"that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him" (John 10:38)**. They tried again to take him, and he escaped.

Beyond Jordan. He went away beyond Jordan, **"into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode" (John 10:40)**. The ministry that began at the Jordan returned there. Many came to him and said, **"John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there" (John 10:41-42)**.

Watch for: "it was winter"; the sheep held in two hands doing one work; Jesus' own words for what he claimed, "I am the Son of God."

Weighing it: Strong inference — that "I and my Father are one" means one in purpose and work (Fit). The neuter "one," the same word for the disciples' unity in John 17:11 and 21, and Jesus' own restatement in John 10:36 all point that way. A careful reader can fairly answer that the Jews heard it as a claim to be God (John 10:33); but Jesus' reply did not accept their charge, and stated his claim as "the Son of God," sent by the Father.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
◆ DEDICATION · "it was winter" · John 10:22					
147 ●	In Solomon's porch: "My sheep hear my voice"; "I and my Father are one"	—	—	—	**10:22-39**
148 ●	He goes beyond Jordan where John first baptized; many believe	—	—	—	**10:40-42**

Section 53: Teaching in Perea

Before You Read Luke 13:22–14:35

Toward Jerusalem. "And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem" (Luke 13:22). This section and the next three follow Jesus' teaching in Luke during the winter months, much of it probably in Perea, the land beyond Jordan where he had withdrawn after Dedication (John 10:40).

"Are there few that be saved?" Someone asked. He did not answer the number, but the person: **"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24)**. The master of the house rises and shuts the door, and those outside plead, **"We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets" (Luke 13:26)**. Acquaintance is not enough. Men will come from east, west, north and south and sit down in the kingdom; **"there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last" (Luke 13:30)**.

"That fox." The same day some Pharisees came: **"Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee" (Luke 13:31)**. Perea was Herod Antipas' territory. Jesus answered:

> **Luke 13:32** *And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. 13:33 Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.*

He would not be hurried by a threat; his course was fixed, and it led to Jerusalem.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem." Then the lament:

> **Luke 13:34** *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!*

"Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Luke 13:35), from Psalm 118:26. Matthew records the same lament spoken in the temple in the last week (Matthew 23:37-39, Section 67). Jesus spoke it twice, on the way and at the end.

At a chief Pharisee's table. On a sabbath he went to eat at the house of one of the chief Pharisees, and they watched him. A man with dropsy was there. Jesus asked the lawyers whether it was lawful to heal on the sabbath; they were silent. He healed the man and asked which of them would not pull an ox out of a pit on the sabbath. Noticing how the guests chose the chief places, he told them to take the lowest

place, as Proverbs 25:6-7 teaches: **"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11)**. To the host: invite the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind, who cannot repay, **"for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14)**.

The great supper. A guest said, **"Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God" (Luke 14:15)**. Jesus answered with the parable of the great supper. Those invited made excuses: a field, five yoke of oxen, a new wife. The master sent his servant into the streets and lanes for the poor and maimed, and then into **"the highways and hedges"** (Luke 14:23), beyond the city. The invited guests would not taste his supper.

Counting the cost. Great crowds went with him. He turned and said, **"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26)**. "Hate" here is a Hebrew way of saying "love less": Jacob **"loved also Rachel more than Leah"**, and the next verse says **"Leah was hated"** (Genesis 29:30-31). Matthew gives the sense directly: **"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37)**. A man builds a tower only after counting the cost; a king goes to war only after counting his men. Salt that has lost its savour is good for nothing.

Watch for: a fixed course toward Jerusalem; the lament over the city; the invited who refuse and the outcasts who are brought in.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that "hate" in Luke 14:26 means "love less" (Fit), from Genesis 29:30-31 and Matthew 10:37. A careful reader can fairly answer little against it. **Reasonable inference — that the lament over Jerusalem was spoken twice (Fit),** since Luke places it on the journey and Matthew in the temple, each with its own setting.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
BEYOND JORDAN AND ON THE WAY · winter, about A.D. 30-31					
149 ○	"Are there few that be saved?"; Herod's threat; "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem"	—	—	**13:22-35**	—
150 ○	At a chief Pharisee's house: the dropsy healed; the lowest room; the great supper	—	—	**14:1-24**	—
151 ○	Counting the cost	—	—	**14:25-35**	—

Section 54: The Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Lost Son

Before You Read Luke 15:1–32

"This man receiveth sinners." "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him" (Luke 15:1). The Pharisees and scribes murmured: **"This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15:2)**. Jesus answered with three parables, one after another, each about something lost and found and the joy that follows.

The lost sheep. A shepherd with a hundred sheep loses one, leaves the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and goes after it until he finds it. He carries it home on his shoulders and calls his friends to rejoice. **"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7)**.

The lost coin. A woman with ten pieces of silver loses one, lights a candle, sweeps the house, and searches until she finds it. The coin was a drachma, about a day's wage. **"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10)**.

The lost son. A man had two sons. The younger asked for his share of the inheritance while his father still lived, as though he could not wait for his death. Under the law the elder son received a double portion (Deuteronomy 21:17), so the younger's share was a third. He went into a far country and wasted it in riotous living. When famine came he hired himself out to feed swine, the most degrading work a Jew could imagine, and would gladly have eaten their husks.

> **Luke 15:17** *And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 15:18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,*

The father ran. "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Luke 15:20). An elder of a household did not run; this father did. He cut short his son's prepared speech and called for the best robe, a ring, shoes, and the fatted calf: **"For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (Luke 15:24)**.

The elder brother. The elder son came in from the field, heard music and dancing, and was angry. He would not go in. His father came out and entreated him. He complained that he had served many years, never transgressed a commandment, and never been given a kid to make merry with his friends. The father answered:

> **Luke 15:31** *And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. 15:32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.*

The parable ends without saying whether the elder brother went in.

Watch for: three times lost, three times found, three times joy; the father running; the elder brother outside, still invited.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the elder brother pictures the murmuring Pharisees and scribes of Luke 15:2 (Fit). The parables answer their complaint, and the elder brother's complaint is theirs: faithful service, no transgression, and resentment at the welcome given to a sinner. A careful reader can fairly answer that Jesus does not make the application in words; but the setting the parables answer is stated.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
152 ○	The lost sheep, the lost piece of silver, the prodigal son	—	—	**15:1-32**	—

Section 55: The Steward and the Rich Man

Before You Read Luke 16:1–17:10

The unjust steward. A rich man's steward, the manager of his estate, was accused of wasting his goods and told he would lose his position. Too weak to dig and ashamed to beg, he called in his master's debtors and reduced their bills: a hundred measures of oil to fifty, a hundred measures of wheat to eighty. When he was put out, they would take him in.

> **Luke 16:8** *And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.*

The master praised not his dishonesty but his foresight: he used what was in his hands now to prepare for what was coming. **"Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness"** (Luke 16:9): use earthly wealth for eternal ends. **"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16:10)**. **"Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13)**.

The Pharisees rebuked. "And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him" (Luke 16:14). He answered, **"that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15)**. The law and the prophets were until John; since then the kingdom of God was preached. Yet not one tittle of the law would fail, and he restated its teaching on divorce (Luke 16:16-18).

The rich man and Lazarus. A rich man dressed in purple and fine linen feasted every day. At his gate lay a beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, wanting the crumbs from his table, while dogs licked his sores. The beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died and was buried, and **"in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments" (Luke 16:23)**. "Hell" here is *hadēs*. He asked Abraham to send Lazarus to cool his tongue; Abraham said there was a great gulf fixed between them. He asked that Lazarus be sent to warn his five brothers.

> **Luke 16:31** *And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*

Within weeks a man named Lazarus was raised from the dead at Bethany, and the leaders' response was to plot to kill him (John 12:10). Within months Jesus himself rose, and they paid the soldiers to deny it (Matthew 28:12-15).

A parable or an account? The story is told to the covetous Pharisees, right after the unjust steward, and it uses the picture of the afterlife common among the Jews of the day: Abraham's bosom, a place of torment, a gulf between them. Some readers take it as a literal description of the state of the dead. Others take it as a parable, like the stories before it, using the hearers' own beliefs to make its point about wealth, mercy and the sufficiency of scripture, and they set it beside the many plain statements that the dead sleep until the resurrection (Ecclesiastes 9:5; John 11:11-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16). The library's study *Where Are the Dead Right Now?* weighs the passage in full.

Duty. Last, sayings to the disciples: offences must come, but woe to him through whom they come; rebuke a brother who sins and forgive him, even seven times in a day. The apostles said, **"Increase our faith" (Luke 17:5)**. Faith as a grain of mustard seed could uproot a sycamine tree. And a servant who does all he is commanded should say, **"We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10)**.

Watch for: wealth used for eternity; Moses and the prophets as enough; one who rose from the dead, and men still unpersuaded.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the rich man and Lazarus is a parable using the hearers' own picture of the afterlife (Fit). It stands in a chain of parables to the same hearers on the same subject, and scripture elsewhere speaks plainly of the dead as asleep. A careful reader can fairly answer that this story names a person, Lazarus, which no other parable does, and gives no "parable" heading. The question is weighed in full in the companion study named above.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
153 ○	The unjust steward; "ye cannot serve God and mammon"	—	—	**16:1-13**	—
154 ○	The Pharisees rebuked; the rich man and Lazarus	—	—	**16:14-31**	—
155 ○	Offences; forgiveness; faith as a grain of mustard seed; unprofitable servants	—	—	**17:1-10**	—

Section 56: Lazarus Raised

Before You Read John 11:1–54

"He whom thou lovest is sick." Jesus was beyond Jordan (John 10:40) when word came from Bethany, the town of Mary and Martha: **"Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick" (John 11:3)**. John adds that this was the Mary who anointed the Lord (John 11:2), an event he tells in the next chapter (Section 61). Jesus said, **"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (John 11:4)**. He loved Martha, her sister and Lazarus, and yet he stayed two days where he was.

"Lazarus sleepeth." Then he said, **"Let us go into Judæa again" (John 11:7)**. The disciples reminded him that the Jews had lately sought to stone him there. He went on:

> **John 11:11** *These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. 11:12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. 11:13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. 11:14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.*

Jesus calls death sleep, and John explains that he meant death. Thomas, ready for the worst, said, **"Let us also go, that we may die with him" (John 11:16)**.

Four days. When Jesus came, Lazarus had lain in the grave four days. Bethany was **"nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off" (John 11:18)**, about two miles, and many Jews had come to comfort the sisters. Martha went to meet him: **"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (John 11:21)**. Jesus said her brother would rise again. She answered with the hope of every faithful Israelite: **"I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24)**.

> **John 11:25** *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?*

"Jesus wept." Mary came and fell at his feet with the same words as her sister. When he saw her weeping, and the Jews weeping with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled. He asked where they had laid him. **"Jesus wept" (John 11:35)**. He knew he was about to raise Lazarus, and still he wept with those who wept.

"Lazarus, come forth." At the tomb, a cave with a stone across it, he told them to take away the stone. Martha objected: **"Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days" (John 11:39)**. They took it away.

> **John 11:41** *Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 11:42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.*

He prayed aloud so that the people would know the Father had sent him and was doing the work. Lazarus came out bound hand and foot in graveclothes. **"Loose him, and let him go" (John 11:44)**. He was raised to his former life; he would die again. This is the seventh and greatest sign in John's Gospel before the cross.

The council decides. Many believed. Others went to the Pharisees. The council met: **"If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation" (John 11:48)**. Caiaphas, the high priest, said it was expedient **"that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John 11:50)**. John explains that he spoke more than he knew: **"being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation" (John 11:51)**, and not for that nation only. **"Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death" (John 11:53)**. Jesus withdrew to a city called Ephraim, near the wilderness, about fifteen miles north of Jerusalem (John 11:54).

Watch for: death called sleep; "I am the resurrection, and the life"; the Son praying to the Father before the miracle; the miracle of life that sealed the decision to kill him.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that Jesus called death sleep and meant death (Fit), John 11:11-14. **Reasonable inference — that Lazarus was raised in the weeks between Dedication and the final Passover (Order).** He was beyond Jordan after Dedication (John 10:40), and after the raising he withdrew to Ephraim until the Passover drew near (John 11:54-55). A careful reader can fairly answer that John gives no date; the order of his chapters is the only guide, and it is a narrative that moves forward in time.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
156 ●	At Bethany: Lazarus raised after four days	—	—	—	**11:1-44**
157 ●	The council: "one man should die for the people"; Jesus withdraws to Ephraim	—	—	—	**11:45-54**

Section 57: The Last Journey Begins

Before You Read Luke 17:11–18:14

Between Samaria and Galilee. "And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee" (Luke 17:11). From Ephraim (Section 56), Jesus may have gone north to the border between Samaria and Galilee, to join the Galilean pilgrims going down the Jordan valley to Jericho and up to Jerusalem for the Passover.

Ten lepers. At the entrance of a village ten lepers stood afar off, as the law required, and cried, **"Jesus, Master, have mercy on us" (Luke 17:13)**. He told them, **"Go shew yourselves unto the priests" (Luke 17:14)**. They went before they were healed, and as they went they were cleansed. One of them, seeing he was healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and fell at Jesus' feet giving thanks, **"and he was a Samaritan" (Luke 17:16)**.

> **Luke 17:17** *And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? 17:18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.*

Shared misery had brought Jews and a Samaritan together; only the stranger came back. **"Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:19)**.

"The kingdom of God is within you." The Pharisees asked when the kingdom of God would come.

> **Luke 17:20** *And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 17:21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.*

"Within you" can also be translated "among you" or "in the midst of you." He was speaking to Pharisees who did not believe; the kingdom was among them because the King was standing among them.

The days of the Son of man. To the disciples he spoke of his future coming. It would be as sudden as lightning; but first **"must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation" (Luke 17:25)**. It would be as in the days of Noah and of Lot: eating, drinking, marrying, buying, selling, building, until the flood came, until fire fell on Sodom. **"Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32)**. One would be taken and the other left.

The unjust judge. "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). A widow kept coming to a judge who feared neither God nor man, until he gave her justice to be rid of her. If such a judge acts, will not God avenge his own elect who cry to him day and night? **"Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8)**.

The Pharisee and the publican. To some **"which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (Luke 18:9)**, he told of two men who went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself: **"God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are" (Luke 18:11)**, and listed his fasting twice a week and his tithes. The publican stood far off, would not lift his eyes, and beat on his breast:

> **Luke 18:13** *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 18:14 I tell you,*

> *this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

Watch for: obedience before healing, and thanks after it; the King in the midst of men who did not see him; prayer that does not faint; mercy for the one who asks for it.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that these events belong to the last journey from Ephraim toward Jericho (Order). Luke 17:11 places Jesus on the border of Samaria and Galilee on the way to Jerusalem, and John 11:54 places him at Ephraim, to the south, shortly before. A careful reader can fairly answer that Luke 17:11 may belong to an earlier stage of the journey; the grid marks it ○.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
158 ○	Between Samaria and Galilee: ten lepers cleansed; one returns	—	—	**17:11-19**	—
159 ○	"The kingdom of God is within you"; as in the days of Noah	—	—	**17:20-37**	—
160 ○	The unjust judge; the Pharisee and the publican	—	—	**18:1-14**	—

Section 58: Marriage and Little Children

Before You Read Matt. 19:1–15 · Mark 10:1–16 · Luke 18:15–17

Into Judea beyond Jordan. Matthew and Mark take up the story again for the last weeks: **"he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judæa beyond Jordan; And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there" (Matthew 19:1-2)**. Mark says that **"as he was wont, he taught them again" (Mark 10:1)**. "Beyond Jordan" is Perea, east of the river, on the pilgrim road that crossed back over to Jericho.

A question of divorce. The Pharisees came, tempting him: **"Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" (Matthew 19:3)**. The teachers of the day were divided over Deuteronomy 24:1, where a man may give a bill of divorce if he finds **"some uncleanness"** in his wife. One school allowed divorce for almost any cause; another only for unchastity. The question may also have been meant to entangle him with Herod Antipas, in whose territory he stood, and who had put John to death for condemning his marriage (Section 34).

From the beginning. Jesus went behind Moses to Genesis:

> **Matthew 19:4** *And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 19:5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

They asked why Moses commanded a bill of divorce. **"Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so" (Matthew 19:8)**. Moses permitted; he did not command. Whoever put away his wife, **"except it be for fornication"** (Matthew

19:9), and married another, committed adultery. The disciples said it would be better not to marry. He answered that not all could receive that saying, only those to whom it was given.

The exception. Matthew records the exception for fornication (Matthew 5:32; 19:9); Mark and Luke give the saying without it (Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18). Matthew wrote with Jewish readers and their legal debates in view, and records the clause that answered the Pharisees' question. Mark, writing for a wider audience, gives the principle.

Little children. They brought young children, Luke says **"infants" (Luke 18:15)**, that he would touch them. The disciples rebuked those who brought them. Mark alone records Jesus' feeling:

> **Mark 10:14** *But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. 10:15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. 10:16 And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.*

Watch for: Genesis set above the debates over Deuteronomy; "from the beginning it was not so"; the displeasure of Jesus at children turned away.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Matthew's exception and Mark's plain saying agree (Fit). Matthew answers the Pharisees' question about grounds; Mark states the principle. A careful reader can fairly answer that the clause is significant and that its absence in Mark and Luke must be accounted for; the explanation given is the usual one, and no account contradicts another.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
161 ●	Into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan; great multitudes follow	**19:1-2**	10:1	—	—
162 ●	"Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?"	**19:3-12**	10:2-12	—	—
163 ●	Little children brought to him: "of such is the kingdom"	19:13-15	**10:13-16**	18:15-17	—

Section 59: The Rich Young Ruler

Before You Read Matt. 19:16–20:16 · Mark 10:17–31 · Luke 18:18–30

Running and kneeling. As Jesus set out on the road, a man came running, knelt before him, and asked, **"Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17)**. Matthew says he was young (Matthew 19:20); Luke says he was a ruler (Luke 18:18), perhaps of a synagogue; all three say he was very rich.

"None good but one."

> **Mark 10:18** *And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.*

Jesus turned the man's thoughts from himself to God, the source of all goodness. Then he pointed him to the commandments: do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honour thy father and mother. The man answered, **"Master, all these have I observed from my youth" (Mark 10:20)**.

"One thing thou lackest." "Then Jesus beholding him loved him" (Mark 10:21), and said:

> **Mark 10:21** *Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*

The commandments he had listed were those about one's neighbour. The man's wealth held first place in his heart, which the first commandment forbids. **"And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions" (Mark 10:22)**.

The eye of a needle. Jesus looked round at his disciples: **"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23)**. They were astonished; wealth was commonly taken as a sign of God's favour. **"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:25)**. The picture is meant to be impossible. **"Who then can be saved?"** they asked.

> **Mark 10:27** *And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.*

"We have left all." Peter said, **"Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee" (Mark 10:28)**. Jesus promised that no one who had left house or family or lands for his sake and the gospel's would fail to receive a hundredfold now, **"with persecutions"**, and in the world to come eternal life (Mark 10:30). Matthew adds that the twelve would sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). **"But many that are first shall be last; and the last first" (Mark 10:31)**.

The labourers in the vineyard. Matthew follows with a parable that begins and ends with that saying (Matthew 19:30; 20:16). A householder hired labourers early in the morning for a penny a day, and more at the third, sixth, ninth and eleventh hours. At evening he paid them all a penny, beginning with the last. Those hired first complained. He answered, **"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" (Matthew 20:15)**. Reward in the kingdom is a gift of grace, not a wage measured by hours.

Watch for: Jesus loving the man who went away; the impossible made possible with God; the last who are first.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that in Mark 10:18 Jesus directed the man to God as the one source of goodness (Fit). His words distinguish "God" from the one being addressed, and the conversation turns at once to God's commandments. A careful reader can fairly answer that Jesus may have been testing whether the man understood whom he was addressing; but the words themselves say "there is none good but one, that is, God," and Jesus does not apply them to himself.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
164 ●	The rich young ruler; "how hardly shall they that have riches enter"; the reward of those who left all	19:16-30	**10:17-31**	18:18-30	—
165 ●	The labourers in the vineyard	**20:1-16**	—	—	—

Section 60: On the Road to Jerusalem

Before You Read Matt. 20:17–34 · Mark 10:32–52 · Luke 18:31–19:28

Going up. "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid" (Mark 10:32). He walked ahead, toward the city where he knew what waited. He took the twelve aside and told them a third time, now in detail:

> **Mark 10:33** *Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: 10:34 And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.*

Luke adds, **"they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them" (Luke 18:34)**.

The places of honour. James and John came with a request. Matthew says their mother came with them and asked for them (Matthew 20:20); she was probably Salome, who stood at the cross (Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40). Mark gives the request as theirs. **"Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory" (Mark 10:37)**. He asked if they could drink his cup and be baptized with his baptism, meaning his sufferings. **"We can,"** they said, and he told them they would; James was the first of the twelve to be killed (Acts 12:2). But the places at his right and left were not his to give, but **"for whom it is prepared of my Father" (Matthew 20:23)**.

The Son of man came to serve. The ten were indignant. Jesus called them together. Among the Gentiles rulers lord it over others; **"But so shall it not be among you"** (Mark 10:43). The great must be servants, the first must be slaves of all.

> **Mark 10:45** *For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

At Jericho. Jericho, an oasis city of palms in the Jordan valley, was the last stop before the climb to Jerusalem, some seventeen miles and more than three thousand feet up. A blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road. Hearing that Jesus of Nazareth passed by, he cried, **"Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me" (Mark 10:47)**. Many told him to be quiet; he cried the more. Jesus stopped and called him. **"And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus" (Mark 10:50)**. **"Lord, that I might receive my sight"**. **"Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole"** (Mark 10:51-52). He followed Jesus in the way.

The accounts differ in two details. Matthew has two blind men (Matthew 20:30); Mark and Luke tell of one, and Mark names him. Mark and Matthew place the healing as Jesus went out of Jericho; Luke, as he **"was come nigh unto Jericho" (Luke 18:35)**. There were two Jerichos in that day: the old city of

Joshua's time, largely ruined, and the new city built by Herod, a mile or more away. A man leaving one was approaching the other. And as at Gadara (Section 30), Mark and Luke tell of the one who was known by name.

Zacchaeus. In Jericho was Zacchaeus, **"the chief among the publicans, and he was rich" (Luke 19:2)**. He was short, and climbed a sycomore tree, a kind of fig, to see Jesus over the crowd. Jesus stopped beneath it: **"Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house" (Luke 19:5)**. The crowd murmured that he had gone to be guest with a sinner. Zacchaeus stood and said he would give half his goods to the poor and repay fourfold anyone he had cheated, the penalty the law set for theft (Exodus 22:1).

> **Luke 19:9** *And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

The pounds. Because they were near Jerusalem, and **"they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear" (Luke 19:11)**, he told a parable. A nobleman went into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return. He gave ten servants a pound each: **"Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13)**. His citizens sent after him, **"We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14)**. On his return he rewarded the faithful and judged his enemies. His hearers would remember that Archelaus, Herod's son, had gone to Rome to receive his kingdom, and the Jews had sent an embassy after him to oppose it. Then **"he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem" (Luke 19:28)**.

Watch for: the cross foretold in full; greatness in serving; a blind man calling him son of David on the road to David's city; salvation coming to a publican's house.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the differences at Jericho arise from the two Jerichos and from Mark and Luke naming the one known man (Fit). Both facts are known, and together they account for every detail. A careful reader can fairly answer that the explanation of the two cities is from history, not from the text; it is offered as a possibility that keeps every account true, and the grid marks the placement ◌.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
166 ●	Going up to Jerusalem: he foretells his death the third time	20:17-19	**10:32-34**	18:31-34	—
167 ●	James and John ask to sit on his right and left; "to give his life a ransom for many"	20:20-28	**10:35-45**	—	—
168 ◌	At Jericho: blind Bartimaeus healed [1]	20:29-34	**10:46-52**	18:35-43	—
169 ●	Zacchaeus: "To day is salvation come to this house"	—	—	**19:1-10**	—
170 ●	The parable of the pounds, "because he was nigh to Jerusalem"	—	—	**19:11-28**	—

[1] On "two blind men" and on Jericho entered or left, see "At Jericho" above.

Section 61: The Anointing at Bethany

Before You Read Matt. 26:6–13 · Mark 14:3–9 · John 11:55–12:11

The last Passover. "And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves" (John 11:55). Anyone ceremonially unclean had to be purified before eating the Passover (Numbers 9:6-13), and pilgrims came days early. They looked for Jesus in the temple: **"What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?" (John 11:56)**. The chief priests and Pharisees had ordered that anyone who knew where he was should report it.

The days of the month. From here the harmony follows the days of the month Nisan, about A.D. 31. The day begins at sunset (Chapter 5 A). The Passover lamb was killed on the afternoon of the 14th (Exodus 12:6), and the 15th was the first day of unleavened bread, a sabbath (Leviticus 23:5-7).

"Six days before the passover." "Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead" (John 12:1). Counting from the 14th, six days before is the 8th of Nisan. There they made him a supper. Martha served, as she had before (Luke 10:40), and Lazarus sat at the table with him.

The anointing. Mary took **"a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly" (John 12:3)**, an aromatic oil from a plant of the Himalayas, carried in an alabaster flask (Mark 14:3). She broke the flask and poured it on his head (Mark 14:3), and anointed his feet and wiped them with her hair (John 12:3). **"And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment" (John 12:3)**. A pound was a large quantity, enough for head and feet both: Matthew and Mark tell of his head, John of his feet.

The complaint. Some were indignant at the waste. John names the man who led it: Judas Iscariot, **"Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" (John 12:5)**. Three hundred pence was about a year's wages for a labourer. John explains: **"This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein" (John 12:6)**.

"For my burial."

> **Mark 14:6** *And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. 14:7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. 14:8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.*

"Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her" (Mark 14:9). Of all the disciples, Mary alone seems to have grasped that he was going to die.

When was the anointing? Matthew and Mark tell the anointing after the words **"after two days was the feast of the passover"** (Mark 14:1), in the house of Simon the leper at Bethany, and go straight on to Judas going to the chief priests. They do not date the supper; Matthew introduces it with **"Now when Jesus was in Bethany" (Matthew 26:6)**. John dates it six days before the Passover. Matthew and Mark appear to tell it out of time order, to show what moved Judas. Simon the leper may have been the host, with Martha serving; scripture does not say how he was related to the family.

Lazarus too. A great crowd came to Bethany, not only for Jesus but to see Lazarus. **"But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus" (John 12:10-11)**.

Watch for: Mary at his feet once more (Luke 10:39; John 11:32); love that does not count the cost; the shadow of his burial over the supper; a living witness the priests wanted dead.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9 and John 12:1-8 record one anointing (Fit). The town, the costly ointment, the complaint about three hundred pence, the defence and the reference to his burial agree. A careful reader can fairly answer that the host's name and the anointing of the head or the feet differ, and that some hold two anointings at Bethany. **Reasonable inference — that Matthew and Mark tell it out of time order (Order),** since John alone gives a date and theirs is introduced without a time word.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
THE LAST WEEK · the final Passover · about A.D. 31 · the month Nisan					
171 ●	The Jews seek him at the temple: "Will he not come to the feast?"	—	—	—	**11:55-57**
172 ●	"Six days before the passover": the supper at Bethany; Mary anoints him [1]	26:6-13 †	14:3-9 †	—	**12:1-8**
173 ●	Many come to see Lazarus; the priests plot to kill him also	—	—	—	**12:9-11**

[1] Matthew and Mark tell the anointing after "two days" (Matthew 26:2; Mark 14:1), to explain Judas' going to the priests. John dates the supper. See "When was the anointing?" above.

Section 62: The King Comes to Jerusalem

Before You Read

Matt. 21:1–11 · Mark 11:1–11 · Luke 19:29–44 · John 12:12–19

"On the next day." John dates the entry: **"On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him" (John 12:12-13)**. Counting from the supper on the 8th, this was about the 9th or 10th of Nisan. On the 10th the Passover lamb was chosen and kept until the 14th (Exodus 12:3-6).

The colt. As they came near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples into the village ahead to find **"a colt tied, whereon never man sat" (Mark 11:2)**. If anyone asked, they were to say, **"the Lord hath need of him" (Mark 11:3)**. Matthew mentions the colt's mother too, and quotes the prophet:

> **Matthew 21:5** *Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.*

The words are from Zechariah 9:9. Kings rode horses to war; a king came on an ass in peace. The mother would walk beside an unbroken colt that had never been ridden.

"Hosanna." They spread their garments on the colt and on the road, and cut branches. The crowds that went before and followed cried:

> **Mark 11:9** *And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: 11:10 Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.*

"Hosanna" is Hebrew for "save now," from Psalm 118:25, sung at the feasts; the next verse of the psalm is **"Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD" (Psalm 118:26)**. Luke gives **"Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest" (Luke 19:38)**. For the first time Jesus accepted public acclaim as King. Some Pharisees said, **"Master, rebuke thy disciples" (Luke 19:39)**.

> **Luke 19:40** *And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.*

John adds that the disciples did not understand these things at first, **"but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him" (John 12:16)**. The crowd that had seen Lazarus raised bore witness. The Pharisees said among themselves, **"Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him" (John 12:19)**.

He wept. As the road came over the mount of Olives and the city came into view across the Kidron valley, Jesus wept over it:

> **Luke 19:42** *Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*

He foretold that enemies would cast a trench about it, lay it even with the ground and its children within it, and not leave one stone upon another, **"because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke 19:44)**. Forty years later, in A.D. 70, Roman armies besieged and destroyed Jerusalem, as Josephus records.

Into the city. Mark records the close of the day: **"And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve" (Mark 11:11)**. Matthew tells the cleansing of the temple directly after the entry (Matthew 21:12); Mark, more exactly, places it on the next day (Section 63).

Watch for: the King on an ass as Zechariah wrote; Hosanna and the King's welcome; tears over a city that would reject him; the disciples understanding only later.

Weighing it: Corroboration only — that the entry fell on the 10th of Nisan, the day the Passover lamb was chosen (Date). It fits the count from John 12:1 and 12:12 and is a fitting picture, but John's "six days" and "the next day" may be counted so as to give the 9th; the text does not fix it. **Reasonable inference — that Mark gives the order of the days (Order),** since he alone marks them: the entry and a look round at evening, then **"on the morrow"** (Mark 11:12), then **"in the morning"** (Mark 11:20).

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
174 ●	"On the next day": the entry into Jerusalem on the colt; "Hosanna"	21:1-11	11:1-11	19:29-40	**12:12-19**
175 ●	He weeps over the city: "thou knewest not the time of thy visitation"	—	—	**19:41-44**	—

Section 63: The Fig Tree and the Temple

Before You Read Matt. 21:12–22 · Mark 11:12–26 · Luke 19:45–48

The fig tree. "And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry" (Mark 11:12). He saw a fig tree in leaf and came to it for fruit, and found nothing but leaves, **"for the time of figs was not yet" (Mark 11:13)**. In that land the fig tree puts out small early fruit with or before its leaves; a tree in full leaf promised fruit. This one had leaves only.

> **Mark 11:14** *And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.*

The prophets had used the fig tree as a picture of Israel (Hosea 9:10; Jeremiah 8:13), and Jesus had told a parable of a barren fig tree given one more year (Luke 13:6-9, Section 51). The next thing he did was go to the temple.

The second cleansing. "And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves" (Mark 11:15). He would not let anyone carry a vessel through the temple court, using it as a short cut. Then he taught:

> **Mark 11:17** *And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.*

The first quotation is Isaiah 56:7; only Mark gives the words "of all nations." The market filled the court of the Gentiles, the one part of the temple where Gentiles could pray. The second is Jeremiah 7:11, spoken at the temple gate before the first temple was destroyed. Three years before, at the first Passover, he had cleansed the temple and called it "an house of merchandise" (Section 11). Now he called it a den of thieves.

The children's Hosanna. Matthew adds that the blind and the lame came to him in the temple and he healed them, and children were crying in the temple, **"Hosanna to the son of David" (Matthew 21:15)**. The chief priests and scribes were indignant. He answered from Psalm 8:2: **"Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" (Matthew 21:16)**.

The rulers decide. "And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine" (Mark 11:18). Luke adds that he taught daily in the temple, and they could find nothing they could do, **"for all the people were very attentive to hear him" (Luke 19:48)**. At evening he went out of the city.

The fig tree withered. "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots" (Mark 11:20). Peter said, **"Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away" (Mark 11:21)**. Jesus answered with a lesson on faith:

> **Mark 11:22** *And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. 11:23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

And when they prayed, they must forgive (Mark 11:25-26).

Matthew's shorter account. Matthew tells the cleansing on the day of the entry and the cursing and withering of the fig tree together, the next morning: **"And presently the fig tree withered away" (Matthew 21:19)**. Mark spreads the events over two mornings with his time words. Matthew gathers each subject into one account; Mark gives the days.

Watch for: leaves without fruit; the house of prayer for all nations; the children's praise; the withered tree as the setting for a lesson on faith.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that Mark gives the order of these events (Order). He marks each step with a time word, "on the morrow" and "in the morning," and Matthew's account is consistent with his when read as gathered by subject. A careful reader can fairly answer that Matthew's "presently" (at once) suggests the tree withered that moment; Mark says only that it was found withered the next morning, and both can be true.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
176 ●	"On the morrow": the fig tree cursed	21:18-19 †	**11:12-14**	—	—
177 ●	The second cleansing: "a den of thieves"; the children's Hosanna	21:12-17 †	**11:15-19**	19:45-48	—
178 ●	"In the morning": the fig tree withered; "Have faith in God"	21:20-22	**11:20-26**	—	—

Section 64: The Greeks Seek Jesus

Before You Read John 12:20–50

"Sir, we would see Jesus." Among those who came up to worship at the feast were certain Greeks: Gentiles who worshipped the God of Israel. They came to Philip, whose Greek name and home in Bethsaida, near Gentile country, may have drawn them, and asked, **"Sir, we would see Jesus" (John 12:21)**. Philip told Andrew, and the two told Jesus. John does not say whether the Greeks spoke with him. What he records is Jesus' answer.

"The hour is come." Through the whole of John's Gospel his hour had not yet come (John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20). Now:

> **John 12:23** *And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. 12:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

Gentiles seeking him was the sign that the harvest of his death was near. The way to the nations lay through the grave: the seed must die to bear fruit. Whoever would serve him must follow him there.

"Father, glorify thy name."

> **John 12:27** *Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. 12:28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*

This is John's Gethsemane, days before the garden. The voice from heaven was heard for the third time in the ministry, after the baptism and the transfiguration. Some in the crowd said it thundered; others, that an angel spoke. **"This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes" (John 12:30)**.

"If I be lifted up." "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:31-32). John explains: **"This he said, signifying what death he should die" (John 12:33)**. The crowd was puzzled: the law said the Christ abides for ever; who was this Son of man who must be lifted up? He answered, **"Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you" (John 12:35)**, and went away and hid himself.

They believed not. John pauses to look back over the whole public ministry: **"But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him" (John 12:37)**. He quotes Isaiah 53:1, **"Lord, who hath believed our report?"**, and Isaiah 6:10, the blinded eyes and hardened heart. **"These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him" (John 12:41)**. Even among the chief rulers many believed, but would not confess him for fear of being put out of the synagogue, **"For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43)**.

His last public words in John. Jesus cried out:

> **John 12:44** *Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.*

He came as a light into the world, not to judge the world but to save it. The word he had spoken would judge those who rejected it at the last day, **"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12:49)**.

Watch for: Gentiles seeking him as the hour arrives; the grain of wheat; a troubled soul and an obedient will; John's summary of a ministry of signs met with unbelief.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the Greeks came during the days between the entry and the supper (Order). John places it after the entry (John 12:12-19) and before the supper (John 13:1). A careful reader can fairly answer that John gives no day; the grid marks it ○.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
179 ○	Greeks ask to see Jesus: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die"	—	—	—	**12:20-36**
180 ○	Though he had done so many miracles, they believed not; "I came not to judge the world"	—	—	—	**12:37-50**

Section 65: By What Authority?

Before You Read Matt. 21:23–22:14 · Mark 11:27–12:12 · Luke 20:1–19

The day of questions. After the fig tree was found withered, **"they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders" (Mark 11:27)**. These three groups made up the council (Chapter 4 C). This day, from Mark 11:27 to 13:37, is the fullest single day recorded in the ministry: a series of questions meant to trap him, his answers, the woes on the scribes and Pharisees, and the discourse on the mount of Olives.

"By what authority?" They demanded: **"By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?" (Mark 11:28)**. He had cleansed their temple the day before. He answered with a question:

> **Mark 11:30** *The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me.*

If they said "from heaven," he would ask why they had not believed John, who had pointed to him. If they said "of men," the people would turn on them, for all held John a prophet. **"We cannot tell,"** they said; **"Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things"** (Mark 11:33). His authority came from the same source as John's.

The two sons. Matthew adds a parable. A father told two sons to work in his vineyard. One said "I will not," and afterward repented and went. The other said "I go, sir," and went not. Which did the father's will? **"Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (Matthew 21:31)**. They had believed John; the leaders had not.

The wicked husbandmen. A man planted a vineyard, set a hedge around it, dug a winepress, built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen. The picture is Isaiah's song of the vineyard, **"For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel" (Isaiah 5:7)**. At harvest he sent servant after servant for his fruit; they beat some, stoned some, killed some.

> **Mark 12:6** *Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. 12:7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be our's.*

They killed him and cast him out of the vineyard. What would the lord of the vineyard do? He would destroy them and give the vineyard to others. Jesus quoted Psalm 118:22: **"The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner" (Matthew 21:42)**. **"Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matthew 21:43)**. **"And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they**

perceived that he spake of them" (Matthew 21:45). They would have seized him then, but feared the people.

The marriage of the king's son. Matthew gives one more. A king made a marriage feast for his son. The invited guests would not come; some went to their farms and businesses, and others killed the servants. The king sent his armies, destroyed those murderers, **"and burned up their city" (Matthew 22:7)**. Then he filled the hall from the highways, good and bad. One guest had no wedding garment and was cast out. **"For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14)**.

Watch for: a question answered with a question; the son sent last, the heir killed; the rejected stone; the leaders recognising themselves in the parables.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that the vineyard parables describe Israel's leaders and their rejection of the Son (Fit). Isaiah 5:7 names the vineyard, and Matthew 21:45 records that the leaders understood it of themselves. A careful reader can fairly answer little against it. The burned city of Matthew 22:7 fits the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, as a picture within a parable, not a dated prophecy.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
181 ●	"By what authority doest thou these things?"	21:23-27	**11:27-33**	20:1-8	—
182 ●	The two sons	**21:28-32**	—	—	—
183 ●	The wicked husbandmen; "the stone which the builders rejected"	**21:33-46**	12:1-12	20:9-19	—
184 ●	The marriage of the king's son	**22:1-14**	—	—	—

Section 66: Questions in the Temple

Before You Read

Matt. 22:15–46 · Mark 12:13–37 · Luke 20:20–44

Tribute to Caesar. Pharisees and Herodians came with flattery and a trap: **"Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?" (Mark 12:14)**. The tribute was the Roman poll tax, hated by the people. If he said yes, he would lose the crowds; if no, he could be handed to the governor as a rebel. He said, **"Bring me a penny, that I may see it" (Mark 12:15)**: the denarius, bearing the image and title of the emperor Tiberius.

> **Mark 12:16** *And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's. 12:17 And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.*

The coin bore Caesar's image; man bears God's (Genesis 1:27).

The Sadducees and the resurrection. The Sadducees, who said there was no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit (Acts 23:8), came with a puzzle built on the law of the brother's widow (Deuteronomy 25:5-6). Seven brothers married one woman in turn and died childless; in the resurrection, whose wife would she be? Jesus answered:

> **Mark 12:24** *And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? 12:25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.*

Then he proved the resurrection from the five books of Moses, which the Sadducees accepted. At the bush God said, **"I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Mark 12:26)**, long after all three had died. **"He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living" (Mark 12:27)**. Luke adds, **"for all live unto him" (Luke 20:38)**. God's covenant with the fathers was made to men who would live again; he is their God, and he will raise them. Matthew introduces the proof with the words **"as touching the resurrection of the dead" (Matthew 22:31)**: it was an argument for the resurrection.

The first commandment. A scribe who had heard them reasoning, and saw that he answered well, asked, **"Which is the first commandment of all?" (Mark 12:28)**.

> **Mark 12:29** *And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.*

He quoted the Shema of Deuteronomy 6:4-5, the confession every Israelite recited daily, and added Leviticus 19:18, love of neighbour, as the second. The scribe agreed: **"Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he" (Mark 12:32)**, and that love was more than all burnt offerings. **"Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark 12:34)**.

David's son and David's Lord. Then Jesus asked them a question:

> **Matthew 22:42** *Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David.*

How then did David, by the spirit, call him Lord? **"The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Matthew 22:44)**, from Psalm 110:1. **"If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" (Matthew 22:45)**. In the Hebrew of the psalm, "the LORD" is God's name, Yahweh; "my Lord" is *adoni*, a form the Hebrew Bible uses of men and angels addressed as lord, not of God. The Christ would be David's son by birth and David's lord by exaltation. Peter answered the question on the day of Pentecost: God raised Jesus and exalted him to his right hand, **"God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36)**. **"And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions" (Matthew 22:46)**.

Watch for: traps turned into teaching; the resurrection proved from God's covenant; "The Lord our God is one Lord"; David's son exalted to be David's Lord.

Weighing it: Direct statement — that Jesus named the Shema, "The Lord our God is one Lord," as the first commandment (Fit), Mark 12:29. **Strong inference — that the burning bush argument proves the future resurrection (Fit),** as Matthew 22:31 introduces it; a careful reader can fairly answer that "all live unto him" may imply a present life of the dead, but the argument is offered "as touching the resurrection," against men who denied it. **Reasonable inference — that "my Lord" in Psalm 110:1 is the word used of human and angelic lords (Fit);** a careful reader can fairly answer that the distinction rests on the Hebrew vowel marks, which were written down centuries after the psalm; the consonants allow it, and Peter's use of the verse for the exalted man Jesus fits it.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
185 ●	Tribute to Caesar: "Render therefore unto Cæsar"	22:15-22	**12:13-17**	20:20-26	—
186 ●	The Sadducees: whose wife in the resurrection?	22:23-33	**12:18-27**	20:27-40	—
187 ●	"Which is the great commandment?"	22:34-40	**12:28-34**	—	—
188 ●	"What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?"	**22:41-46**	12:35-37	20:41-44	—

Section 67: Woe unto You

Before You Read Matt. 23:1–39 · Mark 12:38–44 · Luke 20:45–21:4

Moses' seat. Jesus spoke to the crowds and his disciples about the scribes and Pharisees:

> **Matthew 23:2** *Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 23:3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.*

They bound heavy burdens on others and would not move them with a finger. They did their works to be seen: broad phylacteries (small boxes holding scripture, bound on the forehead and arm), enlarged tassels, the chief seats, greetings in the markets, the title Rabbi. **"But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren" (Matthew 23:8)**. **"And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven" (Matthew 23:9)**. **"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:11)**.

The woes. Then the woes, each beginning **"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"**:

1. They shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, neither entering nor letting others enter.
2. They devoured widows' houses and for a pretence made long prayers (Matthew 23:14; this verse is lacking in some old manuscripts of Matthew, but the same words are in Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47).
3. They crossed sea and land to make one proselyte, and made him twofold more a child of hell.
4. They taught that an oath by the temple was nothing, but by the gold of the temple binding: **"Ye blind guides" (Matthew 23:16)**.
5. They tithed mint, anise and cummin and omitted **"the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith" (Matthew 23:23)**: **"Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel" (Matthew 23:24)**.
6. They cleaned the outside of the cup and left the inside full of extortion.
7. They were **"like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones" (Matthew 23:27)**. Tombs were whitewashed before the feasts so that pilgrims would not touch one unknowingly and be defiled.
8. They built the tombs of the prophets and said they would not have shared their fathers' guilt, and so testified that they were the children of those who killed the prophets.

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers" (Matthew 23:33). On that generation would come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, **"from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" (Matthew 23:35)**. The Zechariah killed in the temple court was the son of Jehoiada (2 Chronicles 24:20-21); the prophet Zechariah was the son of Berechiah (Zechariah 1:1). Some readers think Jehoiada bore a second name, or that the prophet met the same end unrecorded; the difficulty is real and is left open here.

The lament. He ended with the lament he had spoken on the way (Section 53): **"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37)**. **"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23:38)**. He left the temple for the last time.

The widow's two mites. Before he went out, Mark and Luke record one more scene. Jesus sat over against the treasury, the chests in the court of the women where offerings were cast, and watched. Many rich men cast in much. A poor widow cast in two mites, the smallest coins, **"which make a farthing" (Mark 12:42)**.

> **Mark 12:43** *And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 12:44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.*

He had just condemned men who devoured widows' houses. Now a widow gave all she had to the house of God.

Watch for: "they say, and do not"; the weightier matters of the law; the lament and the desolate house; a widow's whole living, measured by God as more than all.

Weighing it: Neutral — on the identity of "Zacharias son of Barachias" (Fit). Both explanations are possible, and neither is proved. **Direct statement — that the widow gave more than all the rich (Fit),** in Jesus' own words, measured by what remained rather than by what was given.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
189 ●	"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"; the lament over Jerusalem	**23:1-39**	12:38-40	20:45-47	—
190 ●	The widow's two mites	—	**12:41-44**	21:1-4	—

Section 68: The Olivet Discourse

Before You Read Matt. 24:1–25:46 · Mark 13:1–37 · Luke 21:5–38

"Not one stone upon another." As he went out of the temple, one of his disciples said, **"Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" (Mark 13:1)**. Herod's temple was among the wonders of the world, built of white stone and gold, some of its stones many yards long. Jesus answered:

> **Mark 13:2** *And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

On the mount of Olives. He sat on the mount of Olives facing the temple, and Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately. Matthew gives their question in full: **"Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3)**. They asked about two things, the temple's destruction and his coming at the end of the age, perhaps thinking them one event. His answer speaks of both.

The beginning of sorrows. Deceivers would come in his name; there would be wars and rumours of wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes: **"All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:8)**. His disciples would be delivered up, hated of all nations; many would fall away; and **"this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14)**.

The abomination of desolation. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)" (Matthew 24:15), those in Judea were to flee to the mountains without stopping for anything. Daniel speaks of it three times (Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). Then there would be **"great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21)**.

Luke's account of the siege. Luke records words that point plainly to the Roman siege: **"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (Luke 21:20)**, and **"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24)**. In A.D. 70 the Roman armies surrounded the city and destroyed the temple, leaving not one stone upon another, as Josephus describes. Christians in Jerusalem, according to early writers, heeded the warning and fled across the Jordan.

The coming of the Son of man. After that tribulation the sun would be darkened, the stars fall, **"and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30)**, the words of Daniel 7:13. He would send his angels to gather his elect. From the fig tree they should learn: when its branch is tender and puts out leaves, summer is near. **"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matthew 24:34)**.

No man knows the day.

> **Mark 13:32** *But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*

As in the days of Noah, men would eat, drink and marry until the flood came. One would be taken and the other left. **"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matthew 24:42)**. The faithful and wise servant would be found doing his master's work.

Three pictures in Matthew 25. The ten virgins, five wise with oil and five foolish without, waiting for the bridegroom: **"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 25:13)**. The talents, entrusted to servants according to their ability and reckoned for on the master's return. And the sheep and the goats, when the Son of man comes in his glory and all nations are gathered before him:

> **Matthew 25:40** *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

Days and nights. Luke closes: **"And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives" (Luke 21:37)**, and all the people came early in the morning to hear him (Luke 21:38).

The administrations. The discourse speaks to Israel, of the temple, the holy place, Judea and the sabbath (Matthew 24:20). The coming it describes belongs, in the library's study *The Seven Administrations of Scripture*, to the Day of Wrath and what follows it, after the present administration of grace.

Watch for: two questions and an answer that holds both; the fall of the temple; the coming of the Son of man; the Son himself not knowing the day; the call to watch.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that Luke 21:20-24 was fulfilled in the siege of A.D. 70 (Fit). The armies, the desolation and the treading down of Jerusalem match the history. **Reasonable inference — that the coming of the Son of man in glory is still future (Fit),** since nothing in A.D. 70 matches the sign in heaven and the gathering of all nations. **Neutral — on the meaning of "this generation" (Fit);** it is read as the generation then living, as the generation that sees the signs, and as the race of Israel, and the text does not settle it. **Direct statement — that the Son did not know the day or the hour (Fit),** Mark 13:32.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
191 ●	"Not one stone upon another"; the signs; the abomination of desolation	**24:1-28**	13:1-23	21:5-24	—
192 ●	The coming of the Son of man; the fig tree; "Watch therefore"	**24:29-51**	13:24-37	21:25-36	—
193 ●	The ten virgins; the talents	**25:1-30**	—	—	—
194 ●	When the Son of man shall come in his glory: the sheep and the goats	**25:31-46**	—	—	—
195 ●	By day teaching in the temple, by night on the mount of Olives	—	—	**21:37-38**	—

Section 69: The Plot and the Betrayer

Before You Read Matt. 26:1–5, 14–16 · Mark 14:1–2, 10–11 · Luke 22:1–6

"After two days." When Jesus had finished the discourse on the mount of Olives, he said to his disciples:

> **Matthew 26:2** *Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.*

Counting to the Passover on the 14th of Nisan, this was spoken on about the 12th. Jesus named both the day and the manner of his death.

The council in Caiaphas' palace. At the same time the chief priests, the scribes and the elders gathered at the palace of the high priest, Caiaphas, **"And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him" (Matthew 26:4)**. They had a plan of their own for the timing: **"Not on the feast day, lest there**

be an uproar among the people" (Matthew 26:5). Jerusalem swelled with pilgrims at Passover, many of them Galileans who had followed Jesus, and the Romans were watchful for riots. The leaders meant to wait until the crowds had gone. Events overtook their plan, and he died on the day he had named.

Judas. Luke says plainly what moved him: **"Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve" (Luke 22:3)**. He went to the chief priests and captains of the temple guard:

> **Matthew 26:15** *And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.*

Thirty pieces of silver was the price the law set for a slave gored by an ox (Exodus 21:32). Zechariah had been paid the same sum as his wages by those who despised him: **"So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver" (Zechariah 11:12)**. Matthew later shows what became of the money (Section 73). The priests **"were glad"** (Mark 14:11). From then on Judas **"sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude" (Luke 22:6)**. What the priests lacked was a way to find Jesus quietly, at night, away from the crowds. Judas supplied it.

Why did Judas do it? Scripture gives three things: he was a thief who kept the common purse (John 12:6); he went to the priests directly after the rebuke at Bethany (Mark 14:10); and Satan entered into him (Luke 22:3; John 13:27). Scripture does not give a political motive, though some have proposed one.

Watch for: Jesus naming the day; the leaders' plan to wait undone; the price of a slave set on the Son of God.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the plot and Judas' bargain fell about the 12th of Nisan (Date). Matthew 26:2 counts "after two days" to the Passover, and Mark 14:10 ties Judas' visit to the time after the anointing story. A careful reader can fairly answer that "after two days" may be counted inclusively, giving the 13th; either way it falls within the two days before the cross.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
196 ●	"After two days": the priests and elders consult to take him by subtilty	26:1-5	14:1-2	**22:1-2**	—
197 ●	Judas covenants with the chief priests for thirty pieces of silver	26:14-16	14:10-11	**22:3-6**	—

Section 70: The Last Supper

Before You Read

Matt. 26:17–29 · Mark 14:12–25 · Luke 22:7–38 · John 13:1–38

The room made ready. Mark dates the preparation: **"And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?" (Mark 14:12)**. Jesus sent Peter and John (Luke 22:8) into the city: a man bearing a pitcher of water would meet them, an unusual sight, since women usually carried water. They were to follow him to a house and say to the owner, **"The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?" (Mark 14:14)**. He would show them **"a large upper room furnished and prepared" (Mark 14:15)**. The secret arrangement kept Judas from knowing the place in advance.

The supper and the Passover. Here the Gospels raise a question that bears on the whole last day. Matthew, Mark and Luke call the meal "the passover" and place its preparation on "the first day of unleavened bread." John says the supper was **"before the feast of the passover" (John 13:1)**; that the next morning the Jews would not enter Pilate's hall **"lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover" (John 18:28)**; and that the day of the crucifixion was **"the preparation of the passover" (John 19:14)**. This harmony follows the library's position that Christ died at the ninth hour on the 14th of Nisan, the day the Passover lambs were killed, as **"Christ our passover"** sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5:7). On that reading the supper was eaten on the evening that began the 14th, a day before the Passover meal itself. The 14th was commonly called the first day of unleavened bread, because all leaven was put out of the houses that day (Exodus 12:15, 18). Luke records Jesus' words: **"With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15)**, and **"I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:16)**. He desired it, and he would not eat it with them; before the lambs were eaten he would be in the tomb.

Strife at the table. Luke records that **"there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest" (Luke 22:24)**. Jesus answered, **"For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22:27)**. He promised them a kingdom, and thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

The feet washed. John shows how he served. **"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God" (John 13:3)**, rose from supper, laid aside his garments, took a towel, poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, the work of the lowest servant. Peter refused: **"Thou shalt never wash my feet"**. **"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me"**. **"Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head"** (John 13:8-9). **"He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" (John 13:10)**. Then: **"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15)**.

"One of you shall betray me." As they ate, Jesus was troubled in spirit and said it plainly. They were exceeding sorrowful and began to say one by one, **"Lord, is it I?" (Matthew 26:22)**. **"He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me" (Matthew 26:23)**. The disciple whom Jesus loved, reclining next to him, leaned back on his breast and asked who it was. Jesus answered that it was he to whom he would give a sop, a morsel dipped in the dish, and gave it to Judas.

> **John 13:27** *And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.*

The others thought Jesus was sending him to buy for the feast or to give to the poor. **"He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night" (John 13:30)**.

The bread and the cup.

> **Luke 22:19** *And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*

"Bread" means the meal. In Hebrew *lechem* and in Greek *artos* often stand for food in general, and "breaking bread" is eating a meal together (the figure called synecdoche, a part put for the whole). At this supper both are true: real bread, taken **"as they were eating" (Matthew 26:26)**.

The new testament is the new covenant promised by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Matthew adds that the blood was shed **"for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28)**. Paul later received the same words and passed them on to the church (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Order in the upper room. Luke tells of the bread and the cup before the word about the betrayer (Luke 22:19-23); Matthew and Mark tell of the betrayer first (Matthew 26:21-26). John says Judas went out after the sop but does not mention the bread and cup at all. Whether Judas was present when the bread was broken cannot be settled from the text.

A new commandment. When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, **"Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him" (John 13:31)**.

> **John 13:34** *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

Peter said he would lay down his life for him. Jesus said, **"The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice" (John 13:38)**. Luke adds, **"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32)**.

Watch for: the Master serving; the sop given and Satan entering; "and it was night"; the bread and the cup "in remembrance"; love as the mark of his disciples.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the supper was eaten on the evening that began the 14th of Nisan, before the Passover lambs were killed (Date). John 13:1, 18:28 and 19:14 point that way, and it agrees with the library's position on the day of the cross. A careful reader can fairly answer that Matthew, Mark and Luke call the meal "the passover" and date its preparation "when they killed the passover" (Mark 14:12), and that many hold it was the Passover meal itself. The question is real, and the reader can weigh both readings. **Neutral — on whether Judas was present at the bread and the cup (Order).**

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
THE NIGHT BEFORE THE CROSS · the evening that began 14 Nisan					
198 ○	The upper room made ready [1]	26:17-19	**14:12-16**	22:7-13	—
199 ●	At table with the twelve: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover"	26:20	14:17	**22:14-18**	—
200 ○	Strife over who is greatest; "I am among you as he that serveth"	—	—	**22:24-30** †	—
201 ●	He washes the disciples' feet	—	—	—	**13:1-20**
202 ●	"One of you shall betray me"; the sop given; Judas goes out, "and it was night"	26:21-25	14:18-21	22:21-23 †	**13:21-30**
203 ○	The bread and the cup: "This do in remembrance of me" [2]	26:26-29	14:22-25	**22:19-20** †	—
204 ●	"A new commandment"; Peter's denial foretold	—	—	22:31-38	**13:31-38**

[1] On the day and the meal, see "The supper and the Passover" above.

[2] Whether Judas was still present at the bread and the cup is uncertain; see "Order in the upper room" above.

Section 71: The Farewell Discourse

Before You Read John 14:1–17:26

Farewell. John 14-17 is the longest record of Jesus' words to his disciples, spoken on the last night. He was going away, and they were troubled.

"Let not your heart be troubled."

> **John 14:1** *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 14:2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

Thomas said they did not know the way. **"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6)**. Philip asked to be shown the Father. **"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9)**, Jesus said, and explained how: **"the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:10)**. The Father was seen in the Son because the Son spoke the Father's words and did the Father's works.

The Comforter. He promised them a gift:

> **John 14:16** *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

The Comforter is the gift of holy spirit, given by the Father after the Son was glorified (John 7:39), poured out at Pentecost (Acts 2:33). In verse 17 the Greek pronouns that refer to "the Spirit" are neuter, though the KJV renders them "him"; the library's study *He or It?* examines the pronouns of John 14-16. **"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18)**. Through the gift, the Father and the Son would make their abode with those who loved him (John 14:23). He left them his peace, and said, **"If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I" (John 14:28)**. **"Arise, let us go hence" (John 14:31)**.

The vine. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman" (John 15:1). The branches bear fruit only by abiding in the vine. **"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13)**. **"Henceforth I call you not servants... but I have called you friends" (John 15:15)**. The world that hated him would hate them; they would be put out of the synagogues.

"It is expedient for you that I go away."

> **John 16:7** *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

The gift would reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. **"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:12-13)**. There was more to be revealed after Pentecost, and it came through the apostles. Their sorrow would turn to joy, like a woman's after travail. **"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33)**.

The prayer. Then he lifted up his eyes to heaven and prayed:

> **John 17:1** *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 17:2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

He prayed for the eleven, that the Father would keep them, **"that they may be one, as we are" (John 17:11)**; **"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17)**. He prayed for all who would believe through their word, that they all might be one. **"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me" (John 17:24)**.

Where were these words spoken? At John 14:31 Jesus says, "Arise, let us go hence," but John 18:1 says he went forth across the Kidron only **"When Jesus had spoken these words."** Chapters 15-17 may have been spoken as they rose and lingered in the room, or on the way through the city to the brook. John does not say.

Watch for: the Father seen in the Son's words and works; the Comforter promised; "my Father is greater than I"; "the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

Weighing it: Direct statement — that Jesus called the Father "greater than I" and "the only true God" (Fit), John 14:28 and 17:3. **Mixed, stated per point — on John 17:5, "the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (Fit).** Some read it as a glory he possessed in a prior existence; others as the glory God purposed for him before the world, as he gives the disciples **"the glory which thou gavest me" (John 17:22)** before they possess it. The companion study *One God One Mediator* weighs it. **Neutral — on where John 15-17 was spoken (Order).**

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
205 ●	"In my Father's house are many mansions"; "I am the way"; the Comforter promised; "Arise, let us go hence"	—	—	—	**14:1-31**
206 ●	The vine and the branches; the world's hatred; the Comforter's work; "I have overcome the world"	—	—	—	**15:1-16:33**
207 ●	His prayer: "Father, the hour is come"	—	—	—	**17:1-26**

Section 72: Gethsemane

Before You Read

Matt. 26:30–56 · Mark 14:26–52 · Luke 22:39–53 · John 18:1–12

To the mount of Olives. "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matthew 26:30). They left the city by night, went down into the Kidron valley and up toward the slope of the mount of Olives.

"All ye shall be offended." On the way Jesus told them:

> **Matthew 26:31** *Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. 26:32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.*

The words are from Zechariah 13:7. Peter answered, **"Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended" (Matthew 26:33)**. Jesus told him that this very night, before the cock crowed, he would deny him three times; Mark has **"before the cock crow twice" (Mark 14:30)**. Peter insisted the more, and so said all the disciples. Luke and John give a warning to Peter in the upper room (Section 70); Matthew and Mark give this one on the way. Peter's boast was made more than once, and the warning was given more than once.

Gethsemane. "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden" (John 18:1). Matthew and Mark name it Gethsemane, meaning "oil press," an olive grove. He left eight disciples near the entrance and took Peter, James and John farther in.

> **Matthew 26:38** *Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.*

He went a little farther and fell on his face and prayed:

> **Mark 14:36** *And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.*

"Abba" is the Aramaic word a child used for "father." The cup was the suffering before him (Isaiah 51:17). He prayed three times, and three times returned to find the disciples asleep: **"What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Matthew 26:40)**. **"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41)**.

Luke the physician. Luke adds that an angel appeared from heaven, strengthening him, and that **"being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44)**. These two verses (Luke 22:43-44) are in the KJV and most manuscripts but missing from some of the oldest. Luke's own words for the prayer are **"Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42)**.

"He is at hand." "Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me" (Matthew 26:46). Judas knew the place, **"for Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples" (John 18:2)**. He came with a band of soldiers and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, with lanterns, torches and weapons. The "band" is the Greek word for a detachment of Roman soldiers.

"I am he." Jesus went out to meet them: **"Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth." "I am he." "As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground" (John 18:6)**. He asked again, and said, **"if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way" (John 18:8)**. He gave himself up; he was not taken.

The kiss. Judas had given them a sign: whomever he kissed was the man. He came up: **"Hail, master; and kissed him" (Matthew 26:49)**. **"Friend, wherefore art thou come?" (Matthew 26:50)**. Luke records, **"Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48)**.

The sword. Peter drew a sword and cut off the right ear of the high priest's servant, Malchus (John 18:10). Jesus said, **"Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matthew 26:52)**. He could ask his Father for more than twelve legions of angels; but then how should the scriptures be fulfilled? Luke alone records that **"he touched his ear, and healed him" (Luke 22:51)**. To the chief priests and captains he said, **"this is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53)**. **"Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled" (Matthew 26:56)**. Mark adds a young man who followed, wearing only a linen cloth, who fled naked when they laid hold of him (Mark 14:51-52). Many think the young man was Mark himself.

Watch for: the Son's will yielded to the Father's; disciples asleep; soldiers falling back at his word; a kiss of betrayal; the shepherd struck and the sheep scattered.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Peter was warned twice, in the room and on the way (Fit). Luke and John set one warning at the table, Matthew and Mark one after the hymn, each with its own words. A careful reader can fairly answer that the Gospels may place one warning differently; the grid keeps each where its writer placed it. **Direct statement — that Jesus prayed to his Father, "not my will, but thine" (Fit),** Luke 22:42, two wills, the Son's yielded to the Father's.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
208 ●	A hymn; to the mount of Olives; "All ye shall be offended because of me" [1]	**26:30-35**	14:26-31	22:39	18:1
209 ●	The agony in Gethsemane: "not my will, but thine, be done"	26:36-46	**14:32-42**	22:40-46	—
210 ●	Judas' kiss; the arrest; Peter's sword; the disciples flee	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	**18:2-12**

[1] Luke and John give Peter's warning in the upper room (Section 70); Matthew and Mark on the way to the mount of Olives. Jesus may have warned him twice; see above.

Section 73: The Night Trials and Peter's Denials

Before You Read

Matt. 26:57–27:1, 3–10 · Mark 14:53–15:1 · Luke 22:54–71 · John 18:13–27

Before Annas. The soldiers bound Jesus **"And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year" (John 18:13)**. Annas had been high priest years before, and five of his sons held the office after him; he was the power behind it (Chapter 4 B). He questioned Jesus about his disciples and his doctrine. Jesus answered:

> **John 18:20** *Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. 18:21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.*

An officer struck him: **"Answerest thou the high priest so?" (John 18:22)**. **"If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" (John 18:23)**. Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas.

Before Caiaphas by night. The council gathered at Caiaphas' house. They sought false witness to put him to death, but the witnesses did not agree. At last two came: **"This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days" (Matthew 26:61)**, a twisting of what he had said at the first Passover (Section 11). He held his peace, as Isaiah wrote: **"as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:7)**. Then the high priest put him on oath:

> **Matthew 26:63** *But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. 26:64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

Mark gives his answer as **"I am" (Mark 14:62)**. He joined Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13. The high priest rent his clothes: **"He hath spoken blasphemy" (Matthew 26:65)**. They answered, **"He is guilty of death" (Matthew 26:66)**. They spat in his face, struck him, blindfolded him, and said, **"Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?" (Matthew 26:68)**.

Peter's denials. Peter followed afar off. Another disciple, known to the high priest, usually taken to be John, spoke to the girl at the door and brought Peter into the courtyard (John 18:15-16). It was cold, and the servants made a fire of coals; Peter stood with them and warmed himself. Three times he was challenged:

1. The girl at the door: **"Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" He saith, I am not" (John 18:17)**.
2. Another maid, and others by the fire, as he went out to the porch: he denied with an oath, **"I do not know the man" (Matthew 26:72)**.
3. About an hour later (Luke 22:59), those standing by, one of them a kinsman of Malchus (John 18:26): **"Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee" (Matthew 26:73)**. His Galilean accent gave him away. He began to curse and to swear, "I know not the man."

At each denial more than one person spoke, which is why the Gospels name different questioners. Then the cock crew.

> **Luke 22:61** *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. 22:62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

The council at daybreak. "And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council" (Luke 22:66). The night hearing was confirmed by day. **"Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am" (Luke 22:70)**, an idiom of assent. **"What need we any further witness?" (Luke 22:71)**. They took counsel to put him to death, bound him, and led him to Pilate (Matthew 27:1-2).

Judas. When Judas saw that Jesus was condemned, he **"repented himself"** (Matthew 27:3), brought back the thirty pieces of silver, and said, **"I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood" (Matthew 27:4)**. **"What is that to us? see thou to that."** He cast down the silver in the temple and went and hanged himself. The priests would not put blood money into the treasury, so they bought the potter's field to bury strangers in, and it was called the field of blood. Acts adds that his body fell headlong and burst open (Acts 1:18): he hanged himself, and the body fell. Matthew says the purchase fulfilled what was **"spoken by Jeremy the prophet" (Matthew 27:9)**. The words about thirty pieces of silver cast to the potter are from Zechariah 11:12-13; Jeremiah tells of a potter's house and of buying a field (Jeremiah 18:2; 32:6-9). Matthew may combine the two and name the greater prophet, or refer to a saying of Jeremiah not otherwise written.

Watch for: a trial in which the accused alone spoke the truth under oath; Peter's denials and the Lord's look; Judas' remorse without return.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that the different questioners in the denials are several people at each of three challenges (Fit). John 18:25 says **"They said therefore unto him"**, more than one, and the accounts agree on three denials. A careful reader can fairly answer that the details are hard to align exactly; nothing in them is contradictory. **Neutral — on Matthew's "Jeremy the prophet" (Fit);** the difficulty is real, and each explanation is possible.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
211 ●	Bound and led first to Annas; questioned of his doctrine	—	—	—	**18:13-14, 19-24**
212 ●	Before Caiaphas and the council by night: false witnesses; "Thou hast said"; mocked and struck	**26:57, 59-68**	14:53, 55-65	22:63-65	—
213 ●	Peter's three denials in the high priest's palace; the cock crows	26:58, 69-75	14:54, 66-72	**22:54-62**	18:15-18, 25-27
214 ●	The council at daybreak: "Art thou then the Son of God?"	27:1	15:1	**22:66-71**	—
215 ○	Judas repents himself and hangs himself; the potter's field (told by Matthew here)	**27:3-10**	—	—	—

Section 74: Before Pilate and Herod

Before You Read

Matt. 27:2, 11–31 · Mark 15:2–20 · Luke 23:1–25 · John 18:28–19:16

Early in the morning. They led Jesus from Caiaphas to the governor's palace, the judgment hall, **"and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover" (John 18:28)**. The Passover lambs had not yet been killed. They meant to eat the Passover that evening; the Lamb of God would be dead before they did.

The charges. Pilate came out to them: **"What accusation bring ye against this man?" (John 18:29)**. In the council the charge had been blasphemy, which meant nothing to a Roman. Before Pilate they made it political: **"We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a King" (Luke 23:2)**. Two days before, Jesus had said, "Render to Cæsar"

(Section 66). The Jews also told Pilate, **"It is not lawful for us to put any man to death" (John 18:31)**: Rome kept the power of death to itself. John adds that this fulfilled what Jesus had said **"signifying what death he should die" (John 18:32)**: not stoning, but being lifted up on a Roman cross (John 12:32-33).

"Art thou the King of the Jews?" Pilate questioned him inside.

> **John 18:36** *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*

"What is truth?" (John 18:38), said Pilate, and went out and said, **"I find in him no fault at all."** Before the accusers Jesus answered nothing, so that Pilate marvelled (Matthew 27:14).

Before Herod. Hearing that Jesus was a Galilean, Pilate sent him to Herod Antipas, who was in Jerusalem for the feast. Herod was glad; he had long wanted to see him and hoped for a miracle. He questioned him with many words, and Jesus answered nothing. The man who had killed John the Baptist heard no word from the one John announced. Herod and his soldiers mocked him, arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him back. **"And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together" (Luke 23:12)**.

Barabbas. Pilate told the chief priests and rulers that neither he nor Herod had found any fault in him; he would chastise him and release him. It was the custom to release one prisoner at the feast. There was a prisoner named Barabbas, a robber, held for insurrection and murder (Mark 15:7; John 18:40). Pilate offered them a choice. While he sat on the judgment seat, his wife sent him word: **"Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him" (Matthew 27:19)**. The chief priests persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas. **"What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" "Let him be crucified"** (Matthew 27:22). Pilate washed his hands before the crowd: **"I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it" (Matthew 27:24)**. **"Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matthew 27:25)**.

"Behold the man!" John records the scourging and what followed. Soldiers platted a crown of thorns, put a purple robe on him, and struck him, saying, **"Hail, King of the Jews!" (John 19:3)**. Pilate brought him out: **"Behold the man!" (John 19:5)**. The chief priests cried, "Crucify him." They added: **"We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God" (John 19:7)**. Pilate was the more afraid. **"Whence art thou?"** Jesus gave no answer. Pilate claimed power to crucify or release him.

> **John 19:11** *Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.*

Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried, **"If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend" (John 19:12)**. He sat down in the judgment seat at the Pavement, Gabbatha. **"And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!" (John 19:14)**. **"We have no king but Cæsar" (John 19:15)**. Then he delivered him to be crucified. Matthew and Mark add that the whole band of soldiers mocked him again in the hall with a scarlet robe, a crown of thorns and a reed, then led him out to crucify him (Matthew 27:27-31).

The hour. Mark says, **"And it was the third hour, and they crucified him" (Mark 15:25)**, about 9 A.M. John says it was **"about the sixth hour"** when Pilate brought him out, about noon by Jewish reckoning. Some readers think John counted hours from midnight, as the Romans did for legal purposes, which would make his sixth hour about 6 A.M.; others think both writers gave approximate times for a morning between the third and the sixth hours; and some manuscripts of John read "third." The difficulty is noted, not resolved.

Watch for: the accusers careful of defilement while condemning the innocent; a kingdom not of this world; Pilate's three verdicts of no fault; "Behold the man"; power given from above.

Weighing it: Neutral — on the hour in John 19:14 and Mark 15:25 (Date). Each explanation is possible, and none is proved. **Direct statement — that Pilate found no fault in him (Fit),** stated three times in John (John 18:38; 19:4, 6) and confirmed in Luke 23:14-15.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
THE DAY OF THE CROSS · 14 Nisan, the Passover · about A.D. 31					
216 ●	Before Pilate: "Art thou the King of the Jews?"; "What is truth?"	27:2, 11-14	15:2-5	23:1-5	**18:28-38**
217 ●	Sent to Herod; mocked and sent back	—	—	**23:6-12**	—
218 ●	Barabbas released; scourged; "Behold the man!"; delivered to be crucified	27:15-26	15:6-15	23:13-25	**18:39-19:16**
219 ●	The soldiers mock him with purple and a crown of thorns	**27:27-31**	15:16-20	—	—

Section 75: The Crucifixion

Before You Read

Matt. 27:32–66 · Mark 15:21–47 · Luke 23:26–56 · John 19:17–42

The road to Golgotha. Jesus went out bearing his cross (John 19:17). On the way the soldiers compelled a man coming in from the country, **"Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross" (Mark 15:21)**. Cyrene was in North Africa. Mark names his sons as men his readers knew; a Rufus is greeted in Romans 16:13. A great company followed, and women who wailed. Jesus turned to them:

> **Luke 23:28** *But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.*

"For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke 23:31). Two criminals were led with him.

Crucified. They came to **"a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull" (Matthew 27:33)**; "Calvary" is the Latin. It was outside the city, near it (John 19:20; Hebrews 13:12). They offered him wine mingled with myrrh, which dulled pain; he would not drink it (Mark 15:23). **"And it was the third hour, and they crucified him" (Mark 15:25)**, about 9 A.M. Luke records his first words from the cross:

> **Luke 23:34** *Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*

The soldiers divided his garments and cast lots for his seamless coat, as Psalm 22:18 had said (John 19:23-24). Pilate's title stood over him in Hebrew, Greek and Latin (Chapter 7 B); the chief priests asked him to change it, and he answered, **"What I have written I have written" (John 19:22)**. He was crucified between two thieves, **"And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors" (Mark 15:28)**, from Isaiah 53:12.

Mocked. The passers-by wagged their heads: **"Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself" (Matthew 27:40)**. The chief priests, scribes and elders said, **"He saved others; himself he cannot save" (Matthew 27:42)**, and **"He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him" (Matthew 27:43)**, words close to Psalm 22:8. Both thieves at first reviled him (Matthew 27:44); then one changed. He rebuked the other and said:

> **Luke 23:42** *And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*
> *23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

"Woman, behold thy son!" Near the cross stood his mother, her sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved, he said to her, **"Woman, behold thy son!"**, and to the disciple, **"Behold thy mother!" "And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home" (John 19:26-27)**.

Darkness and death. "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour" (Matthew 27:45), from noon to 3 P.M. It was not an eclipse; Passover falls at full moon, when an eclipse of the sun cannot occur. About the ninth hour he cried:

> **Matthew 27:46** *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

These are the opening words of Psalm 22, which begins in desolation and ends in praise and the proclamation of his righteousness to a people yet to be born (Psalm 22:22-31).

Left, not abandoned. The psalm itself answers the cry: **"neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard" (Psalm 22:24)**. The night before, Jesus had told the disciples, **"ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me" (John 16:32)**, and Paul writes that **"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19)**. The word translated "forsaken," *egkataleipō*, means to leave behind, to leave someone in a situation, as in **"thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (Acts 2:27)**. God did not take him down from the cross, as the mockers dared (Matthew 27:42-43), because redemption required his death. God left him there to finish the work; he never abandoned him.

Then, knowing that all things were now accomplished, he said, **"I thirst" (John 19:28)**, and received vinegar on a sponge (Psalm 69:21).

> **John 19:30** *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.*

Luke records his last words: **"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46)**, from Psalm 31:5. The ninth hour was the hour of the evening sacrifice and, Josephus says, the hour when the slaying of the Passover lambs began.

The veil rent. "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Matthew 27:51): the curtain before the holy of holies, torn from above. The way into God's presence was opened (Hebrews 10:19-20). The earth quaked and rocks were split. Matthew adds that graves were opened and many bodies of saints arose and came out **"after his resurrection" (Matthew 27:53)**. The library's study *Where Are the Dead Right Now?* holds this passage in abeyance as one it cannot yet fully explain. The centurion said, **"Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54)**; Luke gives his words as **"Certainly this was a righteous man" (Luke 23:47)**. The women from Galilee stood afar off, beholding.

Before the high day. "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken" (John 19:31). The next day was the 15th of Nisan, the first day of unleavened bread, a sabbath whatever day of the week it fell on (Chapter 5 C). The soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves, but finding Jesus already dead, did not break his. One pierced his side, and forthwith came out blood and water. John, who saw it, bears record, and names two scriptures fulfilled: **"A bone of him shall not be broken" (John 19:36)**, the law of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:46), and **"They shall look on him whom they pierced" (John 19:37)**, from Zechariah 12:10.

The burial. Joseph of Arimathæa, a rich man and an honourable counsellor who had not consented to their decision (Luke 23:51), a secret disciple, **"went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus" (Mark 15:43)**. Pilate marvelled that he was already dead and confirmed it with the centurion. Nicodemus brought about a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. They wound the body in linen with the spices and laid it in Joseph's new tomb, hewn in the rock, in a garden near the place, **"wherein never man before was laid" (Luke 23:53)**. Isaiah had written that he would be **"with the rich in his death" (Isaiah 53:9)**. **"And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on" (Luke 23:54)**. A great stone was rolled to the door. The women saw where he was laid, **"And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56)**.

The guard. "Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation" (Matthew 27:62), the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate: **"Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again" (Matthew 27:63)**. They asked for the tomb to be made sure until the third day. **"Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can" (Matthew 27:65)**. They sealed the stone and set a watch.

The day of the cross. This harmony follows the library's position: Christ died at the ninth hour on the 14th of Nisan, the Passover, and was buried before sunset, before the high day of the 15th. On the reading of **"three days and three nights" (Matthew 12:40)** as a full seventy-two hours (Section 76), the 14th was a Wednesday, about A.D. 31. His death, resurrection and ascension together completed the work by which the promised spirit was poured out at Pentecost (Acts 2:32-33).

Watch for: forgiveness from the cross; the opened paradise promised to a thief; "It is finished"; the Passover lamb with no bone broken; a rich man's tomb.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that Christ died on the 14th of Nisan, the day the Passover lambs were killed (Date). John 18:28, 19:14 and 19:31 point that way, and John 19:36 applies to him the law of the Passover lamb. A careful reader can fairly answer that Matthew, Mark and Luke call the supper of the night before "the passover" (Section 70). **Mixed, stated per point — on Luke 23:43 (Fit).** The Greek

has no punctuation. The KJV reads **"Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."** Another reading places the comma after "to day": "Verily I say unto thee to day, shalt thou be with me in paradise," a solemn way of speaking found in Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 30:18). The thief had asked to be remembered **"when thou comest into thy kingdom"**, and Jesus himself was in the tomb that day, not ascended (John 20:17). The companion study *Where Are the Dead Right Now?* weighs both readings.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
220 ●	Simon of Cyrene bears the cross; "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me"	27:32	15:21	**23:26-32**	19:17
221 ●	Crucified at Golgotha between two thieves; "Father, forgive them"; the garments; the title	27:33-38	15:22-28	23:33-38	**19:18-24**
222 ●	Mocked by the rulers and passers-by; the thief: "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise"	27:39-44	15:29-32	**23:39-43**	—
223 ●	"Woman, behold thy son!"	—	—	—	**19:25-27**
224 ●	Darkness from the sixth hour to the ninth; "It is finished"; he gives up the ghost	27:45-50	15:33-37	23:44-46	**19:28-30**
225 ●	The veil rent; the earthquake; the centurion; the women beholding afar off	**27:51-56**	15:38-41	23:47-49	—
226 ●	Before the high day: his side pierced; "A bone of him shall not be broken"	—	—	—	**19:31-37**
227 ●	Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus bury him before sunset; the women see the tomb	27:57-61	15:42-47	**23:50-56**	19:38-42
228 ●	The next day: the tomb sealed and guarded	**27:62-66**	—	—	—

Section 76: He Is Risen

Before You Read

Matt. 28:1–15 · Mark 16:1–11 · Luke 24:1–12 · John 20:1–18

"In the end of the sabbath." Matthew begins: **"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre" (Matthew 28:1)**. The Greek reads more exactly "late of the sabbaths," plural, and "toward the first of the sabbaths." Matthew then tells of a great earthquake: an angel of the Lord came down, rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and the keepers shook and became as dead men (Matthew 28:2-4). The stone was rolled away not to let him out, but to let the witnesses in.

At the tomb at dawn. Mark gives the women's coming: **"And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him" (Mark 16:1)**. **"And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun" (Mark 16:2)**. John says Mary Magdalene came **"when it was yet dark" (John 20:1)**. They asked one another who would roll away the stone, and looking up,

saw it already rolled away. Entering, they saw a young man in white. Luke says two men stood by them in shining garments:

> **Luke 24:5** *And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? 24:6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,*

Matthew gives the angel's words: **"He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matthew 28:6)**. Mark adds the message: **"tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee" (Mark 16:7)**, and Peter, who had denied him, was named.

Peter and John. The women told the eleven, and **"their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not" (Luke 24:11)**. Mary Magdalene ran to Peter and the other disciple: **"They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him" (John 20:2)**. The two ran; the other disciple outran Peter, stooped, and saw the linen clothes lying, but did not go in. Peter went in and saw the linen clothes lying, and the napkin that had been about his head **"not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself" (John 20:7)**. Then the other disciple went in, **"and he saw, and believed" (John 20:8)**. **"For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead" (John 20:9)**.

Mary Magdalene. Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. Two angels asked, **"Woman, why weepest thou?"** She turned and saw Jesus standing, and did not know him; she supposed him the gardener. He said one word: **"Mary."** She turned: **"Rabboni"**, Master (John 20:15-16).

> **John 20:17** *Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.*

Mark records that **"he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils" (Mark 16:9)**.

The other women. As the women went to tell the disciples, **"Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him" (Matthew 28:9)**. **"Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me" (Matthew 28:10)**.

The guards. Some of the watch came into the city and told the chief priests all that had happened. The priests and elders gave the soldiers large money: **"Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept" (Matthew 28:13)**, and promised to keep them out of trouble with the governor. **"And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day" (Matthew 28:15)**.

The end of Mark. Mark 16:9-20 is in the KJV and in the great majority of manuscripts, and Irenaeus quoted from it about A.D. 180. It is absent from the two oldest complete manuscripts of the New Testament, and some copies end at verse 8 or give a shorter ending. Careful readers differ on whether it was written by Mark. The harmony includes it as the KJV prints it.

When did he rise? The Gospels record that the tomb was already empty at dawn on the first day of the week (Matthew 28:1-6; Mark 16:2-6; Luke 24:1-3; John 20:1). None of them says he rose at that hour. The only length Jesus gave for his time in the grave was **"three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40)**. This harmony follows the library's position:

- He died at the ninth hour on the 14th of Nisan and was buried before sunset (Section 75).

- The 15th was the high day, the first day of unleavened bread (John 19:31).
- Three days and three nights, seventy-two hours, from burial before sunset on the 14th, end before sunset on the 17th.
- The 17th was the weekly sabbath, ending at sunset; the tomb was found empty before dawn on the first day.
- Counting back, the 14th was a Wednesday, the 15th a Thursday, and the 17th a Saturday.

Two details fit this reading. Mark says the women bought spices **"when the sabbath was past"** (Mark 16:1), and Luke says they prepared spices and ointments and then **"rested the sabbath day according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56)**. With a high day on Thursday and the weekly sabbath on Saturday, they could buy spices after the first sabbath and prepare them on Friday, then rest on the second. And Matthew's "end of the sabbaths" is plural. Jesus also said **"after three days"** (Mark 8:31; Matthew 27:63) and **"the third day"** (Matthew 16:21). On the road to Emmaus, on the first day, Cleopas said **"to day is the third day since these things were done" (Luke 24:21)**. On this reading, "these things" include the sealing of the tomb and the setting of the watch on the day after the preparation (Matthew 27:62-66).

Watch for: the stone rolled away to let the witnesses in; the linen clothes lying in order; a word, "Mary"; "my Father, and your Father; my God, and your God"; the empty tomb and the bribed guard.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — that he rose before sunset on the 17th of Nisan, the weekly sabbath, after three days and three nights in the tomb (Date). It rests on reading Matthew 12:40 as a full seventy-two hours, on the high day of John 19:31, and on the two sabbaths implied by Mark 16:1 and Luke 23:56. A careful reader can fairly answer that "the third day" is said more often than "three days and three nights," and that inclusive counting allows a Friday burial and a Sunday rising, the traditional view, which the companion study *How Long Did Christ Minister?* states beside this one. **Direct statement — that the tomb was empty at dawn on the first day and that no Gospel records the hour of the rising (Date). Mixed, stated per point — on Mark 16:9 (Date).** The KJV reads **"Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene."** The Greek has no punctuation, and "early the first day of the week" may belong with "he appeared" rather than with "was risen": having risen, early on the first day he appeared first to Mary.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
THE RESURRECTION · three days and three nights · the tomb empty at dawn on the first day of the week					
229 ○	"In the end of the sabbaths": the women set out; the earthquake; the angel rolls back the stone [1]	**28:1-4**	—	—	—
230 ●	At the tomb very early: the stone rolled away; the angels: "He is not here, but is risen"	28:5-8	**16:1-8**	24:1-8	20:1
231 ●	The women tell the apostles; Peter and John run to the tomb	—	—	24:9-12	**20:2-10**
232 ●	He appears first to Mary Magdalene [2]	—	16:9-11	—	**20:11-18**
233 ●	He meets the women: "All hail"	**28:9-10**	—	—	—
234 ●	The guards bribed: "His disciples came by night, and stole him away"	**28:11-15**	—	—	—

[1] On the day and hour of the resurrection, see "When did he rise?" above.

[2] On the manuscripts of Mark 16:9-20, see "The end of Mark" above.

Section 77: Forty Days and the Ascension

Before You Read Matt. 28:16–20 · Mark 16:12–20 · Luke 24:13–53 · John 20:19–21:25

Forty days. Luke tells Theophilus in his second book that Jesus **"shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3)**. Paul lists appearances to Peter, to the twelve, to above five hundred brethren at once, to James, and to all the apostles (1 Corinthians 15:5-7). The Gospels record these.

The road to Emmaus. The same day, two disciples, one named Cleopas, walked to Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. Jesus drew near and went with them, **"But their eyes were holden that they should not know him" (Luke 24:16)**. They told him of Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in deed and word, crucified: **"But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21)**.

> **Luke 24:25** *Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: 24:26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

At the table he took bread, blessed and broke it, and their eyes were opened; and he vanished. **"Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32)**. They returned to Jerusalem that night and found the eleven saying, **"The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon" (Luke 24:34)**.

In the upper room. That evening, with the doors shut for fear of the Jews, Jesus stood among them: **"Peace be unto you" (John 20:19)**. They were terrified, supposing they saw a spirit.

> **Luke 24:39** *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*

He ate broiled fish and honeycomb before them. He breathed on them and said, **"Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22)**. The gift itself came at Pentecost: forty days later he still told them to wait in Jerusalem for **"the promise of the Father"** (Acts 1:4-5), and it was poured out when he had been exalted (Acts 2:33). The breathing was a sign and a pledge of what was coming. Thomas was not with them. **"Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25)**.

Thomas. "And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them" (John 20:26). Jesus said to Thomas, **"Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:27)**. Thomas answered, **"My Lord and my God" (John 20:28)**. The library's study *One God One Mediator* holds this verse in abeyance as one that carries real grammatical weight. **"Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29)**. John then states why he wrote:

> **John 20:31** *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

By the sea of Tiberias. Seven disciples went back to Galilee, and Peter said, **"I go a fishing" (John 21:3)**. They caught nothing all night. At dawn a man on the shore told them to cast the net on the right side, and they could not draw it for the fish. **"It is the Lord" (John 21:7)**, said the disciple whom Jesus loved, and Peter threw himself into the sea. On the shore was a fire of coals with fish and bread. The net held a hundred and fifty-three great fishes, and was not broken. **"Come and dine" (John 21:12)**. It was the third time he showed himself to the disciples as a group.

"Lovest thou me?" Beside a fire of coals, like the one where he had denied him three times, Peter was asked three times, **"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"** Three times he answered, and three times was told, **"Feed my lambs"**, **"Feed my sheep"** (John 21:15-17). Jesus told him how he would die, **"signifying by what death he should glorify God" (John 21:19)**, and said, **"Follow me."** Peter asked about the disciple whom Jesus loved. **"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me" (John 21:22)**. John corrects the rumour that followed: Jesus did not say that disciple would not die.

On the mountain in Galilee. The eleven went to a mountain in Galilee where Jesus had appointed them. **"And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted" (Matthew 28:17)**.

> **Matthew 28:18** *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

All power was given him. The commission that once went only to the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 10:5-6) now went to all nations. In Acts the apostles baptized **"in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5)**; the library's study *Baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus* examines what that phrase meant. Mark records the commission as **"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15)**, with signs to follow those who believed.

The ascension. Back in Jerusalem he opened their understanding of the scriptures: **"Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day" (Luke 24:46)**, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. **"But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49)**. He led them out as far as Bethany, lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

> **Luke 24:51** *And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.*

Mark: **"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19)**. The disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God (Luke 24:52-53). Ten days later, at Pentecost, the exalted Lord poured out the promised gift (Acts 2:32-33). The cross, the resurrection and the ascension together had completed the work.

John's last word. "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true" (John 21:24). **"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen" (John 21:25)**.

Watch for: the scriptures opened; flesh and bones; Thomas' doubt answered; Peter restored three times; all power given; the King carried up, with hands lifted in blessing.

Weighing it: Strong inference — that the gift promised in John 20:22 was given at Pentecost (Fit), on Acts 1:4-5 and 2:33, spoken after John 20. A careful reader can fairly answer that John 20:22 may record a real but partial giving; but forty days later the disciples were still told to wait for it. **Held in abeyance — on John 20:28 (Fit),** as in the companion study *One God One Mediator*.

The Grid

#	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
235 ●	On the road to Emmaus: "Did not our heart burn within us?"	—	16:12-13	**24:13-35**	—
236 ●	To the disciples in the evening: "Peace be unto you"; Thomas absent	—	16:14	**24:36-43**	20:19-25
237 ●	"After eight days": Thomas: "My Lord and my God"; why John wrote	—	—	—	**20:26-31**
238 ●	At the sea of Tiberias: the great catch; "Lovest thou me?"; "Feed my sheep"	—	—	—	**21:1-23**
239 ●	On the mountain in Galilee: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations"	**28:16-20**	16:15-18	—	—
240 ●	The last words; at Bethany he is carried up into heaven	—	16:19-20	**24:44-53**	—
241 ●	John's witness: "we know that his testimony is true"	—	—	—	**21:24-25**

In Short: The harmony has followed the life of Christ through all four Gospels, from the writers' openings to the ascension, in seventy-seven sections and more than two hundred events. Every verse of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John is placed once in the grid. John's feasts give the frame, the text's own time words give the order, and every uncertain placement is marked and explained. Four witnesses, each writing for his own purpose, tell of one Lord and Saviour.

Appendix A: The Judgments of This Harmony

Every judgment the commentary makes on order, date or fit is listed here with its weight, in the order of the sections. "What the other reading answers" gives, where the section states it, what a careful reader could fairly say on the other side. Sections marked *Narrative* or *Method, not argument* make no judgment and are not listed.

No.	Section	Weight	The judgment	Bears on	What the other reading answers
1	2	Reasonable inference	Luke gives the line of Mary	Fit	Luke names Joseph, not Mary, and genealogies were rarely traced through women
2	3	Corroboration only	Dating the births from the course of Abijah	Date	—
3	4	Reasonable inference	The birth fell between about 6 and 2 B.C.	Date	The range cannot be narrowed from scripture, which is true
4	4	Neutral	The season of the birth	—	—
5	4	Neutral	The census of Quirinius	—	—
6	5	Reasonable inference	The wise men came after the presentation, some months to two years after the birth	Order	Herod's "two years" may have been a wide margin for safety, and Matthew 2:1 places the wise men's arrival
7	6	Reasonable inference	Joseph had died before the ministry	Fit	No verse records his death
8	7	Reasonable inference	The baptism took place in about A.D. 27	Date	Other reckonings of Tiberius' reign move it by a year or two
9	7	Reasonable inference	Luke 3:19-20 is told in advance	Order	—
10	8	Reasonable inference	Matthew gives the temptations in their order of time	Order	Matthew's "again" can mean "on another occasion" without fixing the sequence
11	9	Strong inference	The temptation came before John 1:19-51	Order	John never mentions the temptation
12	10	Reasonable inference	The tone of John 2:4	Fit	The words still set a distance between the mother's request and the Son's obedience to his Father
13	11	Reasonable inference	The temple was cleansed twice	Fit	John may have placed a single cleansing at the beginning for his own purpose
14	11	Reasonable inference	About A.D. 28 or 29	Date	—
15	12	Neutral	Where Jesus' words end in John 3	Fit	—
16	12	Strong inference	The new birth was promised here and given after Pentecost	Fit	—
17	13	Direct statement	A ministry in Judea came before John's imprisonment	Order	—
18	13	Reasonable inference	The Galilean ministry of Matthew and Mark begins after John 4:43	Order	—
19	14	Neutral	The season of John 4:35	Date	—
20	15	Strong inference	Matthew 4:12, 17, Mark 1:14-15, Luke 4:14-15 and John 4:43-45 describe the same return to Galilee	Order	The Gospels do not say so in one sentence
21	16	Reasonable inference	Jesus was rejected at Nazareth twice	Fit	Luke often arranges by subject at the opening of a section, and may have brought the one visit forward
22	17	Reasonable inference	Luke 5:1-11 is the same call as Matthew 4:18-22 and Mark 1:16-20	Fit	The details of the nets differ and Luke's order differs
23	17	Reasonable inference	Mark's order is the order of time	Order	—

24	18	Strong inference	These three events fell on one sabbath at Capernaum	Order	Matthew places two of them later
25	19	Reasonable inference	The leper was healed during this first tour	Order	Matthew's time word supports his order
26	20	Strong inference	The power to forgive was given to the Son of man by God	Fit	The scribes' objection, "who can forgive sins but God only?", is left unanswered in words
27	21	Reasonable inference	The feast of John 5:1 was not a Passover	Date	Some manuscripts read "the feast" and an early writer counted it a Passover
28	21	Reasonable inference	John 5:18 records the Jews' charge and John 5:19-30 Jesus' answer to it	Fit	John narrates verse 18 in his own voice
29	22	Reasonable inference	The grain fields were in spring, between Passover and Pentecost	Date	—
30	22	Neutral	The year of the grain fields	Date	Either way, and the grid leaves both years open
31	23	Reasonable inference	Bartholomew is Nathanael	Fit	—
32	23	Direct statement	Thaddaeus and Judas the brother of James are the same man	Fit	—
33	24	Reasonable inference	Matthew 5-7 and Luke 6:17-49 record one sermon	Fit	Luke places much of Matthew's material elsewhere in his Gospel (the Lord's prayer, Luke 11:2-4; the birds and lilies, Luke 12:22-31), which shows that Jesus taught the same things more than once
34	25	Strong inference	Matthew and Luke record the same healing of the centurion's servant	Fit	Matthew says the centurion came "unto him"
35	26	Reasonable inference	Matthew 11:20-30 follows John's question in time	Order	Luke gives the same woes and thanksgiving at the return of the seventy (Luke 10:13-15, 21-22)
36	27	Strong inference	This anointing is distinct from the anointing at Bethany	Fit	Both hosts are named Simon (Mark 14:3)
37	28	Strong inference	The sin not forgiven is defined by Mark 3:30	Fit	Matthew 12:32 speaks more generally of "whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost"
38	28	Reasonable inference	"his friends" in Mark 3:21 means his family	Fit	—
39	29	Direct statement	The parables by the sea were spoken on the day of the Beelzebub charge	Order	Matthew 13 gathers parables by subject and some may have been spoken on other days
40	30	Reasonable inference	Mark and Luke tell of the more prominent of two men	Fit	This explanation is not stated
41	30	Strong inference	The storm followed the day of parables	Order	—
42	31	Reasonable inference	Matthew condenses the account of Jairus' daughter	Fit	This is an explanation, not a statement of the text
43	32	Reasonable inference	Jesus' brothers and sisters were children of Mary and Joseph	Fit	"brother" in Hebrew usage can mean a near relative (Genesis 14:16), and "firstborn" names the child who opens the womb whether others follow or not (Exodus 13:2)
44	33	Direct statement	This commission was limited to Israel	Fit	—

45	33	Reasonable inference	Matthew's "provide... nor yet staves" and Mark's "save a staff only" agree	Fit	The verb applies most naturally to money, and the two lists may simply be worded differently
46	34	Reasonable inference	John's death came some time before Herod's words of Mark 6:14-16	Order	Matthew 14:13 ("When Jesus heard of it") may tie the news closely to the feeding
47	35	Strong inference	The feeding took place near a Passover	Date	—
48	35	Reasonable inference	About A.D. 30	Date	—
49	36	Corroboration only	Mark's silence about Peter's walk	Fit	—
50	37	Strong inference	Eating his flesh and drinking his blood means believing on him	Fit	The words were later connected with the Lord's supper
51	37	Reasonable inference	"came down from heaven" means sent and given by God	Fit	—
52	38	Reasonable inference	Jesus' words in Mark 7 answer the tradition of the elders and did not then set aside the food laws	Fit	Many translations render the end of Mark 7:19 as Mark's own comment, "making all foods clean"
53	39	Strong inference	The five thousand and the four thousand were two feedings	Fit	Little against it
54	39	Direct statement	His ministry was then to Israel	Fit	—
55	40	Reasonable inference	Mark places the two-stage healing as a picture of the disciples' partial sight	Fit	Mark does not say so
56	41	Reasonable inference	Matthew 16:28 was fulfilled at the transfiguration	Fit	—
57	41	Neutral	Which reading of "this rock" is right	Fit	—
58	42	Reasonable inference	"after six days" and "about an eight days after" describe the same interval	Fit	Little against it
59	42	Direct statement	Jesus called what the disciples saw a vision	Fit	—
60	43	Reasonable inference	Matthew's "lunatick" and Mark's "dumb spirit" describe the same condition from two sides	Fit	Matthew 17:18 also speaks of the devil departing
61	44	Reasonable inference	The lost sheep of Matthew 18 and of Luke 15 were spoken on two occasions	Fit	One Gospel may have moved it
62	45	Reasonable inference	Luke 9:51 marks the final departure from Galilee at about the time of Tabernacles	Order	Luke 9:51 may mark a later departure, perhaps after Dedication
63	46	Reasonable inference	John 7:53-8:11 was not part of the original text of John, though it may record a true event	Fit	It is in the great majority of later manuscripts and has long been read as scripture
64	46	Mixed, stated per point	John 8:58	Fit	—
65	47	Mixed, stated per point	John 9:3	Fit	—
66	48	Reasonable inference	The seventy were sent in the months between Tabernacles and Dedication	Order	Luke's journey account has few time words
67	49	Reasonable inference	The village of Luke 10:38 was Bethany, near Jerusalem	Order	Luke does not name the village and it comes early in his journey account

68	50	Reasonable inference	The Beelzebub charge of Luke 11 is a second occasion, distinct from Matthew 12 and Mark 3	Fit	Luke may have placed the Galilean event here
69	51	Direct statement	This woman's infirmity was a bond of Satan	Fit	—
70	51	Corroboration only	The fig tree's "three years" pictures the years of the ministry	Date	—
71	52	Strong inference	"I and my Father are one" means one in purpose and work	Fit	The Jews heard it as a claim to be God (John 10:33)
72	53	Strong inference	"hate" in Luke 14:26 means "love less"	Fit	Little against it
73	53	Reasonable inference	The lament over Jerusalem was spoken twice	Fit	—
74	54	Reasonable inference	The elder brother pictures the murmuring Pharisees and scribes of Luke 15:2	Fit	Jesus does not make the application in words
75	55	Reasonable inference	The rich man and Lazarus is a parable using the hearers' own picture of the afterlife	Fit	This story names a person, Lazarus, which no other parable does, and gives no "parable" heading
76	56	Direct statement	Jesus called death sleep and meant death	Fit	—
77	56	Reasonable inference	Lazarus was raised in the weeks between Dedication and the final Passover	Order	John gives no date
78	57	Reasonable inference	These events belong to the last journey from Ephraim toward Jericho	Order	Luke 17:11 may belong to an earlier stage of the journey
79	58	Reasonable inference	Matthew's exception and Mark's plain saying agree	Fit	The clause is significant and its absence in Mark and Luke must be accounted for
80	59	Reasonable inference	In Mark 10:18 Jesus directed the man to God as the one source of goodness	Fit	Jesus may have been testing whether the man understood whom he was addressing
81	60	Reasonable inference	The differences at Jericho arise from the two Jerichos and from Mark and Luke naming the one known man	Fit	The explanation of the two cities is from history, not from the text
82	61	Reasonable inference	Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9 and John 12:1-8 record one anointing	Fit	The host's name and the anointing of the head or the feet differ, and some hold two anointings at Bethany
83	61	Reasonable inference	Matthew and Mark tell it out of time order	Order	—
84	62	Corroboration only	The entry fell on the 10th of Nisan, the day the Passover lamb was chosen	Date	—
85	62	Reasonable inference	Mark gives the order of the days	Order	—
86	63	Strong inference	Mark gives the order of these events	Order	Matthew's "presently" (at once) suggests the tree withered that moment
87	64	Reasonable inference	The Greeks came during the days between the entry and the supper	Order	John gives no day
88	65	Strong inference	The vineyard parables describe Israel's leaders and their rejection of the Son	Fit	Little against it

89	66	Direct statement	Jesus named the Shema, "The Lord our God is one Lord," as the first commandment	Fit	—
90	66	Strong inference	The burning bush argument proves the future resurrection	Fit	—
91	66	Reasonable inference	"my Lord" in Psalm 110:1 is the word used of human and angelic lords	Fit	—
92	67	Neutral	The identity of "Zacharias son of Barachias"	Fit	—
93	67	Direct statement	The widow gave more than all the rich	Fit	—
94	68	Strong inference	Luke 21:20-24 was fulfilled in the siege of A.D. 70	Fit	—
95	68	Reasonable inference	The coming of the Son of man in glory is still future	Fit	—
96	68	Neutral	The meaning of "this generation"	Fit	—
97	68	Direct statement	The Son did not know the day or the hour	Fit	—
98	69	Reasonable inference	The plot and Judas' bargain fell about the 12th of Nisan	Date	"after two days" may be counted inclusively, giving the 13th
99	70	Reasonable inference	The supper was eaten on the evening that began the 14th of Nisan, before the Passover lambs were killed	Date	Matthew, Mark and Luke call the meal "the passover" and date its preparation "when they killed the passover" (Mark 14:12), and many hold it was the Passover meal itself
100	70	Neutral	Whether Judas was present at the bread and the cup	Order	—
101	71	Direct statement	Jesus called the Father "greater than I" and "the only true God"	Fit	—
102	71	Mixed, stated per point	John 17:5, "the glory which I had with thee before the world was"	Fit	—
103	71	Neutral	Where John 15-17 was spoken	Order	—
104	72	Reasonable inference	Peter was warned twice, in the room and on the way	Fit	The Gospels may place one warning differently
105	72	Direct statement	Jesus prayed to his Father, "not my will, but thine"	Fit	—
106	73	Reasonable inference	The different questioners in the denials are several people at each of three challenges	Fit	—
107	73	Neutral	Matthew's "Jeremy the prophet"	Fit	—
108	74	Neutral	The hour in John 19:14 and Mark 15:25	Date	—
109	74	Direct statement	Pilate found no fault in him	Fit	—
110	75	Reasonable inference	Christ died on the 14th of Nisan, the day the Passover lambs were killed	Date	Matthew, Mark and Luke call the supper of the night before "the passover" (Section 70)
111	75	Mixed, stated per point	Luke 23:43	Fit	—

112	76	Reasonable inference	He rose before sunset on the 17th of Nisan, the weekly sabbath, after three days and three nights in the tomb	Date	"the third day" is said more often than "three days and three nights," and inclusive counting allows a Friday burial and a Sunday rising, the traditional view, which the companion study *How Long Did Christ Minister?* states beside this one
113	76	Direct statement	The tomb was empty at dawn on the first day and that no Gospel records the hour of the rising	Date	—
114	76	Mixed, stated per point	Mark 16:9	Date	—
115	77	Strong inference	The gift promised in John 20:22 was given at Pentecost	Fit	John 20:22 may record a real but partial giving
116	77	Held in abeyance	John 20:28	Fit	—

Appendix B: Gospel Index

Each chapter of the four Gospels is listed with the numbers of the events in the grid where it is read. A number in brackets means the chapter only mentions or recalls that event. To find a verse, look up its chapter, then find the event in the grid whose reference contains the verse.

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Sources Consulted

Scripture. The King James Version is quoted throughout. Every quotation of scripture in this harmony, inline and in full, was checked word for word against the text of the KJV by a full-text comparison. Every verse of the four Gospels was checked by the same means to make sure that it appears once in the grid.

Lexicons. James Strong, *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, with its Hebrew and Greek dictionaries (1890); the Greek words named in the commentary were checked against it. Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.

Reference works. E. W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible* (1909-1922), notes on the four Gospels.

Manuscripts. Where the commentary notes that a passage is lacking in some early manuscripts (Mark 16:9-20; Luke 22:43-44; John 5:4; John 7:53-8:11; Matthew 23:14), it reports the evidence as it is generally given in the standard critical editions of the Greek New Testament. It was not checked against the manuscripts themselves.

History. Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* and *The Jewish War*: on Herod and the rebuilding of the temple, his sons, the census of Quirinius, the death of John the Baptist at Machaerus, the Passover sacrifices, and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The Mishnah: on the courses of priests, the council, and the water and the lamps of the feast of Tabernacles.

Companion studies in this library. *How Long Did Christ Minister?* (the dates of the ministry, the feasts in John, the day of the cross); *One God One Mediator* (John 1:1-18, 8:58, 17:5, 20:28); *The Seven Administrations of Scripture* (the administrations); *Where Are the Dead Right Now?* (death as sleep, the transfiguration, the rich man and Lazarus, Luke 23:43, Matthew 27:52-53); *He or It?* (the pronouns of the Comforter); *In Vain Do They Worship Me* (the traditions of men); *Baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus* (baptism in the name).

None of these sources carries scriptural weight. Each is a tool or a witness to history. Every placement and judgment has been tested against the text of scripture.

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