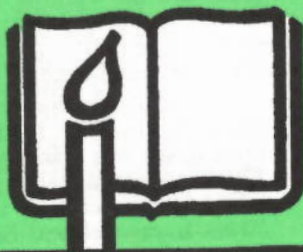


STUDIES IN THE BIBLE



Jesus Christ – His Ministry

Lesson 11

The personal teaching ministry of Christ lasted about three and a half years. During this time He traveled over Palestine, performing miracles and teaching a new way of life. At the end of this period He was arrested and crucified at Calvary, surrendering His life that the world might be redeemed.

In the previous lesson we left Jesus at Capernaum, His headquarters during much of His ministry. He soon left Galilee for Judea to attend the Feast of the Passover at Jerusalem. While there He cast the money changers out of the temple and had His famous discussion with Nicodemus about the new birth. Returning to Galilee through Samaria, He met a woman at Jacob's well near the city of Sychar. After talking with her at length about spiritual matters, He concluded with the profound thought, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24.)

The Galilean Ministry

After His return to Galilee, Jesus remained there for about two years, teaching and healing the sick. So far as we are told, He returned to Jerusalem only once during this period—to attend the Passover Feast. One time He visited Phoenicia, the only occasion He left Palestine after having been brought back from Egypt as a child.

Early in His Galilean ministry Jesus returned to Nazareth, His boyhood home. Surprisingly He was rejected by His own people who refused to believe the things they had heard about Him. In the following months Jesus healed many in the hills of Galilee. Some came for miles that they might hear Him teach or that they might receive the benefit of His healing powers. Thousands followed Him on His various journeys into the Galilean villages, or into the desolate areas surrounding the Sea of Galilee. On one of these trips to a mountain near Capernaum Jesus preached His "Sermon on the Mount" recorded in chapters 5, 6, and 7 of Matthew. It is probably the most famous sermon ever delivered. On one occasion nightfall found 5000 men listening to His words of life. Only five loaves of bread and two small fish were available as food for the multitude, but Jesus by a miracle fed them all. On still another occasion He fed 4000 men in a similar way. Naturally, some followed Him because they hoped they might get another free meal, but most were hungry for the spiritual food which He broke in their presence. So great did His popularity become that when He one time crossed the Sea of Galilee to escape the multitudes they walked around the lake and found Him on the other side.



Jesus did not confine His associations to the respectable. He once ate a meal with a group of publicans, the despised tax collectors of the time. For this He received much criticism, but He retorted, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Matt. 9:13.)

Special mention should be made of His taking three of His closest disciples with Him to the top of a mountain to pray. While they were there Jesus was transfigured in a most glorious fashion and Moses with Elijah appeared, talking with Him. When Peter suggested building a tabernacle for each of the three before him, a voice out of heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matt. 17:5.) Thus the voice of the Father Himself declared that the authority of His Son is supreme. We are to be subject neither to Moses nor to the law that he gave, but the sovereignty of Jesus Christ is absolute.

The Ministry In Judea And Perea

After two years of teaching in Galilee Jesus returned to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Tabernacles. Even before this the Pharisees (the leading religious and political sect among the Jews) had begun to oppose Him. Their lawyers had attempted to ensnare Him with words, but always they had failed. Now they sought to kill Him, but they discovered that His popularity was still too great for such an attempt. Jesus was able to leave Jerusalem in peace and He journeyed across the Jordan River into Perea. It was here and in Judea that Jesus spent His last months before His arrest and crucifixion. As He traveled back and forth across the two provinces, He prepared His disciples for the day when He would no longer be with them as their shepherd.

The Apostles

Jesus had many disciples. Anyone who truly follows Him is His disciple. Jesus knew that after He was gone others would have to carry on His work. He therefore appointed twelve of His disciples as apostles. An apostle is one who is sent with a commission. In another lesson we shall study the commission which Jesus gave to His apostles. Of the twelve He selected there were at least two sets of brothers—Peter and Andrew; and the sons of Zebedee, James and John. As members of the inner circle, Peter, James, and John accompanied Him when others did not. Another apostle was Matthew, a former tax collector who later wrote the gospel of Matthew. Then there were Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas (who is remembered because he doubted that Jesus had arisen from the grave), James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus or Judas as he was sometimes called, Simon the Zealot, and last of all the betrayer, Judas Iscariot. Most of these were fishermen from the Sea of Galilee. Their training included the witnessing of deeds performed by Christ and listening to His teachings. He also sent them forth to preach and to heal the sick, giving them valuable experience.

The Miracles Of Jesus

No study of the life of Christ is complete without special notice of His miracles. His fame rested not only on His teaching, but also on the works which demonstrated His deity.

Thirty-five recorded miracles performed by Jesus are mentioned in the gospels. Many others are alluded to. Of those named seventeen were bodily cures. Those who were helped by Jesus included several blind men whose sight was restored, a centurion's servant who was healed of paralysis, and a man born deaf and dumb who was made to hear and speak. Also six possessed of devils were cured. Three were raised by Jesus from the dead. These were the son of a widow of Nain; the daughter of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue; and Lazarus, brother of Mary and Martha, dear friends of Jesus. We are told of nine miracles by Christ over the forces of nature. These included the feeding of the 5000 and the 4000, His walking on the Sea of Galilee, and His stilling of the tempest on the same body of water.

Christ did not work miracles just to make people well. He performed them that men would believe His teachings and realize His deity. When He healed an individual the healing was instantaneous. It did not take a period of days as is true with some who claim to heal miraculously today. Likewise, He healed many of whom He required no faith. Lazarus obviously did not have faith when Jesus raised him from the dead. Modern "faith healers" who say that they cannot heal without faith on the subject's part obviously do not follow the example of Jesus.

What Happened To the Twelve?

The New Testament does not tell us much about the apostles after Pentecost when all were present at the establishment of the church. They remained in Jerusalem after the first major persecution scattered most of the Christians. (Acts 8:1.) The Acts records Peter's early activities in Palestine and those of John when in the company of Peter. Judas, the betrayer, took his own life when Jesus was crucified. The only other one of the twelve whose death is recorded in the Bible is James, executed by Herod in 44 A.D. (Acts 12:2.) The historian Eusebius relates a tradition that the apostles drew lots for mission fields and that they went throughout the earth preaching the word. All, except John, are believed to have died as martyrs. John spent many years at Ephesus, was banished to the Isle of Patmos late in life, and died a natural death at the end of the first century.

"Seek and Ye Shall Find"

Write true or false before each statement:

- 1. The personal ministry of Christ lasted seven years.
- 2. While in Jerusalem for the Passover, Jesus cast the money changers out of the temple.
- 3. The ministry of Jesus in Galilee lasted about two years.
- 4. When He visited His own people at Nazareth they had a big celebration for Him.
- 5. Jesus once fed 5000 men with 25 loaves and three fish.
- 6. Some followed Him because they hoped to get a free meal.
- 7. Jesus was afraid to eat with sinners such as the publicans.
- 8. The last teaching of Jesus before His crucifixion was done in Perea and Judea.

Match the apostle in the right hand column with the description in the left hand column by placing the number in the blank. First one is done correctly:

- | | | |
|---------|---|-------------------|
| 6 | He betrayed Jesus. | 1. Peter |
| | He was the brother of Andrew. | 2. James |
| | He doubted Jesus had arisen from the grave. | 3. Simon |
| | He was a former tax collector. | 4. John |
| | He was killed by Herod. (Acts 12:1, 2.) | 5. Thomas |
| | With Peter and James, he was in the inner circle of apostles. | 6. Judas Iscariot |
| | He was called the Zealot. | 7. Matthew |

In each blank write the correct number:

- 1. How many recorded miracles did Christ perform?
- 2. How many did He raise from the dead?
- 3. Out of how many did He cast devils?
- 4. How many miracles did Jesus perform over the forces of nature?
- 5. What was the **total** number of men fed by Christ on the two occasions He fed a great multitude?
- 6. How many bodily cures by Christ are recorded?

Read Luke 7:1-18 and fill in the blanks:

When Jesus had ended His sayings He went into the city of

There a man who was a sent to Him saying his servant was at the point of death. The elders of the Jews asked Jesus to heal the servant because the man had built them a

Jesus said of him, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in"

Jesus healed the servant. The next day Jesus went to the city of

He saw people carrying out a man. Jesus said to his mother, "..... not." He touched the bier and said, "Young man, I say unto thee,"

The man who had been dead sat up and began to

The people glorified God saying that a great had risen up among them.

Name..... Grade.....

Address..... Date.....

City..... By.....
