# THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

# WEEK SEVEN - JESUS CHRIST'S LATER JUDEAN MINISTRY

After attending the Feast of Tabernacles recorded in John 7 and 8, Jesus and the 12 spend time traveling town to town in Judea, much as they had done earlier in Galilee. This will lead to growing tension and confrontations with the Jewish leaders.

#### 1) Jesus' confrontation with and rebuke of the Pharisees and others - Luke 11:14-54

The tension between Jesus and the Pharisees and Scribes boil over as He confronts them with their hypocrisy in detail.

- a) The charge that Jesus was doing His miracles through the power of Satan (Beelzebub) was not new. The Jewish leaders had made the same accusation the year before in Galilee. Since Jesus' enemies could not deny He was doing miracles, they sought to discredit them. Luke 11:14-16
- b) 'Demand a sign from heaven' They are taunting Jesus 'do something *really big*, these miracles you are doing are nothing.'
- c) Jesus responds by pointing out how ridiculous their claim is. Why would Satan set out to destroy his own kingdom? On the contrary, he would do anything to stop Jesus! If they are wrong, and they are, they are really rejecting the work of God.
- d) Jesus tells them a parable on the ineffectiveness of their attempts at moral reformation. (vs. 24-28)
  - Trying to change our own life can have temporary success, but cannot sustain real spiritual transformation.
  - Real spiritual transformation comes from responding to God's Word, starting with the Gospel.
- e) Jesus then turns His attention to the growing crowd, and condemns their lack of faith. (vs. 29-36)
  - The Resurrection was going to be the sign that would prove beyond a doubt the claims of Jesus.
  - The faith of the Queen of Sheba and people of Nineveh, all Gentiles, stood in contrast to the Jew's rejection of Jesus and condemned them.
  - Faith sees the works of Jesus and brings light into the person's soul. Rejection of Jesus brings darkness to a person's soul. Faith and rejection reveal a person's true heart.
- f) Jesus is invited into the house of a Pharisee. (37-54)
  - The motivation of the invitation is not given, though there is no indication the Pharisee had a hidden agenda. The fact it is given is surprising considering the rebuke Christ had just issued. It may simply have been curiosity that led to the invitation to lunch.
  - The 'washing before dinner' in verse 38 had nothing to do with hygiene. The Pharisees had developed an elaborate ritual for washing before meals that symbolized their inner holiness and desire to remain clean from any sinful defilement.
  - Jesus then rebukes the legalistic, prideful and hypocritical religion of the Pharisees:
    - Spiritually speaking, they were careful to keep up appearances, but were sinful in their inner person (vs. 39-41)
    - They were focused on secondary issues while ignoring primary ones like justice and love (vs. 42)
    - They loved attention and respect though in reality they were more sinful then those they looked down on (vs. 43-44)
    - They are hypocrites, for they make demands on others they fail to keep themselves (vs. 46)
    - Despite their claim to be better than their ancestors, who had rejected and killed God's prophets, they were committing the same sin in rejecting Him as Messiah (vs. 47-51)
    - Not only had they rejected Christ, but they were causing others, who looked to them for spiritual guidance, to do the same. (vs. 52)
    - NOTE: The Pharisees were highly respected by most Jews

      After this exchange, the Scribes and Pharisees in Judea begin to look:
  - After this exchange, the Scribes and Pharisees in Judea begin to look for the opportunity to bring charges against Christ (vs. 53-54)

## 2) Jesus teaches on acknowledging Him as Messiah – Luke 12

In Luke 12 Jesus teaches on the importance of acknowledging Him as the Messiah. Jesus' exchange with the Pharisees and Scribes had attracted a large crowd, some of whom were disciples in the sense they were students of Jesus as a Rabbi. These are the people Jesus is directing most of this teaching on. The time for investigating was drawing to close – it was time to make a decision and follow.

- a) **Beware of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (vs. 1-3)** Do not be influenced by the lack of faith on the part of the Pharisees. It is so important to remember how well respected the Pharisees were. Their decision to reject Jesus would have had a profound influence on the response of the average person. Jesus says their inner hearts will be revealed in time.
- b) **Do not fear the Jewish leaders (vs. 4-12)** By now, the Jewish leaders were seeking to intimidate anyone who started to follow Jesus. In time, Christ's disciples will be officially banned from worship in the Synagogues. Jesus says to not fear people, who can end your physical life, but fear God, who holds your eternal destiny in His hands. Once you become His child through saving faith, you can trust Him to take care of you.
  - We are to acknowledge Christ before people for He acknowledges us before the Father.
  - 'Blasphemes against the Holy Spirit' This means to reject the ministry of the Holy Spirit in revealing the truth about Jesus; convicting of sin; drawing to faith. Ultimately, it rejecting Christ.
  - When you are brought before authorities because of your Faith, the Holy Spirit will enable you to speak with wisdom and effectiveness.
- c) Parable of the Rich Fool (vs. 13-21) In the middle of this crucial teaching about saving faith a man interrupts
  Jesus and asks Him to resolve a dispute over money with his brother. Rabbis were often asked to resolve
  personal disputes, so it was not an improper question. It did reveal a heart that was more worried about money
  than his relationship with God. It also reveals this man saw Jesus as a human teacher, not the divine Messiah.
  Jesus tells him that storing up treasure with God is far more important than earthly treasure.
- d) Seek God and His Kingdom, not temporal needs and wealth (vs. 22-34)

These verses echo those of Matthew 6 and the Sermon on the Mount. It is probable that this was a common theme of Jesus' teaching on 'The Kingdom'. 'Therefore' in verse 22 connects this with the Parable of the Rich Fool, and continues his teaching on being 'rich towards God'.

- God will provide for His children (vs. 23-24) 'Ravens' were considered the most despised and unclean of all creatures. If God provides for them He will provide for us!
- Our worrying cannot change anything (vs. 25-26) Worry will not add even a single hour to our lives. If we are unable to do that, why do we feel worry will affect the other needs in our lives?
- **Do not make attaining our physical needs The Priority of our lives (vs. 27-29)** The non-believer is focused on their earthly/physical lives and needs. Children of God do not need to be, for they can trust God the Father to provide them. All we have to do is look at the beauty of the flower to see how God cares for us.
- **Be sure to focus on Seeking God (vs. 30-31)** God knows our needs, so focus on Him and His Kingdom and trust Him to provide what we need.
- Having received The Kingdom, we are to be generous. This demonstrates our joy and trust in God
  (vs.32-34) This is not a command to give everything we have away and live in poverty. However,
  generosity with our money and possessions does show our joy in our salvation, focus on God's Kingdom
  and trust in God's provision. It demonstrates where our treasure is.
- e) We are to be ready for the coming of Christ (vs. 35-48) The evidence we are prepared for Jesus' return is our faithfulness in serving Him.
  - We are to be dressed with our lamps lit. Light represents spiritual knowledge, understanding and wisdom. We are to be attentive to what Jesus is teaching and live accordingly. (vs. 35)
  - A wedding feast could last up to a full week. The master might return at any point in that week, so the servants had to be alert at all times. His pleasure in their faithful service will lead the master to reward them.
  - We are to be ready for Jesus at each and every moment of each and every day (vs. 39-40)

- We have been given the responsibility to obey and serve Christ by loving Him and others. This includes sharing the Gospel with those outside of Christ. Jesus challenges us to be found busy doing His work, not slothful, assuming He will not return any time soon. The more God has taught us and done in our lives the more He will hold us responsible for obeying Him and investing in His Kingdom. (vs. 41-48)
- f) As Jesus requires people to respond to His claims, He will bring division between those who respond with faith and those who respond with rejection (vs. 49-56) The claims of Jesus are exclusive, they demand a yes or no response. As a result, He will bring division between people.
  - 'I have a baptism to be baptized with' Jesus is referring to His coming crucifixion. He will pay the penalty for our sin.
  - Because receiving forgiveness requires faith in Jesus, there will be tension between those who accept and respond to His claims and those who reject Him and His claims. (vs. 51-53)
  - Now is the time to respond. Just as clouds can indicate coming weather, then the words and actions of Jesus indicate this is time to make a decision on Jesus. (vs. 54-56)

### 3) Jesus teaches on being the Good Shepherd – John 10:1-21

Almost everyone in Jesus' day was familiar with sheep and shepherding. Sheep were helpless, defenseless, tended to stray, and required constant oversight by a shepherd. Many of Israel's greatest leaders had been shepherds, including Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and King David.

- a) **Jesus is the true Shepherd of the people of Israel (vs. 1-6)** This is in contrast to false leaders such as the Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes, who gave the appearance of shepherding the flock but were instead using them for personal gain.
  - Jesus calls His sheep by name, and they recognize His voice and follow Him. Those who understand and respond to Jesus as Messiah will follow Him.
  - Jesus leads from the front! He goes before us and we are to follow Him in His steps.
- b) **Jesus is the door through which we gain salvation (vs. 7-10)** Jesus went to the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. Faith in Him as Savior brings forgiveness, eternal life in the future and an abundant life here on earth.
- c) Jesus is the 'Good Shepherd' who:
  - Lays down His life for His sheep (vs. 11-13). 'Good' = Refers to having a noble character.
  - Loves and knows His sheep (vs. 14-15)
  - Will unite all sheep into one unified flock (vs. 16)
- d) **Jesus is fulfilling the will of His Father (vs. 17-18)** Jesus is willingly laying down His life, it will not be taken from Him. For this the Father loves Jesus.
- e) The words of Jesus brings controversy amongst the people (19-21)

#### 4) Jesus clearly claims to be God's Son, resulting in rejection by most of the Jews – John 10:22-42

These events take place as Jesus is in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Dedication or Hanukkah. Approximately two months have passed since John 10:21. This will be one of the last times Jesus addresses a large crowd. In the four months between now and His Crucifixion, Jesus will focus on preparing the 12.

- a) Jesus is walking in an enclosed area of the Temple, for it is winter (Nov./Dec.) when a group of Jewish leaders surround Him and ask a direct question. Their intent is undoubtedly to either force Him to admit He is not Messiah or to have the grounds to arrest Him for blaspheme.
- b) Jesus replies that He has answered, and that His works verify His claim. They are asking because they refuse to believe, and therefore are not one of His sheep (vs.25-29). His true sheep:
  - Hear and know His voice and follow Him
  - They have eternal life and are held securely in both His and The Father's hands

- c) Jesus then makes the most direct, public claim to being both God and Messiah (30-31) "I and the Father are one." The Jews know exactly what He is claiming, and begin to pick=up rocks to stone Him to death.
- d) Jesus then defends His clam. It is important to understand that if Jesus' claim was not true, He deserved to die. However if it was true, He deserved their faithful acceptance as Messiah. (vs. 32-39)
  - The Jews fully understand Jesus' claim! (vs. 33). Jesus makes reference to 'which work' because His miracles mark Him as God's Son and their Messiah.
  - Jesus stakes His claim on the miracles He is doing they are the Father's mark on His life and words. Therefore Jesus is not guilty of Blaspheme.
- e) As a result of this confrontation, Jesus escapes their hand and moves to the area of Perea, located east of the Jordan. This is the area where John the Baptist had ministered. While ministering there many come out to Him. Perhaps it is the location that makes them remember the Baptist and his affirmation of Jesus. Many take the step of placing faith in Christ as Messiah.

### 5) Jesus answers the question, 'Lord, will those who are saved be few?' – Luke 13:22-30

- a) The large crowds following Jesus were made up by true followers, students who saw Jesus as a Rabbi, curiosity seekers and opponents. The questioner is asking how many out of this large and diverse crowd will actually be saved and enter God's Kingdom? It is important to note Jesus is speaking specifically to the Jews of His generation in these verses, though there is application to people today as well.
- b) Rather than answer the actual question, Jesus makes several observations on being a true follower of Christ. In effect, He is saying, 'The real question to ask is am I saved and entering the Kingdom?'
  - 'Strive' (vs. 24) means to agonize, fight, compete hard. The word points to repentance and following Jesus. Jesus has said that there is a cost to following Him; that we are to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow; that there are those who will reject and even persecute us. Paul would later tell us to, 'Work out our salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.' (Phil. 2:12-13) True repentance will lead to spiritual fruit (Matthew 13:1-9)
  - Jesus is the narrow door through Whom we enter the Kingdom. It is Saving Faith in Him that leads to The Way.
  - Jesus warns them that though God has been patient with them, there will come a time when they will
    no longer have the opportunity of accepting Him as Messiah. Then, when they try to enter trusting their
    Jewish heritage instead of Jesus, they will be declined. Their places at the banquet table will be filled by
    Gentiles who have come from all parts of the world.

#### 6) Jesus laments for Jerusalem – Luke 13:31-35

- a) Soon after answering the question concerning who will be saved, Jesus is approached by some Pharisees who warn Him of Herod's desire to kill Him. Herod had jurisdiction over Perea, where Jesus is teaching. They are not concerned with Jesus' safety, but are seeking to intimidate Him to silence.
- b) Jesus refuses to be intimidated. He is on a divine mission that will run on a divine time table.
  - 'Today, tomorrow and the day following' an expression that meant to complete a task or journey.
  - I will not die at Herod's hand here in Perea, for I will go to Jerusalem, where the prophets of old were put to death. There I will complete the work God has for me.
- c) Jesus then shows His compassion for the city and people who will soon reject and crucify Him (vs.34-35)
  - Jesus' desire was to gather the people as a mother hen gathers her brood under the protective cover of her wings.
  - As a result of their rejection, the city will suffer destruction.

## 7) Jesus confronts the hypocrisy of the Pharisees with the truth about His Kingdom – Luke 14:1-24

One Sabbath, Jesus is invited to have dinner at the house of a lead Pharisee after worship at the Synagogue. The intent was to set a trap for Him, for the Pharisee also invited a man with a dropsy, a condition where one retained fluid, usually associated with lung or heart issues. Would Jesus heal this man on the Sabbath?

- a) Jesus exposes their hard hearts (vs. 3-6). It was not against the Law to treat a sick person on the Sabbath. However, the Pharisees had declared that to treat a sick person constituted 'work', and therefore one should wait until the next day to treat them. This was an example of how they placed their man-made rule over the Word of God, which said we are to have mercy. These hypocrites would water their animals on the Sabbath, but not minister to a sick person! Jesus, having silenced them, heals the man.
- b) Jesus then turns to their problem with pride. When attending a meal, the people who were more honored or considered of higher rank or reputation were given places closest to the host. As they had gathered for this meal, Jesus took note that men were choosing the highest possible place at the table. Jesus uses the illustration of a wedding feast to teach a lesson on humility. (vs. 7-11)
  - If a guest chose a seat that was higher than the host intended for them, they would be asked to move further down the table, a humiliating moment. It is far better to place yourself at a lower place than was intended for you, and allow the host to move you up, a moment of honor.
  - In God's Kingdom, one who exalts themselves through pride, seeking attention and honor will in time be humbled. We are called to humility, where God is free to reveal our character and accomplishments for the Kingdom as He wishes. If not in this life, we will receive recognition at the bema seat of Christ. (1Cor.3:10-15)
- c) Jesus then warned the guests that the opportunity to join the Kingdom of God was now. To delay to respond would leave them outside. (vs.12-24)
  - The exchange begins with Jesus teaching his host that rather than using his dinners to cultivate favor with the rich and influential, he should be inviting those who could never repay him with favors or influence.
  - This leads one of the guests to exclaim, 'Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the Kingdom of God'. This man obviously feels he will be one of the ones included. Jesus however uses a parable to challenge that assumption. Christ has spent almost three years inviting people to come to Him as Messiah. Most of the people attending this dinner have been refusing to respond, giving a variety of excuses and reasons. Jesus warns that in time the Father will invite the Gentiles to the feast, leaving Jews like themselves outside.

#### 8) Jesus teaches on the true cost of discipleship – Luke 14:25-35

When Jesus leaves the home of the Pharisee, great crowds gathered and followed Him. However, only a few of these people were true believers. As has been noted before, many saw Jesus as a Rabbi only. Others were seeking to watch more miracles while still others were opposing Him and were looking for opportunities to discredit Him or even accuse Him of a capital offense. Jesus makes it clear He is looking for followers ready to make a real commitment to Him.

- a) 'Disciple' means a student who seeks to follow in the steps of the teacher. In the Gospels the term 'disciple' can mean committed followers such as the 12; less committed students seeking to learn from Him; seekers who were taking the time to fully explore Him; curiosity seekers and politically minded people who want to see if this miracle worker can deliver them from disease or Rome. As we move to Acts, the term 'Disciple' is used only for those who have committed to following Jesus as the Christ.
- b) Jesus then gives us three pictures of a Fully Devoted Follower of Christ
  - They make Jesus the passion and priority of their life. 'Hate' suggests the idea of 'love less' rather than being antagonistic towards. Our love and commitment to Jesus is to be so strong that all other relationships, including to ourselves, seem like hate in comparison. (vs.26)
  - They fully identify with and give their all to Jesus Christ. This means we are willing to endure suffering, hardships and loss for the sake of Jesus. It means we walk in His steps as we obey His Word. It means we surrender our goals, agendas and honor in order to serve Him and His goals, agenda and honor. We

- crucify the self-life and rise to live His life. This requires us to fully count this cost, just as the builder and king do in Christ's illustrations (vs. 27-33)
- They are salt that remains pure. The salt is the character and actions of Jesus within us. This salt preserves the world around us from being even more sinful than it already is; acts as an antiseptic that cleanses; creates a spiritual thirst in others that lead them to seek Jesus.

## 9) Jesus tells three parables that reveal God's heart for the lost - Luke 15

The Pharisees and Scribes continued to grumble about the fact Jesus spent time with and ate with 'tax collectors and sinners'. In the Jewish society eating with someone communicated acceptance and friendship. These legalists considered it not only beneath their dignity to do this but felt it made you one of the sinners. Jesus tells three parables, all of which reveals the Father's heart for people.

## a) The parable of the lost sheep – Luke 15:1-7

The 99 sheep represent the Pharisees and Scribes, who thought they 'had no need for repentance'. The single sheep represented the sinners and tax collectors the self-righteous ones looked down on. The 99 do not bring rejoicing in heaven because it is their pride that keeps them from recognizing their true spiritual need. However. The one repentant sinner brings great joy! The shepherd pictures God, who seeks out the lost sheep with determination and sacrifice and rejoices when the lost becomes the found.

### b) The parable of the lost coin – Luke 15:8-10

When a woman got married she wore a head band made up of 10 coins. This had great emotional as well as financial value since it was part of her dowry! She pictures God, who is diligent in searching for souls and rejoices when they are found.

## c) The parable of the Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-32

The main character of this story is the father, not his son. In fact, the costar of the story is the older son, not the prodigal. The younger son brings great shame on his father through his request. The money due him was to be paid upon his father's death, so asking for it in advance was saying 'I cannot wait until you are dead.' In fact, the expected response of the father would have been to dis-inherit the boy, not submit to the request! While the boy leaves to squander his money his older brother remains with the father, working with reduced resources day in and day out. His response to his brother's return and restoration would have been understood and applauded by the audience hearing the story. While the repentance of the prodigal is a great aspect of the story, the two main lessons are:

- **The Father** Picturing God, we see a Father who is looking with anticipation for his son's return; rejoicing upon his return; offering full restoration of his wayward son.
- The Older Brother Pictures the Pharisees and Scribes. Their prideful rejection of the younger brother, who pictures the sinners and tax collectors, leave them on the outside of the feast. The parable acts as an invitation for them to repent, recognize their spiritual need and to place faith in Christ as the Messiah.

## 10) Jesus instructs His disciples to be wise stewards and investors in God's Kingdom work. – Luke 16:1-13

At first glance this is a very challenging parable to understand, especially since the main character is a cheating servant! The main point of the story is that if an unrighteous steward knows how to use money to accomplish his plan, how much more should Christ's disciples use it to invest in their plan to build the Kingdom of God? We are given resources by God to act as His stewards, investing it to profit God's agenda – the salvation of people and the building of His Kingdom.

### 11) The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus – Luke 16:19-31

Jesus continues to speak to His disciples, knowing the Pharisees and Scribes are listening in. He turns back to the self-righteous leaders and sinners and tax collectors issue. In the end, rich and poor face death, and then one of two eternal destinations!

a) The rich man would have been looked upon as a godly, blessed man. The Jews assumed that wealth was a sign of God's blessing and poverty a sign of God's judgement. That the man was rich was not the issue, but that he

was self-righteous and sufficient, not seeing himself as really needing God. In this way he represents the Pharisees and Scribes listening in.

- b) Lazarus, the poor man represented the sinners and tax collectors, with his physical poverty representing their spiritual poverty.
- c) Upon death, their positions are reversed. Lazarus, dying in poverty, would have had his body thrown upon the ash heap outside of town. However, he is taken by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man would have had an elaborate funeral and his body buried in a tomb carved out of the rocky hillside. However, his soul finds itself in hades.
- d) Verses 25 is not saying our eternal destiny is tied to wealth or poverty, but that our earthly status does not determine our eternal one. Wealth and poverty are not effective barometers of our spiritual condition.
- e) The rich man wants to warn his family, but Jesus says that even if he was allowed to rise from the grave they will not repent. Again, Jesus is inviting the Pharisees and Scribes to repent, while at the same time acknowledging most of them will not, even after Jesus rises from the grave.

# 12) Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead - John 11

This is perhaps the most fantastic of Jesus' miracles! It will build the faith of His followers, harden the opposition of His enemies and lead to a new crescendo of interest of the population around Jerusalem. More importantly, this miracle shows us the heart and the power of Jesus Christ. Finally, it illustrates that even death cannot defeat Christ...not even His own, as time will tell.

- a) John sets up the story in verses 1-16.
  - Jesus and the 12 in Perea, at least a full day's journey from Bethany. Bethany is located just 2 miles from Jerusalem, where the Jewish leaders are looking to silence Jesus by putting Him to death.
  - Jesus is very close to Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary. The word 'love' in verse 3 and 5 is 'Phileo' brotherly love and affection. Apparently Jesus had often spent the night with this family while visiting Jerusalem.
  - It would have taken a full day for the messenger to get to Jesus; then He waits two days; it would have then taken a full day to travel to Bethany. Lazarus died while the messenger was in route to Jesus.
  - As Jesus announces that Lazarus's death was allowed in order for God's purpose to be fulfilled, He also announces they are going to see them. The reaction of the 12 is surprise and fear, for they knew the Jews were looking to kill Jesus. Why leave the relative safety of Perea? However they resign themselves to Jesus' decision and agree to join Him.
- b) Jesus ministers to Martha and Mary vs. 17--23
  - Lazarus being dead four days was significant. The Jews believed that the soul of the deceased hovered over the body for four days and then left. Lazarus was now recognized as officially dead!
  - While Mary remains with the mourners in the house, Martha goes out to meet Jesus as He arrives in town. Her grief pours out as does her faith (vs. 21-22)
  - Jesus then brings up resurrection life with a view of both the immediate (Raising Lazarus from the tomb) and future (eternal life in the Kingdom). Raising Lazarus was not just to prove His power or to minister to His friends; it was a picture of life after death and Jesus' own resurrection in just a few weeks.
- c) Jesus declares that He is the Resurrection and the Life vs. 24-27
  - 'Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live' This refers to the resurrection of the redeemed at the end of this age.
  - 'Shall never die' This refers to the fact that once we place saving faith in Jesus, we never really die, for death is just a doorway into eternity.
  - 'I am the resurrection' Jesus Himself is the source of this life and the life to come.
  - Jesus then calls Martha to faith, which she does, calling Jesus both 'Christ' and 'Son of God'.

- d) Jesus raises Lazarus from the tomb vs. 28-44
  - In verse 35, Jesus weeps over the grief and sorrow around Him the effect of sin in the world and the people He had created. This is a wonderful picture of Christ's compassion for us.
  - Jesus says a public prayer, not because He needs to, but for the benefit of those around Him (vs. 41-42)
  - Jesus then calls out to Lazarus to come out, and he does, still bound in his grave clothes. It appears the people are so stunned and fearful they stand in place. Jesus has to tell them to unbind him.
- e) As a result of this miracle, the Jewish leaders determine Jesus must die and soon. Intentions now became actual plans (vs. 53).
  - Jesus moves to the Wilderness outside of Jerusalem. He will make a brief trip to Galilee and Samaria before returning for the Passover.
  - The leaders are determined that if Jesus does come to Passover, they will take the opportunity to arrest Him. (vs. 57)