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## Session Guide: Intro to Jesus Challenge and Discipleship; Matthew 1-4

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### Is 40

Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the Lord's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup> A voice cries out:  
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our  
God.

<sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup> Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

<sup>6</sup> A voice says, "Cry out!"  
And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

<sup>7</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand forever.

<sup>9</sup> Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good tidings;<sup>[a]</sup>  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,<sup>[a]</sup>  
lift it up, do not fear;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
"Here is your God!"

<sup>10</sup> See, the Lord God comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup> He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

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A. Introduction to the Jesus Challenge (5 min)

B. Spitfire<sup>1</sup> (10 min)

1) What does it mean to be Jesus' Disciple today?

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2) What are the greatest challenges for living as a Christian in today's aggressively secular world?

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C. Discipleship in Jesus' Time and Today (10 min)

D. Small Group Discussion: Can you be a Catholic (at least in the long run) without being a disciple? Why or why not? (10 min)

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<sup>1</sup> A "Spitfire" is when we take 2 minutes to answer the question to ourselves and then have a 2-3 min group discussion. *Be Quick!*

E. Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels and to Matthew (10 min)

F. *Real World Practice*: While talking with a friend or co-worker how would you answer one of the following questions they pose? What words of Jesus would you cite? Answer one or two Qs below. (15-20 min)

- a) Who is Jesus? Why does he make a Difference? Why do I need to be a Christian if I am already a good person?
- b) Why are you Christians so hung up on Sex? No one gets hurt by masturbation, pornography, or any kind of sex outside of marriage ...
- c) You Christians talk about “God’s Plan for your life”. I see no divine hand, only randomness. In case you haven’t noticed, things are pretty crappy in this world, though I am happy with my life. Many are isolated and lonely, many suffer (pointlessly) in other ways. Why do you think there is a loving God?
- d) People have a right to define their own ‘gender’ – what is your problem with that? (Extra Credit)

Circle two questions and jot down some points you would make and any Scripture references.

1<sup>st</sup> Q:

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2<sup>nd</sup> Q:

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G. Comments on Mt 1-2: Genealogy & Infancy Narratives (5 min)

H. DQ: List the heroic acts of Joseph in 1.18-25 and 2.13-23. Why is each act heroic, i.e., requiring great faith? (10 min)

<i>Heroic Act</i>	<i>Why Heroic?</i>
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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I. Comments on Mt. 3-4: Ministry of JnB, Baptism of Jesus, and Calling of 1<sup>st</sup> Disciples (10 min)

J. Spitfire: Re-read Mt 3-4 and Fill Out the Discipleship Worksheet → Review as Class (10 min)

K. Small Group Discussion: (15 min +/-) Disciples imitate the Lord. During Lent we imitate the Lord’s desert “testing” but also his preparation for mission. We strip ourselves down to nothing, as the Lord did, until there is only the Holy Spirit on whom to rely. What are some ‘things’ the Lord would strip of – and what would God put in its place?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What mission or transition might the Lord be preparing you for?

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## Session Outline: Matthew 4<sup>12-7</sup>

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### Ps 136

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.  
O give thanks to the God of gods,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.  
O give thanks to the Lord of lords,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
who alone does great wonders,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
who by understanding made the heavens,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
who spread out the earth on the waters,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
who made the great lights,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
the sun to rule over the day,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
the moon and stars to rule over the night,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
who struck Egypt through their firstborn,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
and brought Israel out from among them,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
with a strong hand and an outstretched arm,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
who divided the Red Sea in two,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;

and made Israel pass through the midst of it,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
but overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
who led his people through the wilderness,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
who struck down great kings,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
and killed famous kings,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
Sihon, king of the Amorites,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
and Og, king of Bashan,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
and gave their land as a heritage,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
a heritage to his servant Israel,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.

It is he who remembered us in our low estate,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
and rescued us from our foes,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;  
who gives food to all flesh,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.

O give thanks to the God of heaven,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.

### A. Large Group Discussion: (Partial) Salvation History in Eucharistic Prayer IV

10 min +/-

<sup>1</sup>We give you praise, Father most holy, for you are great, and you have fashioned all your works in wisdom and in love. <sup>2</sup>You formed man in your own image and entrusted the whole world to his care, so that in serving you alone, the Creator, he might have dominion over all creatures. <sup>3</sup>And when through disobedience he had lost your friendship, you did not abandon him to the domain of death. <sup>4</sup>For you came in mercy to the aid of all, so that those who seek might find you. Time and again you offered them covenants and through the prophets taught them to look forward to salvation. <sup>5</sup>And you so loved the world, Father most holy, that in the fullness of time you sent your Only Begotten Son to be our Savior. <sup>6</sup>Made incarnate by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, he shared our human nature in all things but sin. <sup>7</sup>To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation, to prisoners, freedom, and to the sorrowful of heart, joy. <sup>8</sup>To accomplish your plan, he gave himself up to death, and, rising from the dead, he destroyed death and restored life. <sup>9</sup>And that we might live no longer for ourselves but for him who died and rose again for us, he sent the Holy Spirit from you, Father, as the first fruits for those who believe, so that, bringing to perfection his work in the world, he might sanctify creation to the full.

Vs.           Element of Salvation History

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_

- B. Beginning of J's Ministry Mt 4.12-25 10 min
- C. Exercise & SG Discussion (15 min): Re-read Mt 4<sup>12</sup> - 7<sup>29</sup> and Fill Out the Discipleship Worksheet if you haven't done so already (allow up to 5 minutes).
- 1) Compare your answers for each of the seven categories
  - 2) Circle a few that you found most challenging and why. Share with the group.
- D. Beatitudes, Value of Witnessing, the New Law: 5.1-16 10 min
- E. SG Discussion (15 min): Review the notes on 2 Beatitudes, perhaps ones the Lord wants you to focus on. 15 min

Beatitude #1

- 1) Describe in your own words the attribute elevated by the beatitude: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Describe how you could better lived the beatitude in an incident in your recent past: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Beatitude #2

- 1) Describe in your own words the attribute elevated by the beatitude: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Describe how you could better lived the beatitude in an incident in your recent past: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- F. The New Law: 5.17-28 10 min
- G. Spitfire: Can we possibly obtain the righteousness he stipulates, without which we can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven (5.20)? 10 min

- a) Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- b) How can we be possibly 'be perfect like our heavenly Father (5.48)?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

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- H. Pieties, Money & Providence: 6.1-34 10 min
- I. Spitfire: If our Father knows what we need before we ask in prayer, should we bother praying for specifics? E.g., for the healing of a friend? Why or why not? 5 min
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- J. Outsiders & Prayer II; Absolute Necessity of Obedient Discipleship: 7.1-29 10 min
- K. SG Discussion: Will many be saved – or few? Re-read 7.13-14. 10 min
- 1) How do you think *the typical* practicing Catholics you know would answer? \_\_\_\_\_ Non-practicing Catholics? \_\_\_\_\_ People in general who would identify as Christian? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) What do you take the Lord to mean by this statement? \_\_\_\_\_
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- 3) How does this teaching affect the way you think about your life and those around you?
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- L. SG DQ: Consider a somewhat close friend or family member, who only sometimes goes to Church and is living with their unmarried partner. You invite them to Mass or an encounter event like Alpha and they like and ask you for advice on going deeper. How would you advise them? Why? 15 min
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## Session Outline: Matthew 6-10; Moral Therapeutic Deism & Universalism

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- A. Pieties, Money & Providence: 6.1-34 10 min
  - B. DQs/SG: How can I better pray the Our Father, what elements can I be more mindful of? 15 min
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What are the benefits of fasting and almsgiving? List a few small steps to get started.

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What is Lord saying here to help me trust him more and avoid anxiety?

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- C. Outsiders & Prayer II; Absolute Necessity of Obedient Discipleship: 7.1-29 10 min
  - D. Spitfires: Do you think most people today think that they are going to heaven? 15 min
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What does Jesus say about obedience (and where)?

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Why do you find this challenging?

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- E. Moralistic Therapeutic Deism; Universalism 10 min
  - F. DQ/SG: Will many be saved – or few? Re-read 7.13-14. 15 min
    - 1) How do you think *the typical* practicing Catholics you know would answer? \_\_\_\_\_ Non-practicing Catholics? \_\_\_\_\_ People in general who would identify as Christian? \_\_\_\_\_
    - 2) What do you take the Lord to mean by this statement? \_\_\_\_\_
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3) How does this teaching affect the way you think about your life and those around you?

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- G. Miracles Demonstrating Jesus' Divine Authority; Becoming a Disciple: 8-9 5 min
  - H. Spitfire: Read 9.20-22. What is surprising about this woman? 5 min
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- I. Missionary Discourse: 10.1-11.1 5 min
  - J. DQ-SG: Picture yourself as one of the Apostles Jesus is preparing. Are you ready for 10 min mission?
    - 1) What would concern you most about Jesus' instructions? Why? \_\_\_\_\_
    - 2) If the Lord called you to become a full-time Missionary, what would be the biggest obstacles? Why? \_\_\_\_\_
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## *Know your Audience: Convinced Believers, Confused Christians, & the “Lost”*

- 1) *Convinced Christians* know, understand, believe, and form themselves in the truths of Scripture and the teaching of the Church. A Convinced Christian could experience same-sex attraction or gender dystopia but would refrain from sexually immoral acts or trying to change their sex or gender.
- 2) *Confused Christians* include anyone self-identifying as a “Christian” and believe (at a minimum) in the authority of Scripture and that Jesus saves us from our sins and provides us grace to be free of sin and be transformed. Confused Christians may be hazy even on these minimums and lack much knowledge of Scripture and their Church’s teaching; and many do not practice their faith and or follow Christian morality in general. Often, the Confused Christian is more of a “Moral Therapeutic Deist” who self-identifies as a Christian and might occasionally go to a Christian Church.
- 3) *The Lost* do not self-identify as Christians, usually have no formal religious affiliation of any sort (“Nones”), but often consider themselves “spiritual” and often articulate beliefs approximating Moral Therapeutic Deism.

Confused Christians may no longer practice their faith actively but retain Christian belief. Confused Christians and the Lost, in place of zeal for advancing God’s Kingdom, often serve a ‘greater good’ of protecting the environment and minorities; defending gay and transgender rights seems to be a matter of justice.

### Contrasting Worldviews: Certain Elements

	<i>Convinced Christian</i>	<i>Confused (MTD)</i>	<i>Lost (Materialistic, Post-modern)</i>
<i>Material Universe</i>	Created by God	Created by God	No Creator
	Meaning embedded in Creation	---	Q of origin is meaningless
<i>Nature of a Human</i>	Embodied Souls = moral growth thru bodily experience	---	Bodies =mere collection of atoms
	Reflect God’s Nature	---	No Fixed Nature
	Afterlife: 4 Last Things	Afterlife: the Good go to Hvn	No Afterlife
<i>“Goods”</i>	Truth, Beauty & Goodness	Be Happy	No Truth, Beauty or Goodness
	True Friendship, Service	Feel Good about Yourself	No True Friendship
	Be w/ God, Become Like God, Do what God Does	Be ‘good’, nice & fair	Only: Pleasure
<i>Culture- Key Markers</i>	Family, service, mission	←————→	Distraction and Amusement
	HS & Grace saturated		Sex-saturated
<i>Cultural Imperatives</i>	Be w God & His People, Become a Saint	←————→	U b U: Self-Invention
	Serve others, Evangelize		Find Pleasure & Flatten Pain

### Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD)<sup>2</sup>

Identified in a 2005 study of 3,000 religious American youth, Christian Smith and Melinda Denton found that many young people believe in several moral statutes *not exclusive to any of the major world religions* ... a set of commonly held spiritual beliefs<sup>3</sup>:

1. A God exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
  2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
  3. *The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.*
  4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
  5. *Good people* go to heaven when they die.
- A significant part of Christianity in the US is only tenuously Christian in any sense to the actual historical Christianity, but has substantially morphed into Christianity’s misbegotten step-cousin, Christian Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.(*Soul Searching*, p. 171)

<sup>2</sup> Much of this summary is taken from the Wikipedia article downloaded 9/1/19: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moralistic\\_therapeutic\\_deism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moralistic_therapeutic_deism)

<sup>3</sup> *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (2005); "Nat’l Study of Youth & Religion", (<https://youthandreligion.nd.edu>).



- God is considered "something like a combination Divine Butler and Cosmic Therapist: he's always on call, takes care of any problems that arise, professionally helps his people to feel better about themselves, and does not become too personally involved in the process." (*Soul Searching*, p. 165)
- The problem does not seem to be that churches are teaching young people badly, but that we are doing an exceedingly good job of teaching youth *what we really believe*, namely, that
  - (a) *Christianity is not a big deal*, that
  - (b) *God requires little*, and
  - (c) the church is *a helpful social institution* (d) *filled with nice people...*<sup>4</sup>

Popular Post-Modernism <sup>5</sup>	Christian Worldview (certain elements)
1. Absolute truth doesn't exist	1. God Created us in His Image for Fellowship with Him
2. Reason is only one form of parochial knowledge	2. Sin effaces God's Image & Destroys His Handiwork
3. Truth claims are typically masked assertions of power	3. Jesus atones for our Sin, whose punishment is Death
4. Morality is relative	4. Holiness is necessary to Be with God
5. Nothing is universal	5. HS vivifies our bodies dead from Sin, remaking
6. Nobody can really know anything for certain	(perfecting) us in God's Image, Holy, Loving, Merciful

### Christian Worldview (certain elements) - Select Scripture Passages

- 1) *Created In God's image for Fellowship w God*
  - <sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make humankind *in our image, according to our likeness ...* <sup>27</sup> *in the image of God he created them: male and female he created them...* (Genesis 1.26-7)
- 2) *Sin (esp. sexual) effaces God's Image & Damages the Creatures He Made & Owns*
  - <sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves (to homosexuality), <sup>25</sup> because *they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator ...*
  - [and they were] filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, slanderers, Godhaters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, <sup>31</sup> foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. (Romans 1.24-31)
  - [we were] sold into slavery under sin... I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. (Rom 7:14,20)
- 3) *Punishment for Sin is Death, but God atones for our sins and saves us by joining us to Christ*
  - <sup>24</sup> they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement (Romans 3.24-5)
  - all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ... buried with him... so that just as Christ was raised from the dead... we too might walk in newness of life... our old self was crucified with him we might no longer be enslaved to sin. (Romans 6.3-6)
- 4) *Holiness is Required to be with God* (Hebrews 12.14)
- 5) *The Holy Spirit brings to life our bodies dead from sin and remakes us in His Image*
  - God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom 5.5)
  - <sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you.... <sup>13</sup> if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (Rom 8:9,13)
  - <sup>26</sup> the Spirit helps us in our weakness... <sup>29</sup> to be conformed to the image of his Son (Rom 8:26,29)
  - ... *Making us Perfect, Merciful & Holy like our Heavenly Father* (Lk 6.36, Mt 5.48, I Ptr 1.15-16)
- 6) *Of course, we must join ourselves vigorously to becoming a new creation*
  - *Put on the Lord Jesus Christ* (Rom 13.14) *Put away ... your old self*, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, *be renewed in your minds*, clothe yourselves with *the new self, created according to the likeness of God* in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4.22-24)
  - Those who belong to Christ Jesus have *crucified* the flesh with its passions and desires. (Gal 5.24)

<sup>4</sup> "More Teens Becoming Fake Christians" on Princeton's Kenda Dean's 2010 book *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*. (Oxford University Press, 2010). <http://www.cnn.com/2010/LIVING/08/27/almost.christian/index.html>

<sup>5</sup> p 6, Smith, Christian. *Young Catholic America*. (Oxford University Press, 2014)

## Session Outline: Matthew 11-19: Galilean Ministry Pt 2; Sex and Marriage

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- A. Ministry in Galilee: 11-12 10 min
  - B. Kingdom of God Discourse: 13 5 min
  - C. SG DQ: Skim Jesus' 30 teachings on Judgment and 9 on 'Bearing Fruit'. Is Jesus preaching (a) 'fire and brimstone', (b) are these merciful warnings meant to drive people to repent and seek Jesus for both forgiveness and the power to live in holiness and fruitful charity – or both? Why? 15 min
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- D. Ministry in Galilee: 14-17 10 min
- E. DQ - Small Group. Re-read 16.24-28. 10 min

1. How would this strike you if you were one of the apostles? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What does this mean for you today? Right now? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- F. Community Discourse: 18 10 min
- G. Spitfire: What does it mean to consider someone 'like a tax collector or gentile'? 5 min

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- H. Mt 19: Marriage & SEX 20 min
- I. SG DQ (see page 39 of the notes) 20 min

### *Time Permitting:*

- J. Mt 19: R&DYM 10 min
- K. DQ-Small Group: Picture yourself as the Rich Young Ruler of 19.16-20. Imagine that you 10 min

went away for a weekend retreat, that the Lord showed up, and invited you to sell everything and follow him. But by 'sell everything', the Lord means treat every possession as if it belongs to him, and instead of following him around Israel, he wants you to devote yourself fully to him in your current state, whether a student, worker, young married, etc.

1) What are the biggest obstacles you would experience and why?

\_\_\_\_\_

2) List four or five things that would have to change, and why.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Session Outline: Matthew 21-25: Palm Sunday & the 1<sup>st</sup> Half of Holy Week

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- A. DQ - Small Group: See Marriage & Sex Question (Notes 39). 20 min
- B. Kingly Entry; Temple purging, healings, and prophecy of its destruction; Fight w/ Authorities: 20-23 10 min
- C. DQ-Small Group: Picture yourself as the Rich Young Ruler of 19.16-20. Imagine that you went away 15 min for a weekend retreat, that the Lord showed up and invited you to sell everything and follow him. But by 'sell everything', the Lord meant treat every possession as if it belongs to him, and rather than following him around Israel, he wants you to devote yourself fully to him in your current state, whether a student, worker, young married, etc.

1) What are the biggest obstacles you would experience and why?

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2) List four or five things that would have to change, and why.

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D. Eschatological Disc. (Temple's Destruction & J's Return): 24.1-41; 25.1-13 15 min

E. Large Group Discussion: Did the Lord have to be so emphatic in his warnings to be watchful? 5 min

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F. Eschatological Disc. (Watchfulness and Coming Judgment): 25 10 min

G. DQ – Small Group: How do you interpret the parable of the talents in your life? 15 min

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H. Five Minutes of Daily Prayer 10/20

I. DQ-SG: Which of God's attributes most attracts you? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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Pick one of your encounters with beauty you have had recently. Describe what you found beautiful. What particularly appealed to you?

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What would you have to change in your schedule to pray or read Scripture for 15-30 minutes per day (or to make it to daily Mass)?

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## Session Outline: Intro to John and John 1-4

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Surely he has borne our infirmities  
and carried our diseases;  
yet we accounted him stricken,  
struck down by God, and afflicted.

<sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions,  
crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the punishment that made us  
whole, and by his bruises we are healed.

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have all turned to our own way,  
and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he did not open his mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.

<sup>8</sup> By a perversion of justice he was taken away.  
Who could have imagined his future?  
For he was cut off from the land of the living,  
stricken for the transgression of my people.  
(Is 53.4-8)

- |  |             |        |
|--|-------------|--------|
| A. Welcome to New Members, Intro to the Jesus Challenge to YAs in John             |             | 5 min  |
| B. Intro to the Gospel of John   |             | 10 min |
| C. Prologue and ID by JnB and 1 <sup>st</sup> Ds                                   | <i>Jn 1</i> | 15 min |
| D. DQ-SG: 1) Which interpretation of Lamb of God makes the most sense to you? Why? |             | 15 min |

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2) What other Scriptures support your interpretation?

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|--|-------------|--------|
| E. Wedding at Cana and 1 <sup>st</sup> Passover  | <i>Jn 2</i> | 10 min |
| F. DQ-SG : Sin, Sacrifice & Temple.  |             | 15 min |
| 1) Read 1.29, 2.19 and 3.16. Who does JnB say Jesus is? What identity does Jesus assert for himself in 2.19? In this Temple context of sacrifices atoning for sin, what does Jesus mean in the famous Jn 3.16? |             |        |

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2) Read I John 2.2-3 & 4.10. In your own words, how does Jesus expiate (atone for) our sins?

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|---|-------------|--------|
| G. Baptism: Nicodemus & Being Born from Above thru the HS; Jesus & JnB  | <i>Jn 3</i> | 10 min |
| H. DQ-SG: Baptism in the Spirit   |             | 15 min |
| 1) Love: Who's the world 3.16? What was in it for God in terms of the Cross? Why was love required? What does this tell you about how much God loves you? |             |        |
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2) Love & Commandments: If God loves us so much, why does he give us laws to follow?

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3) Belief & Commandments: How do you fit *salvation thru belief* in 3.16 with the necessity of (a) obedience to Jesus, i.e., keeping God’s commandments, in 3.36 and 14.21 and (b) bearing fruit in 15.5-6?

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4) Read 3.18-21. What is being said here about the necessity of believing in J? How does this strike you? If this is true, how does affect our relationship with not yet believing family, friends, and even “the world”?

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I. Samaritan Woman and the Living Water

*Jn 4*

10 min

J. DQ-SG:

15 min

1) Read John 7.37-39. How does this passage clarify what J means by *living water*? Do you experience prayer in this way?

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2) What do you think the Lord is teaching you about *your prayer life*? Esp. as it relates to water?

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3) Re-read John 1.32-33. How does this tie into your prayer life?

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## Session Outline: John 5-8

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### A. Healing of a Paralytic: Jn 5

#### B. OT Prefigurements and Prophecies of Jesus

- 1) Read Deuteronomy 18.15-22
  - a) What figure is described here? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Is 15-16 and then 17-20 Moses speaking or God? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) How will we know someone is that guy? (21-22) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Read Daniel 7.13-14,22,27
  - a) Who comes to whom? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) What is that person given and for how long? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) To whom will the kingdom *then* be given (22,27)? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Read II Sam 7.4-16
  - a) What is promised David? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) How is that promise fulfilled by Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Read Ex 4.1-9
  - a) What is the purpose of the 'signs' (v5)? \_\_\_\_\_

### C. Multiplication of the Loaves: Jn 6

#### D. Class DQs:

- 1) What does it mean to 'abide in Jesus and for Jesus to abide in you'? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) How do we 'abide in Jesus' if we take the Eucharist to mean the manner in which he abides in us?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### E. Tabernacles I- Jesus the Source of Living Water: Jn 7

#### F. SG Discussion

- 1) 'Thirst for water' identifies our spiritual thirst as a primary driver in our life.
  - a) How strongly do you experience this thirst? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) What other such "thirsts" in life do you have? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*→ This Lent clear away some of the other thirsts to heighten our appetite for living water from Jesus.*

  - c) How would you describe your thirst for the 'living water'? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) How have you experienced the HS? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### G. Tabernacles II – I AM the Light of the World: Jn 8

- 1) What does keeping God's word entail? (8.31, 37, 51) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) How is J the "pillar of fire" in your life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Session Outline: John 8-12

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- A. Tabernacles I: Jesus provides the Life-Giving Water – HS (7.37-39) 15 min
- 1) ‘Thirst for water’ identifies our spiritual thirst as a primary driver in our life.
    - a) How strongly do you experience this thirst? \_\_\_\_\_
    - b) What other such “thirsts” in life do you have? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*→ This Lent clear away some of the other thirsts to heighten our appetite for living water from Jesus.*

  - c) How would you describe your thirst for the ‘living water’? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) How have you experienced the HS? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- B. Tabernacles II: Following Jesus the Light of the World and the Truth who Sets us Free (8) 15 min
- 1) Read 8.34. How is J the “pillar of fire” in your life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How can you better follow his leading?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Read 8.34: Give some examples of how sin can put us in bondage and why. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Read 8.31-32: What is the condition for knowing ‘the truth’? \_\_\_\_\_  
What does keeping God’s word entail? What obstacles do you face right now in doing so?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- C. Healing of Blind on the Sabbath (9); Jesus the Good Shepherd: (10) 15 min
- 1) Describe how you hear J’ voice and how you know it’s his voice: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) Read 14-5: what does J mean by us ‘mutually knowing’ him as he mutually knows the F?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- D. Raising of Lazarus (11); Anointing, Triumphal Entry, Last Days of Public Ministry (12) 15 min
- 1) Re-read 25-26: we have been meditating the many variations of this “condition” for being J’s disciple! What is the sense of ‘hate’ here? How can you apply this teaching to your life?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Session Outline: John 13-16

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A. Recap of “Book of Signs” (1-12) & Intro to Book of Glory (13-21)

B. Love Like God Loves: Character of Jesus’ Disciple – Jn 13

- 1) Love of one another: Read 13.34-35 and 15.12-13. What range of ‘loving one another’ does Jesus seem to indicate by his actions of foot-washing followed by his Passion?

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- 2) *How* does Jn 14.21-23 tell us to ‘love Jesus’? What is an area that is difficult for you? Why?

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C. Divine Intimacy I – Jn 14.1-12: Jesus’ Communion with the Father; Only Way to Father thru Jesus

D. Cultural Christianity: *Moralistic Therapeutic Deism*

- 1) Make a reasonable case for Jn 14.6 to a cultural Christian by discussing the problem of Sin and the need for God to ‘deify’ or sanctify us in order to bring us into intimate fellowship with Himself.

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E. Divine Intimacy II – Jn 14.15-24: Jesus Brings us into Communion with Himself, the Father, & the HS

F. Maintaining Intimacy with God: 5 Minutes + of Daily Personal Prayer

- 1) Describe *your expectations* for ‘divine intimacy’. In what ways does God’s offer exceed them?

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- 2) *Am I doing my part?* What has to change in order to ensure 5+ minutes of morning prayer? What format do you plan to use? What are some helps to avoid just ‘checking a box’ or ‘autopilot’?

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G. Divine Intimacy and Fruitfulness: Jn 15.1-17

- 1) Describe the connection between Divine Intimacy and Fruitfulness in 15.1-3.

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- 2) What can we do on our part ‘to **abide in Jesus**’? List at least three ways.

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- 3) *How do you allow J & HS to **abide in us***? *Are you inviting God into your heart daily?* How? Be specific!

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## Scripture/Catholicism vs. Cultural Christianity

	Scriptural / CCC	Cultural Christianity
Purpose of Life	God Created us in His Image for Fellowship with Him	God wants us to be happy and you can call on him when needed, otherwise leaves us on our own
Sin	Harms others or yourself Effaces God's Image Destroys <i>His Handiwork</i>	Harms others
Atonement	Jesus atones for our Sin	– NA –
Judgment at End of Life	Punishment of Sin is Death Love (agape) your neighbor as yourself Be Fruitful	Did you try to be nice?
Requirement to Enter Heaven	Atonement for Sin Only thru Jesus Holiness only thru incorporation in Jesus body	Be nice, and not having done anything really bad
Hell	Yes	Only for worst people who do really bad things
Live a Good Life on your own?	No	Yes, but sometimes need help from 'the Big Guy'
Role of HS	Vivify our bodies dead from Sin, remaking (perfecting) us in God's Image, Holy, Loving, Merciful.	– NA –
	Direct mission, Help us Pray, Moral Power, Power for Ministry (spiritual gifts)	– NA –

### Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD)<sup>6</sup>

Identified in a 2005 study of 3,000 religious American youth, Christian Smith and Melinda Denton found that many young people believe in several moral statutes *not exclusive to any of the major world religions* ... a set of commonly held spiritual beliefs<sup>7</sup>:

1. A God exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
  2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
  3. *The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.*
  4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
  5. *Good people go to heaven when they die.*
- A significant part of Christianity in the US is only tenuously Christian in any sense to the actual historical Christianity, but has substantially morphed into Christianity's misbegotten step-cousin, Christian Moralistic Therapeutic Deism. (*Soul Searching*, p. 171)
  - God is considered "something like a combination Divine Butler and Cosmic Therapist: he's always on call, takes care of any problems that arise, professionally helps his people to feel better about themselves, and does not become too personally involved in the process." (*Soul Searching*, p. 165)
  - The problem does not seem to be that churches are teaching young people badly, but that we are doing an exceedingly good job of teaching youth *what we really believe*, namely, that
    - (a) *Christianity is not a big deal*, that
    - (b) *God requires little*, and
    - (c) *the church is a helpful social institution* (d) *filled with nice people*...<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Much of this summary is taken from the Wikipedia article downloaded 9/1/19: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moralistic\\_therapeutic\\_deism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moralistic_therapeutic_deism)

<sup>7</sup> *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (2005); "Nat'l Study of Youth & Religion", (<https://youthandreligion.nd.edu>).

<sup>8</sup> "More Teens Becoming Fake Christians" on Princeton's Kenda Dean's 2010 book *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*. (Oxford University Press, 2010). <http://www.cnn.com/2010/LIVING/08/27/almost.christian/index.html>

# Session Outline: John 17-21

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- A. Summing up Jesus' *Discipleship Teaching* ("Jesus Discipleship Schema in the Gospels")
- B. Recap of Last Discourses; Prayer for Ds to enter Intimate Union with God and One Another (17)
  - 1) Describe what it means to "Be a Disciple" to a 'Cultural Catholic' or 'None' (pick one)

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- C. Summation of Jesus' Teaching in John on *Participating in the Life of God*
  - 1) Describe what it means to "Enter into Life with God" to a 'Cultural Catholic' or 'None' (pick one)

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- D. Passion Narrative: 18-19
  - 1) Describe "Why Jesus had to be Crucified" to a 'Cultural Catholic' or 'None' (pick one)

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- E. Resurrection Appearances: 20-21
  - 1) Describe a personal encounter you have had with the Risen Lord, particularly one that energized your faith, deepened your intimacy with God, or renewed your desire for deeper conversion

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A. Worldview < look at one major element of discipleship each week >

1) What is a “Worldview”? The underlying shared understanding of a people that includes the following elements and an explanation of

- The origin of the observable universe
- A purpose, if any, for the universe
- An explanation of God or gods
- An explanation of what a human person is
- An explanation of “evil” and suffering
- A moral code
- The Purpose (if any) of human life
- What constitutes ‘happiness’ or ‘well-being’
- A hierarchy of Values

A worldview is the bedrock upon which a culture is built.

- 2) Families, schools, and (in many cases) religious institutions or ceremonies transmit the worldview to us at a young age, which a cohesive culture will reinforce. In a static culture, the worldview is simply transmitted, its unquestioned skin and bones, so to speak. The Norse didn’t question Thor’s role as a leading god, the value of battle glory and shame of cowardice, nor the wild feasting awaiting at least the heroic in Valhalla. Frodo simply assumes the key values of hobbit-hood and Middle Earth and the narrative of good vs. evil.
- 3) Times are changing! In fact, they’ve been changing for a very long-time, at first almost imperfectly with the Enlightenment, lurching forward with the French Revolution and World War, with perhaps a decisive final turn with the Sexual Revolution. The Christian age – with its dominant worldview - is now fully eclipsed by what, at least provisionally, is often called post-modernism.

*B. Overview of Salvation History*

Salvation History is the history of how God saves us, beginning with the Creation of the World, centered on the Atonement and Outpouring of the HS, and ends with J’s return and the Final Judgment. The Pentateuch and the Historical Books of Scripture provided 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jews the basic historical framework while the Psalms, the Wisdom literature, and especially the later prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekial, identify elements of God’s Salvation fulfilled by Jesus. The Jesus and the NT rely on this framework and clarify the future elements.

Salvation History is sometimes divided into “ages” such as:

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
|                           | <u>Key Events</u>   |
| 1) Creation to Patriarchs | Creation, Fall, Call & Covenant with Abraham                  |
| 2) Moses to Judges        | Exodus, Giving of Law, Conquest                               |
| 3) Kingship               | David’s Reign; Apostasy, Building and Destruction of Temple   |
| 4) Exile & Return         |   |
| 5) Age of the Church      | Incarnation, Public Ministry, Atonement, Outpouring of HS     |
| 6) New Heavens            | Return of the Lord, Judgment, Eternal Life in “New Jerusalem” |

## C. Judgment (#30) and Bearing Fruit (#9) in Matthew

- 1) Judgment Teachings – Various (#21)
  - a) JnB: who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 3.7
  - b) JnB: fruitless trees to be cut down and thrown into the fire 3.10
  - c) JnB: Jesus will separate chaff from wheat and burn 3.12
  - d) Righteousness greater than Scribes & Pharisees to enter kingdom 5.20
  - e) Beyond 10Cs, judgment for insults, lusting, adultery, unforgiveness, divorce, oaths<sup>2</sup> (#4) 5.21-37
  - α, f) False prophets not bearing good fruit cut down and thrown into fire 7.15-20
  - g) Judgment on those who fail to do F's will and to obey J 7.21,24-27
  - h) Judgment on disobedient and evil-doing prophets and exorcists 7.22-23
  - i) Judgment on unbelief of Jewish folk<sup>9</sup> 8.12
  - j) Judgment on towns that reject Ds proclamation 10.14-15
  - k) Judgment on those who deny Jesus publicly 10.32-33
  - l) Judgment on Unrepentant Cities 11.20-24
  - m) Blasphemes a/g HS (cf. 10.19-23, Spirit will speak thru you) 12.31-32
  - n) Tree known by its fruit; Words of your mouth 12.34-37
  - o) Judgment on this generation for unbelief despite 'Sign of Jonah' 12.38-42
  - p) Weeds among the Wheat, incinerated w weeping & gnashing of teeth<sup>1</sup> 13.24-30,36-43
  - q) Bad fish from good, incinerated w weeping & gnashing of teeth<sup>1</sup> 13.47-50
  - r) Judgment coming on J's return 16.27-28
  - s) Scandal-makers subject to hell-fire<sup>10</sup> 18.5-9
  - t) Uninvited wedding guest cast into outer darkness<sup>6</sup> 22.1-14
  - u) Judgment of Gehenna on Scribes & Pharisees for killing prophets<sup>2</sup> 23.29-39
- 2) Judgment Teachings: Eschatol Discourse (#6) **24 - 25**
  - a) Signs of Coming Judgment, Jesus' return 24.1-35
  - b) Necessity of Watchfulness 36-44
  - c) Wicked servant abuses fellow servants and parties<sup>6</sup> 45-51
  - d) Foolish maidens who fail to wait for bridegroom 25.1-13
  - α, e) Wicked and slothful servant entrusted with one talent<sup>6</sup> 14-30
  - α, f) Nations to be judged on care for sick, imprisoned, hungry and homeless 31-46  
 → bar of judgment radically higher than that of righteousness in Mal 3.1-5
- 3) Bear Fruit (#9)
  - JnB: Bear fruit that befits repentance ... every tree not bearing good fruit is cut own and thrown into the fire 3.8-10
  - You are the salt of the earth ... if it loses its saltiness is to be thrown out 5.13
  - You are the light of the world ... let men see your good works 5.14-16
  - α, - False prophets not bearing good fruit cut down and thrown into fire 7.15-20
  - Make the tree and its fruit good (???) ... a tree is known by its fruit 12.33
  - One who hears and understands bears great fruit 13.3-9, 18-23

<sup>9</sup> Judgment is 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' in the 'outer darkness' (8.12, 22.13, 25.30) or the 'furnace of fire' (13.42, 13.50) and 'where there' (24.51)

<sup>10</sup> Judgment is to 'go' or be 'thrown into' hell (Gehenna, place of burning of refuge)

- Kingdom of God ... given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom 21.43
- 2- Pb of the Talents 25.14-30
- 3- Judgment of the Nations 25.31-46

#### D. Interpretive Notes and Comments in Mt

##### 1) Mt's theological comments:

- a) Genealogy demonstrates that Jesus is Son of Abr, David, & Jos, the Messiah 1.1-17
- b) J's birth fulfills Is 7.14 1.22
- c) Joseph's move of family to Egypt fulfilled Hos 11.1 & Ex 4.22-23 2.15
- d) Herod's murder of children in Bethlehem fulfilled Jer 31.15 3.17-18
- e) J's move from Nazareth to make his home in Capernaum fulfills Is 9.1-2 4.14-16
- f) Note that J's ministry began after he moved to Capernaum 4.17
- g) Note that 'the crowds were astonished' by J's teaching and authority 7.28-29
- h) J's exorcisms and healing fulfill Is 53.4 8.17
- i) J's silencing of those healed fulfills Is 42.1-4 12.17-21
- j) J teaching the crowds thru parables fulfills Ps 78.2 13.34-5
- k) J did few mighty works in Capernaum (his own country) because of unbelief 13.58
- l) Crowd wondered and glorified God at mute speaking, maimed whole, lame walking, blind seeing 15.31
- m) J entering Jerusalem on a donkey fulfills Zech 9.9 21.4-5
- n) Judas' betrayal, return of silver, & suicide fulfill Jer 32.6-15; 18.2-3 (& Zec 11.12-13) 27.8-10

##### 2) Jesus' explicit OT prophecies and references

- a) Extends and radicalizes killing prohibition of Ex 20.13 5.21-26
- b) Extends and radicalizes adultery prohibition of Ex 20.14 5.27-32
- c) Replaces truth-telling pledges of Num 30.2ff with simply 'yes' and 'no' 5.33-37
- d) Replaces retributive justice of Lev24.20/Ex21.24/Dt19.21 w 'law of mercy' 5.38-42
- e) Extends love of neighbor (and alien) in Lev 19.18,34 to love of enemy<sup>11</sup> 5.43-47
- f) Purpose of 5.17-47 is to make us 'perfect' or holy like God in Lev11.45/19.2/20.26 5.48
- g) Calling sinners is the mercy God desires in Hos 6.6 9.13
- h) Laments crowds as un-shepherded sheep echoing prophets, e.g., Zech 10.29.36
- i) Healings fulfill Is 35.5-6 in answer to JnB's question 11.4
- j) Preaching is glad tidings of Is 40.3ff and Is 61.1-4ff 11.4
- k) JnB is that voice of Is 40.3 and Mal 3.1 crying out to prepare way of Lord 11.10
- l) JnB is Elijah per Mal 4.5 11.14
- m) Picking grains to eat on Sabbath like David feeding his men in I Sam 21.1-6 12.3-4
- n) " " like priests making (and eating?) sabbath offering Num 28.1-10 12.5
- o) Hos 6.6 rebukes Ph not supporting J's ministry of mercy, forcing them to fend 12.7
- p) Only "sign" for scribes and pharisees & evil generation is Jonah (Jon 1.17,3.5) 12.40-41
- q) Queen of Sheba to judge them for recognizing mere Solomon (I Kngs10.1-10) 12.42
- r) Lack of crowds understanding fulfills Is 6.9-10 13.14-5
- s) Law of Corban violates 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment of Ex 20.12 and 21.17 15.4
- t) hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees prophesied by Is 29.13 15.8-9
- u) J's death and resurrection is the sign of Jonah 16.4
- v) J will come like the Son of Man in glory of Daniel 7.13-14 16.27-28
- w) JnB was the prophesied Elijah of Malachi 4.5 17.10-13

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Prov 25.21-2 and Rom 12:14,17,19-21

x) Justification for cleansing of Temple in Is 56.7 and Jer 7.9	21.13	
y) children's hosannas fulfill Ps 8.2		21.16
z) rejection by religious leaders prophesied in Ps 118.22-23	21.42	
aa) support for resurrection from the dead in Ex 3.6		22.32
bb) great command from Dt 6.5	22.37	
cc) 2 <sup>nd</sup> great command from Lev 19.18	22.39	
dd) That Christ is greater than David in Ps 110.1	22.44	
ee) Desolating sacrifice in Daniel 9.27, 11.31, 12.11 sign of J's return	24.15	
ff) Tribulation of Daniel 12.1 and Joel 2.2 sign of J's return	24.21	
gg) Judgment b/t sheep and goats on J's return will fulfill Ez 34.17 prophecy	25.32ff	
hh) Judas betrayal fulfills prophecy of Ps 41.9	26.24	
ii) Arrest took place <b>'that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled'</b> <sup>12</sup>		26.54,56
jj) J is will return as that Son of Man of Dan 7.13 (cf 110.1)	26.64	
kk) J prays Ps 22 in the anguish of his crucifixion		27.46
 3) Other OT references		
a) This is my son, with whom I am well pleased', quoting from Is 42.1-4		
(1) Theophany when J baptized by JnB.		3.17
(2) Theological comment by Mt,		12.17-20
(3) Theophany during transfiguration,		17.5
b) Beatitudes draw on Psalms & Prophets to portray inheritors of Kng of Hvn		5.3-11
c) Like Moses (Ex 34.1-28, esp. 28), a forty-day fast marks giving of the 'law'		4.2
d) Faith of centurion echos Is 49.1-12 prophesied gentiles coming from afar	8.12	
e) Keys given to Peter like that given to the steward Eliakim in Is 22.22		16.19
f) Crowds shout out messianic greeting of Ps 118.25-6	21.9	
g) Casting of lots for Jesus clothes of Ps 22.7-8 109.25	27.39	
h) Succor of vinegar to Jesus of Ps 69.21		27.48
 4) Other Teachings		
- Open to gentiles	8.11, 13.47, 20.1ff	
- Least in kingdom greater than JnB	11.11-12	
- First shall be last and the last first	19.30, 20.16	
- Repentant tax colls and prosts ahead of ChPs & Elders	21.28-32	
- Entry a grace which God may reward even to those who have labored very little	20.1-16	
- Some will forego marriage to serve kingdom	19.12	
- Hypocritical 'extra' rules/interpretations of Scr & Phar lock people out of kingdom because too crazy/onerous	23.13-28	
 5) Basic Outline of Mt's Kerygma		
a) Baptism of John		
b) Anointing of J with HS and Power		
c) Mighty works of grace and authority		
d) Ministry in both Galilee and Jerusalem		
e) Betrayal, arrest and trials before the high priest and Pilate		
f) Crucifixion, burial and resurrection		

<sup>12</sup> Luke and John omit this statement, while Mark compactly records only 'Let the Scriptures be fulfilled' (14.9).

g) Ascension, exultation, and coming to raise the dead and judge the world

## E. Key Figures Developed by Matthew

### 1) Joseph

### 2) John the Baptist

- a) Summary of Ministry, Bpt of J 3.1-17
  - i. Preaching and ministry 1-10
  - ii. Prophecy about Jesus 11-12
  - iii. Baptism of J and Epiphany 13-17
- b) Arrest (prompts J to move from Judea to Galilee) 4.12
- c) 1<sup>st</sup> Question to J: fasting 9.14-17
- d) 2<sup>nd</sup> Question to J: are you Messiah 11.2-6
- e) Jesus on JnB 11.7-19
  - i. The prophet in Malachi 3.1 7-10
  - ii. Greatest of prophets, but least in kingdom! 11
  - iii. From days of JnB until now Kgd of Hvn *has been coming violently ...* 12
  - iv. 'all the prophets and law prophecied until JnB' 13
  - v. JnB is 'the Elijah who has come [again]?' 14-15
  - vi. Proverb comparing J's merriment w/ JnB's penance 16-19
- f) Execution 14.1-14
  - i. Herod: id J as risen JnB 14.1-2
  - ii. Herod: account of his execution of JnB 3-11
  - iii. Burial 12
  - iv. Jesus: makes a retreat 13
- g) J: JnB is Elijah 17.10-13
- h) Jesus uses JnB's (3.7) 'you brood of vipers' (12.34, 23.33)

### 3) Devil

- a) Temptation of Jesus 4.1-11
- b) Extravagant Oaths come from Evil One 5.37
- c) J casts out demons many times, see esp Gaderene demoniac 8.28-34
- d) J: pray daily for deliverance 6.13
- e) Phs: J casts out demons by the prince of demons 9.34
- f) J: if they call me Be-el'zebul, same for my Ds 10.24-25
- g) Power for Exorcisms from Be-el'zebul 12.24-32
  - i. Pharisees make assertion 24
  - ii. J: illogical! 25-27,29
  - iii. J: exorcism by Spirit of God 28
  - iv. J: if not 'with Jesus', you are against him 30
  - v. J: blaspheming HS is unforgiveable 31-32

- h) This generation like an exorcised man, cleaned & empty (???)  
who is repossessed by eight spirits 12.43-45
- i) Evil One steals the word preached 'along the path' to the  
uncomprehending man 13.3-9,18-23
- j) Sons of the Devil are the weeds that will be burned up in Judgment 13.24-30,36-43
- k) Rebuke of Peter as a 'Satan' for speaking against the crucifixion 16.22-23

## F. General comments

### 1) on Literary Form

- a) Q passages can be divided into four sections: J & JnB; J & Ds; J & Opponents; J & Eschat

### 2) Puzzlers

- a) Failing to understand the 'word of the kingdom' 13.19
- b) Many are called, few are chosen" 22.1-14
- c) 'oath taking' 23.16-22
- d) Who are the maidens in an historic context? 25.1-14
- e) 'fruit' 13.23

## G. Certain NT Groups (Felix Just, SJ, [www.Catholic-Resources.org](http://www.Catholic-Resources.org))

**Scribes** - men specially trained in writing, and thus influential as interpreters and teachers of the Law, and agents of the rulers.

- "Scribes" did not form their own party, but could belong to other groups (e.g. "the scribes of the Pharisees" in Mk 2:16).
- Most duties involved writing: producing legal documents, recording deeds, copying scriptures, teaching people, etc.
- Since they specialized in the interpreting Jewish Law (Torah), sometimes translated and regarded as "lawyers".
- But only Luke uses the technical term for "lawyer" (*nomikos*; 7:30; 10:25; etc.) in some passages where Mark and Matthew have "scribe" (*grammateus*).
- The Gospels usually portray scribes (along with chief priests, elders, and/or Pharisees) as opponents of Jesus who actively sought his death (Mark 11:27).
- The Acts of the Apostles also portrays them as opponents of the early Christians (Acts 4:5; 6:12).
- But there are a few exceptions: some scribes are neutral (Matt 13:52), or even praised by Jesus (Mark 12:28-34), or rise to defend Paul (Acts 23:9).

**Pharisees** - a group of influential Jews active in Palestine from 2nd century BCE through 1st century CE; they advocated and adhered to strict observance of the Sabbath rest, purity rituals, tithing, and food restrictions based on the Hebrew Scriptures and on later traditions.

- "Pharisees" probably means "separated ones" in Hebrew, per their strict observance of laws and traditions (Lk 18:10-12).
- Long-time political and religious rivals of the Sadducees, vying for influence among the rulers and the people.
- Mostly laymen, but possibly also some priests (from the tribe of Levi) or even members of the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:34).
- Followed not only the laws of the Hebrew Bible, but also the "traditions of the elders" (Mark 7:1-13; Matt 15:1-20).
- Leaders were called "rabbis" or "teachers", such as Nicodemus (John 3:1-10; 7:50; 19:39) and Gamaliel (Acts 5:34; 22:3).
- NT Gospels portray them mainly as opponents of Jesus (Mark 8:11; 10:2); Some of Jesus' harshest polemics are directed against the "hypocrisy" and "blindness" of the Pharisees (Matt 23; John 9).
- In contrast to Sadducees (Mark 12:18-27), Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:1-8).
- Paul himself was a Pharisee (Phil 3:5; Acts 23:6; 26:5), as were some other early Christians (Acts 15:5).

**Sadducees** - another prominent group of Jews in Palestine from 2nd century BCE through 1st century CE; they were probably smaller "elite" group, but even more influential than the Pharisees; they followed the laws of the Hebrew Bible (the Torah), but rejected newer traditions.

- "Sadducees" comes from the Hebrew *tsaddiqim* ("righteous ones"), which may refer to the way they wished to live/
- The name may also derive from Zadok, the high priest under King David (1 Kings 1:26), as many Sadducees were priests.



- Long-time political and religious rivals of the Pharisees, although their influence was more with the wealthy ruling elites.
- Probably also rivals of the Herodians, since they had supported the Hasmonean Jewish rulers against King Herod.
- Closely associated with the Temple and with the ruling council ("Sanhedrin") of the Jews (Acts 4:1; 5:17; 23:6).
- Did not believe in life after death (Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27) or in angels or spirits (Acts 23:8).
- NT Gospels often portray them (often together with the Pharisees) as opponents of Jesus (Matt 16:1-12; Mark 18:12-27).
- But they also rejected the teachings of the Pharisees, esp. their oral traditions and newer innovations.

**Essenes** - a smaller group or "sect" that lived a communal "monastic" lifestyle at Qumran (near the Dead Sea) from 2nd century BCE through 1st century CE; the "Dead Sea Scrolls" found in this location in 1947 are usually associated with them.

- Originally a group of priests, founded and/or led by a "Teacher of Righteousness" during the early Maccabean/Hasmonean era.
- Regarded the Jerusalem priests as illegitimate, since those were not Zadokites (from the family of the high priest Zadok).
- Rejected the validity of the Temple worship, and thus refused to attend the festivals or support the Jerusalem Temple.
- Expected God to send a great prophet and two different "Messiahs" (anointed leaders), one kingly and one priestly.
- Lived a communitarian life with strict membership requirements, rules, and rituals; they probably also practiced celibacy.
- Mentioned by Josephus, but *not in the NT* (although some scholars think the "Herodians" in the NT refer to Essenes).
- Some scholars think Jn the Bapt (also Jesus?) was closely associated with the Essenes, but a direct connection is unlikely.
- Monastery destroyed by the Roman Army ca. 68 AD, during the Jewish War against Rome, which Essenes probably considered the final battle between the forces of good (the true Israelites) and evil (the Romans and their collaborators).
- Dozens of complete scrolls and thousands of written fragments were discovered from 1947 to mid-1950's in caves near Qumran. The Scrolls contain copies of almost the entire Hebrew Bible, some older non-canonical texts, and dozens of the Essenes own writings.

**Elders** - the "older men" of a community who formed the ruling elite and were often members of official "councils".

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- The Greek word "presbyter" simply refers to older men, but was mainly used for men respected by others as leaders and role models.
- The Gospels usually portray the elders (often with scribes and/or priests) as opponents of Jesus who conspired to have him killed.

The main factions can be defined in part by their **posture towards Rome**:

Zealots: military over-throw, fight Rome to death, Messiah is the military leader

Essenes: absolute withdrawal from society, form separate community, hope for, but not act on, overthrow of Rome

Pharisees: no active opposition to Rome, looked for Messiah, used ritual purity rules to create separation from Roman and Hellenistic influences

Sadducees: accept and prosper as much as possible under Roman rule

## Misc Reflections on Discipleship in the Gospels

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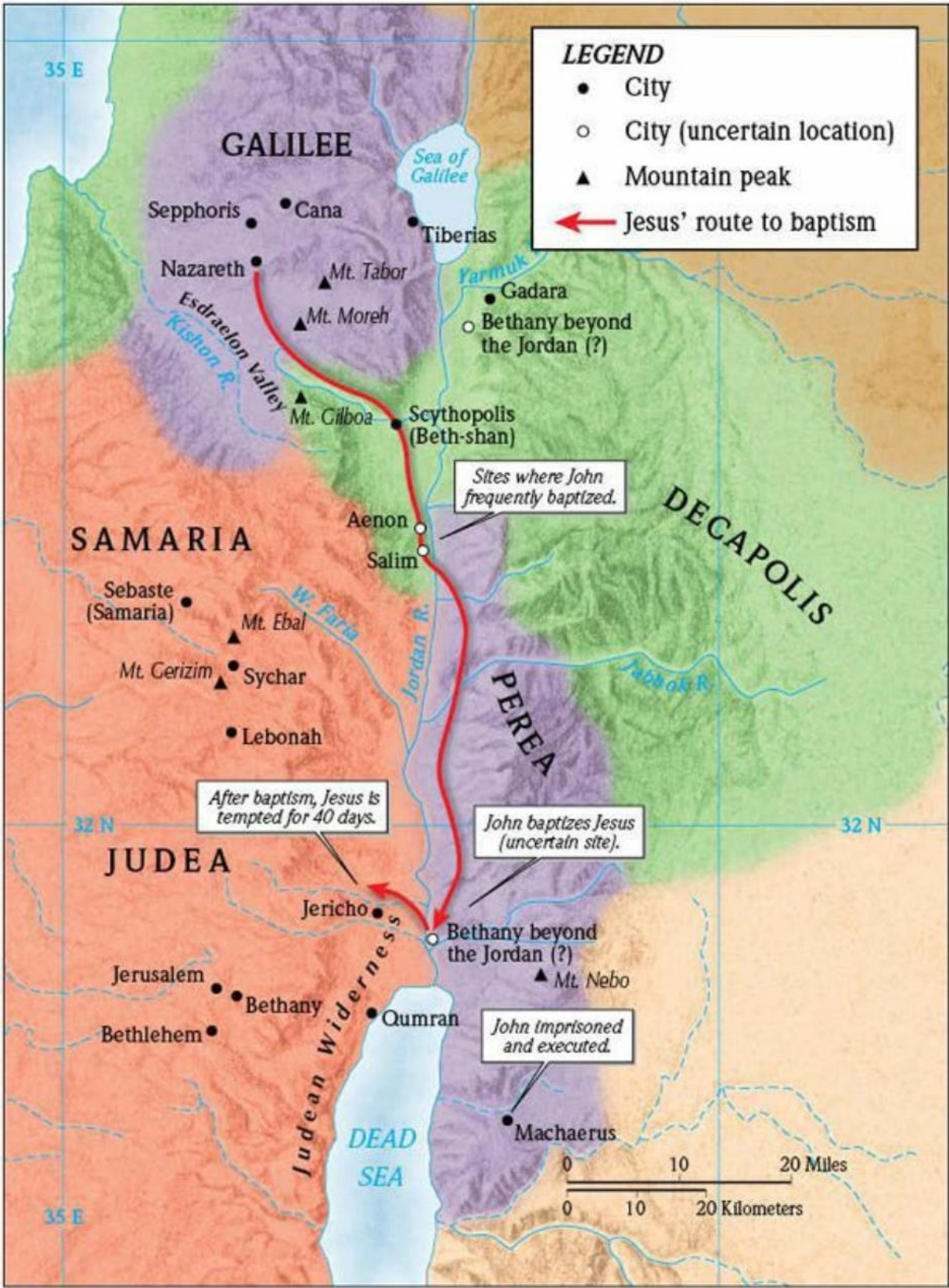
What we have seen so far:

- 1) Conditions to Become a Disciple
- 2) The State of Being a Disciple (Christian Identity)
  - a) Deeply, personally, beloved by God
    - (1) Son and daughter
    - (2) Friend
    - (3) Heir
  - b) Indwelt with the HS (*a la* 'temple')
  - c) Deeply Joyful
  - d) Recognition that our LIFE – our existence, time, relationships, and resources – all belong to God {BEING 'ALL-IN'}
  - e) Common Vocations (of All Disciples)
    - (1) Intercessor
    - (2) Steward
    - (3) Servant
    - (4) Apostle/Witness
      - (a) Evangelize
      - (b) Face persecution
    - (5) Soldier: we are part of a cosmic spiritual battle
  - f) Loving and Fruitful for Kingdom
- 3) Learn "God" thru Jesus
- 4) Become like Jesus
  - a) Holy: esp. Righteous and Loving
- 5) Character Traits of a Disciple (God)
  - a) Meek and poor in spirit → reliance, trust and hope in God {CONSEQ. OF 'ALL-IN'}
  - b) Mournful over sin; Pure of Heart; 'Hungry' for righteousness
  - c) Strive/struggle for righteousness: 'deny yourself, take up your cross'; 'narrow gate'; 'cut off hand/gouge out eye'; fasting; imitate Jesus' 40 days of 'testing' (Lent)
  - d) Merciful; prodigal love towards even enemies
  - e) Filled with the HS
    - (1) God's Moral Power for us
    - (2) Advocate and Spirit of Truth for witnessing and mission (see John 15-17)
  - f) Vigilant for Lord's Return; Diligent about the 'King's business'
  - g) Courageous and persevering
  - h) Have 'Mind of Christ', that is, some understanding of how God views the world
- 6) Practices of a Disciple
  - a) Observing Torah
  - b) Prayer
  - c) Fasting
  - d) Almsgiving

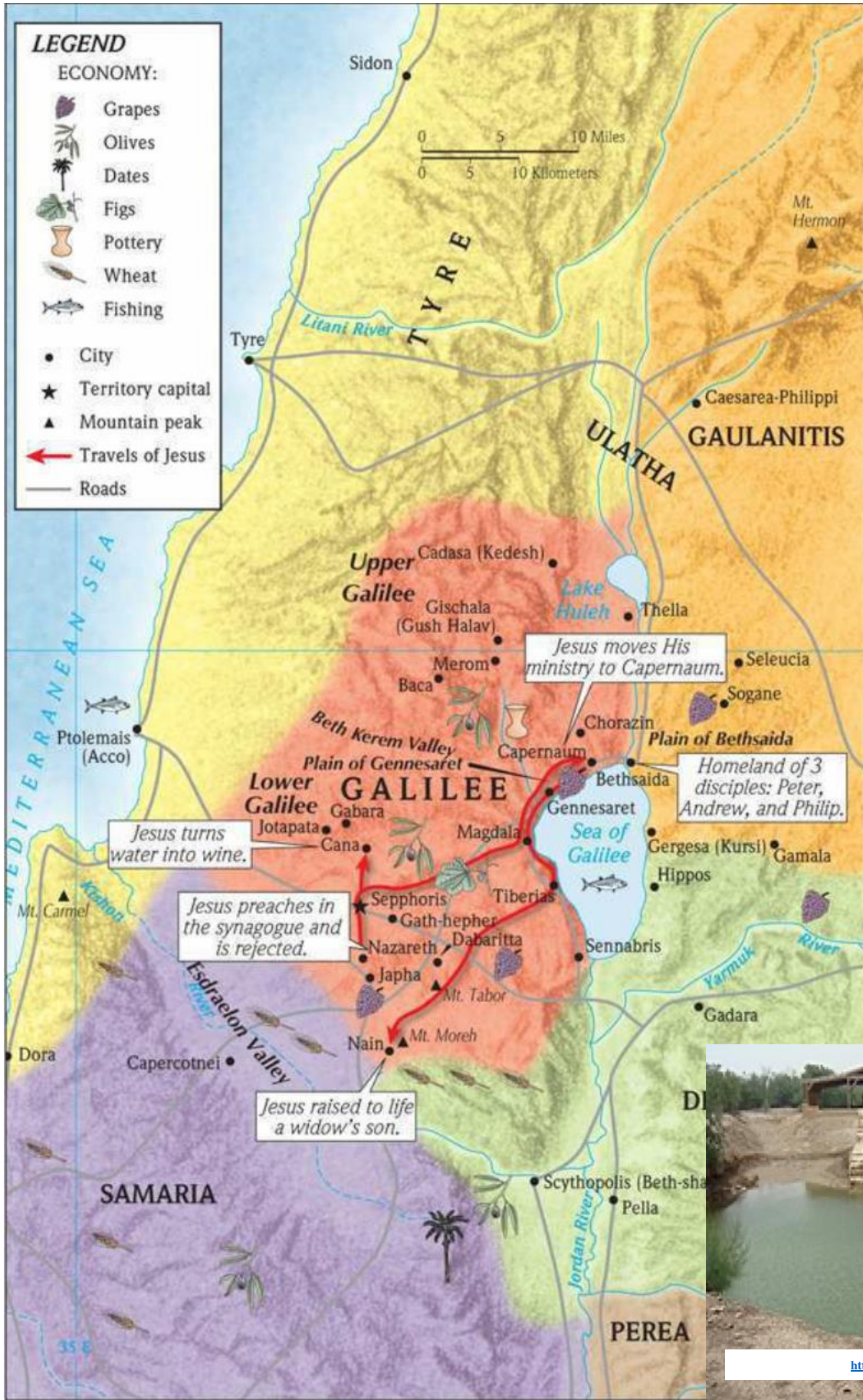
# John the Baptist: Parallel Passages in the Four Gospels

	<i>Matthew 3.1-17</i>	<i>Mark 1.1-11</i>	<i>Luke 3.1-22</i>	<i>John 1.19-34</i>
<b>Summary of JnB's Ministry: Baptism of Repentance</b>	<p>3 In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, 2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."<sup>[a]</sup> 3 This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,</p> <p>"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'"</p> <p>4 Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, 6 and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.</p> <p>7 But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruit worthy of repentance. 9 Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 10 Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."</p>	<p>1 The beginning of the good news<sup>[a]</sup> of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.<sup>[b]</sup></p> <p>2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,<sup>[c]</sup></p> <p>"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,<sup>[d]</sup> who will prepare your way; 3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'"</p> <p>4 John the baptizer appeared<sup>[e]</sup> in the wilderness, <b>proclaiming a baptism of repentance</b> for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.</p>	<p>3 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler<sup>[a]</sup> of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler<sup>[b]</sup> of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler<sup>[c]</sup> of Abilene, 2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 3 He went into all the region around the Jordan, <b>proclaiming a baptism of repentance</b> for the forgiveness of sins, 4 as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; 6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'" 7 John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 9 Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." 10 And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" 11 In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." 12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" 13 He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." 14 Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."</p>	<p>1 <sup>19</sup> This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup> He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah."<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>21</sup> And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No."<sup>22</sup> Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup> He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, <b>'Make straight the way of the Lord.'</b>" as the prophet Isaiah said.</p> <p>... <sup>30</sup> This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' <sup>31</sup> I myself did not know him; but I came <b>baptizing with water</b> for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel."</p>
<b>One coming who will baptize with HS</b>	<p><sup>11</sup> <b>I baptize you with<sup>[a]</sup> water for repentance</b> but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with<sup>[b]</sup> the Holy Spirit and fire.</p>	<p><sup>7</sup> He proclaimed, <b>"The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. 8 I have baptized you with<sup>[c]</sup> water; but he will baptize you with<sup>[d]</sup> the Holy Spirit."</b></p>	<p><sup>15</sup> As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>16</sup> John answered all of them by saying, <b>"I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with<sup>[b]</sup> the Holy Spirit and fire."</b></p> <p><sup>18</sup> So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. <sup>19</sup> But Herod the ruler,<sup>[c]</sup> who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, <sup>20</sup> added to them all by shutting up John in prison.</p>	<p><sup>24</sup> Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup> They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah,<sup>[b]</sup> nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" <sup>26</sup> John answered them, <b>"I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, 27 the one who is coming after me: I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals."</b> <sup>28</sup> This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing. ... <sup>31</sup> I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is <b>the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'</b></p>
<b>More Identities: Judge; and Lamb of God</b>	<p><sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."</p>		<p><sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."</p>	<p><sup>29</sup> The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"</p>
<b>Baptism of Jesus</b>	<p><sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup> John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" <sup>15</sup> But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.</p>	<p><sup>9</sup> In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.</p>	<p><sup>21</sup> Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened,</p>	<p>&lt;implied: vs 1.32&gt;</p>
<b>Descent of the HS; Theophany</b>	<p><sup>16</sup> And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.</p> <p><sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved,<sup>[a]</sup> with whom I am well pleased."</p>	<p><sup>10</sup> And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.</p> <p><sup>11</sup> And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved;<sup>[b]</sup> with you I am well pleased."</p>	<p><sup>22</sup> and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove.</p> <p>And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved;<sup>[c]</sup> with you I am well pleased."<sup>[d]</sup></p>	<p><sup>32</sup> And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. <sup>33</sup> I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup> And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."<sup>[e]</sup></p>

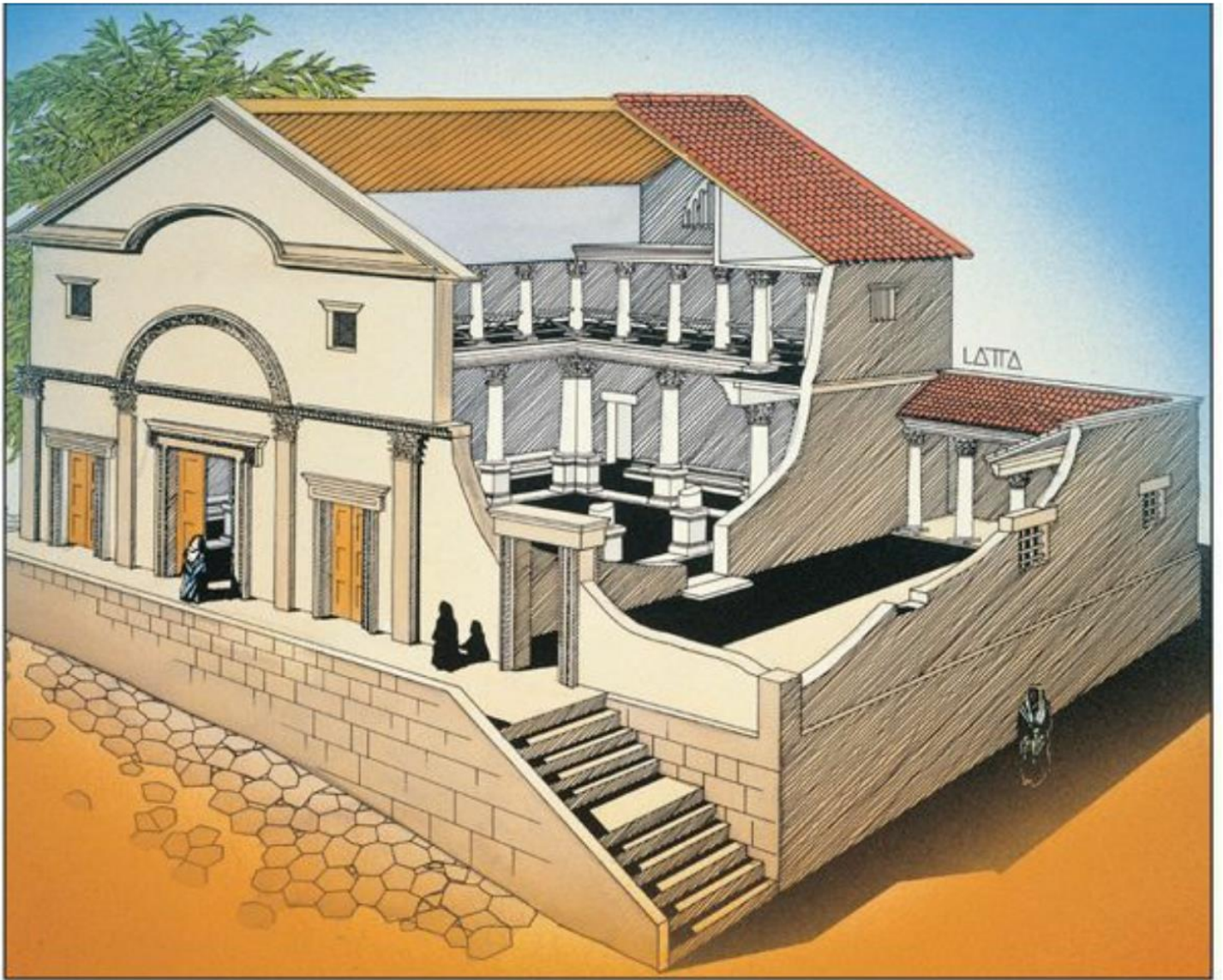
Misc Charts and Maps



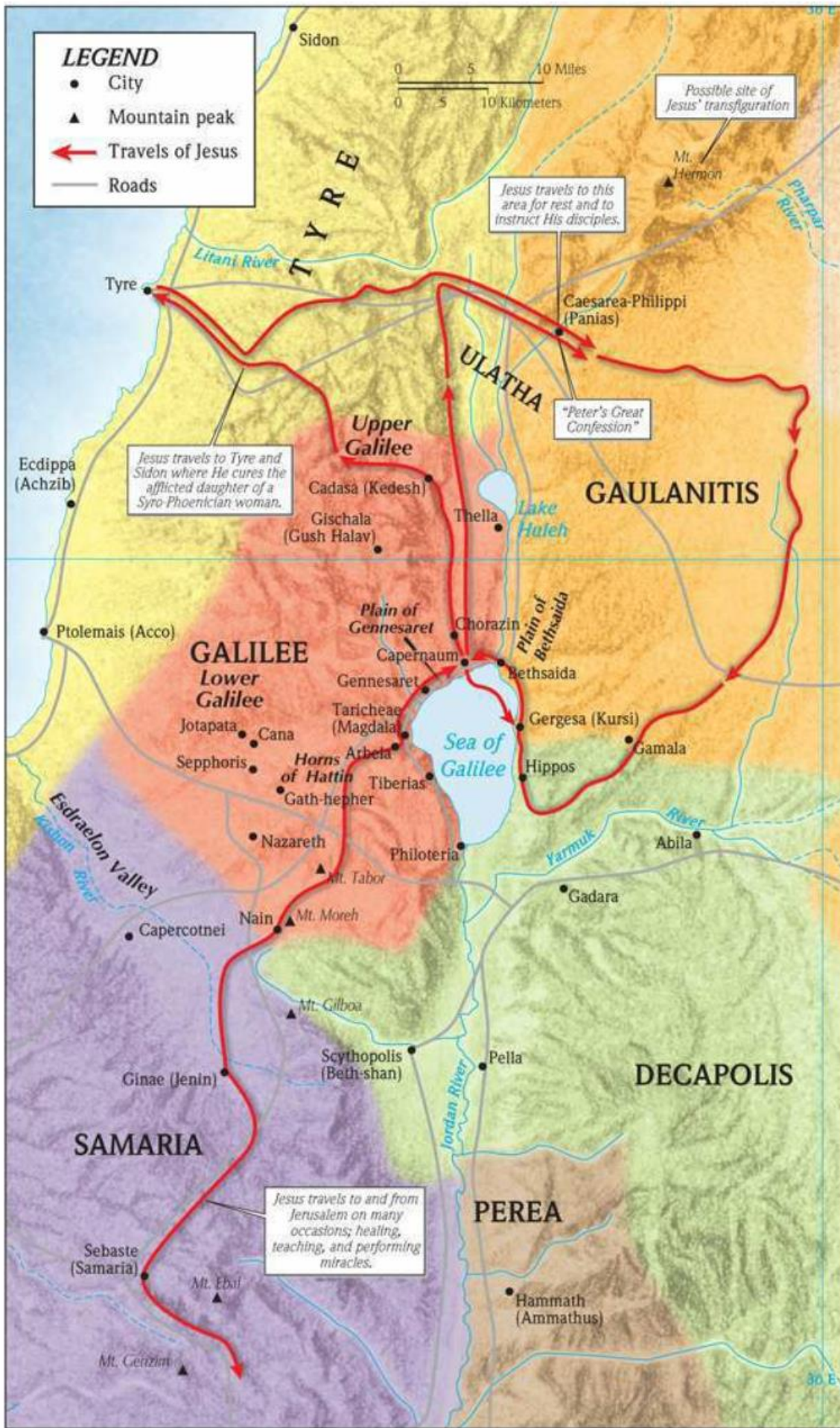




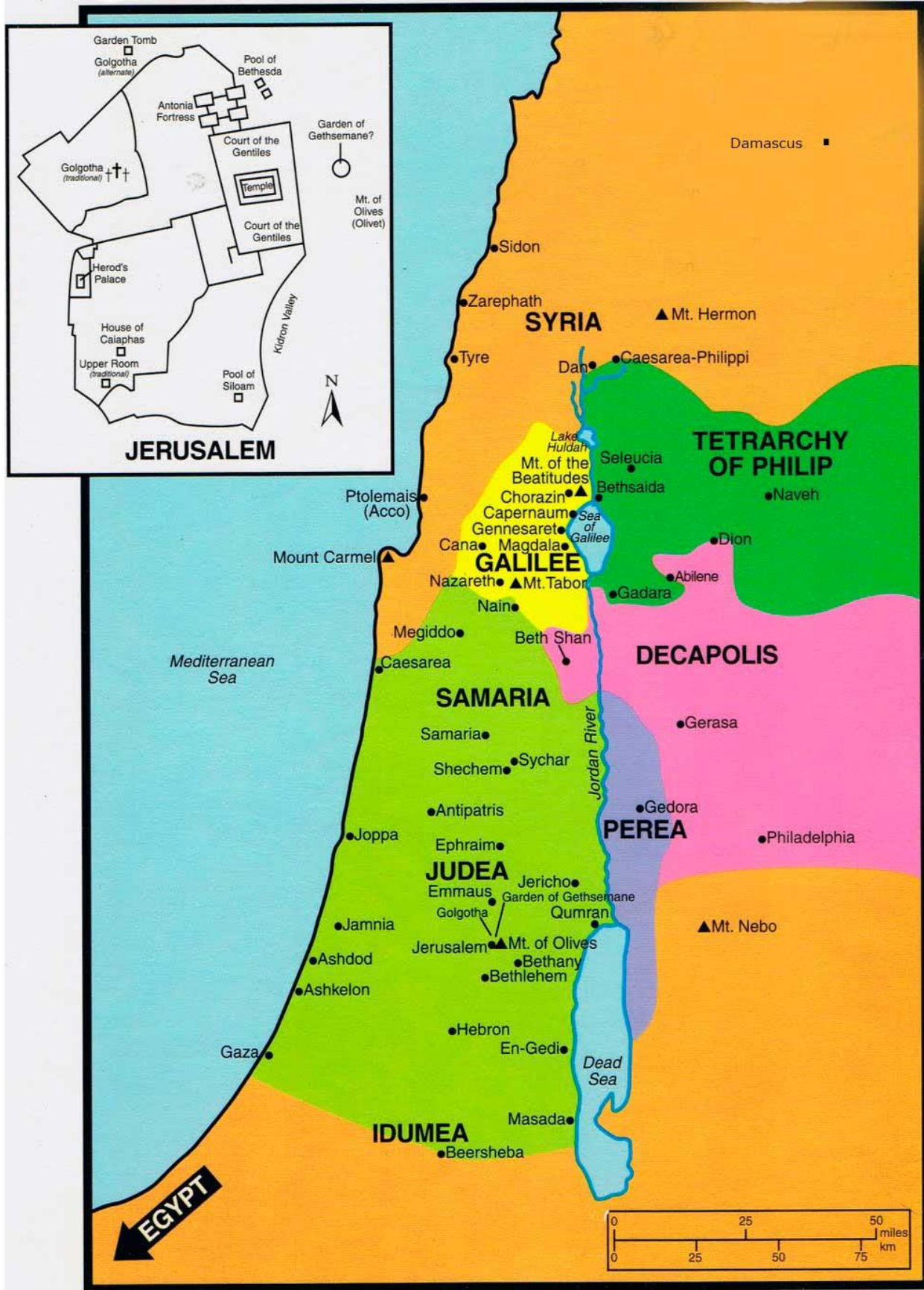














## Allusions to “New Creation” in the Gospel of John include:

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- John beginning, "In the beginning was the word," mirrors the beginning of Genesis <sup>[1]</sup>
- Jesus' final words "it is finished" John 19:30 mirror "completed" in Genesis 2:1 <sup>[2]</sup>
- Emphasis that the resurrection events occurred on "the first day of the week" (20:1,19) <sup>[3]</sup>
- The resurrection of Jesus being the implied eighth sign following seven signs, indicating a week of creation and then a new creation beginning with the resurrection. <sup>[4]</sup>
- The resurrection of Jesus takes place from within a garden tomb (19:41) and, upon encountering the risen Jesus, [Mary Magdalene](#) initially thinks him to be "the gardener" (20:15). This emphasis on the garden and Jesus being the gardener, may be an allusion to [Eden](#), the garden God planted (Gen. 2:8) to which the first humans were sent to be gardeners.
- Jesus breathes on the disciples, saying "receive the Holy Spirit" John 20:22, mirroring God breathing into Adam in Genesis 2:7. <sup>[5]</sup>

### Notes

1. [N. T. Wright, Is there hope?](#)
2. N. T. Wright, *The Scriptures, the Cross and the Power of God: Reflections for Holy Week*
3. [Baylor University, The Eight Day](#)
4. [Rob Bell, Beginning in the Beginning, Poets Prophets & Preachers](#)
5. Graham Staton et al "The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honour of James D.G. Dunn" 2004 p71

## Prologue Passages

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Exodus 25:8      And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. <sup>13</sup>

Exodus 33:7-11    Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp; and he called it the tent of meeting. And every one who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. <sup>8</sup> Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose up, and every man stood at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he had gone into the tent. <sup>9</sup> When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the door of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses. <sup>10</sup> And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the door of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, every man at his tent door. <sup>11</sup> Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tent.

Exodus 34:6      <sup>6</sup>The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,

Joel 3:17

“So you shall know that I am the LORD your God,  
who dwell in Zion, my holy mountain.  
And Jerusalem shall be holy  
and strangers shall never again pass through it.

Zechariah 2:10-13      Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come and I will dwell in the midst of you, says the LORD. <sup>11</sup> And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of you, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. <sup>12</sup> And the LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.”

<sup>13</sup> Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD; for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.

## Jesus as the Lamb of God, One with the HS (1.29-34)

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<sup>13</sup> *The Revised Standard Version*. 1971 (Electronic edition.). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Exodus 12:21-36 (RSV)

<sup>21</sup> Then Moses called all the elders of Israel, and said to them, "Select lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the passover lamb. <sup>22</sup> Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood which is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. <sup>23</sup> For the LORD will pass through to slay the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to slay you. <sup>24</sup> You shall observe this rite as an ordinance for you and for your sons for ever. <sup>25</sup> And when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. <sup>26</sup> And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' <sup>27</sup> you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the LORD's passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he slew the Egyptians but spared our houses.'" And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

Leviticus 16:15-19 (RSV)

<sup>15</sup> "Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood within the veil, and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat; <sup>16</sup> thus he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel, and because of their transgressions, all their sins; and so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which abides with them in the midst of their uncleannesses. <sup>17</sup> There shall be no man in the tent of meeting when he enters to make atonement in the holy place until he comes out and has made atonement for himself and for his house and for all the assembly of Israel. <sup>18</sup> Then he shall go out to the altar which is before the LORD and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar round about. <sup>19</sup> And he shall sprinkle some of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it and hallow it from the uncleannesses of the people of Israel.

Hebrews 9:11-13 (RSV)

<sup>11</sup> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) <sup>12</sup> he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup> For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh,

Revelation 5:6-14 (RSV)

<sup>6</sup> And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth; <sup>7</sup> and he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. <sup>8</sup> And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints; <sup>9</sup> and they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, <sup>10</sup> and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth." <sup>11</sup> Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

## Shepherd Imagery in the Bible

BIBLICAL  
BACKGROUND



The shepherd is a common image for leadership in the ancient world. Shepherd imagery appears throughout Scripture to depict God's people (the sheep) and their leaders (the shepherds). The primary leader and shepherd of God's people is God himself. Psalm 23 famously begins, "The LORD is my shepherd; / there is nothing I lack," and in Isa 40:11, the prophet characterizes God as redeemer in this way: "Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; / in his arms he gathers the lambs, / Carrying them in his bosom, / leading the ewes with care." The leaders whom God appoints over his people are also called shepherds (2 Sam 5:2; Ps 78:70–72; Jer 3:15; 23:4). As shepherds, these human leaders are to care for God's people; the people are God's sheep, not the possession of the appointed leadership. As Ps 95:7 puts it: "He is our God, / we are the people he shepherds, / the sheep in his hands."

When the human leadership fails to care for God's sheep and leads them astray from God, it comes under God's judgment (see Jer 23:1). Ezekiel indicts the authorities in Judah for their self-interest, exploitation of God's people, and failure to care for the sheep (34:2–10). In response to their failures, the Lord declares, "I will . . . put a stop to their shepherding my flock, so that these shepherds will no longer pasture them" (Ezek 34:10). He adds, "I myself will search for my sheep and examine them" (34:11). Other texts speak of God appointing a faithful shepherd, a new king in the lineage of David, to care for his redeemed people (Jer 23:4–5; Ezek 34:23; Mic 5:3).<sup>a</sup> In the New Testament, Jesus uses shepherd imagery in regard to himself and his mission (Matt 9:35–36; 25:32; Luke 15:3–7), and this imagery is also used of the appointed leaders of the Church (John 21:15–19; Acts 20:28–31; Eph 4:11; 1 Pet 5:1–4). The same imagery continues in Church life, where heads of parishes are called "pastors" and bishops carry a crosier, a staff that resembles a shepherd's crook.

p 189, *The Gospel of John*, Martin & Wright, 2015

Observation of 19<sup>th</sup> century group of thousands of intermingled flocks of sheep and goats: when shepherds decided to part, they made a shrill noise and walked away from the center. The confused mass resolved itself into lines following each shepherd.

*Giant Cities of Bashan*, Porter, p. 45

The shepherd is deeply interested in every single one of his flock. Some of them may be given pet names because of incidents connected with them. They are usually counted each evening as they enter the fold, but sometimes the shepherd dispenses with the counting, for he is able to feel the absence of any one of his sheep. With one sheep gone, something is felt to be missing from the appearance of the entire flock. One shepherd in the Lebanon district was asked if he always counted his sheep each evening. He replied in the negative, and then was asked how then he knew if all his sheep were present. This was his reply: "Master, if you were to put a cloth over my eyes, and bring me any sheep and only let me put hands on its face, I could tell in a moment if it was mine or not."

When H. R. P. Dickson visited the desert Arabs, he witnessed an event that revealed the amazing knowledge which some of them have of their sheep. One evening, shortly after dark, an Arab shepherd began to call out one by one the names of his fifty-one mother sheep, and was able to pick out each one's lamb, and restore it to its mother to suckle. To do this in the light would be a feat for many shepherds, but this was done in complete darkness, and in the midst of the noise coming from the ewes crying for their lambs, and the lambs crying for their mothers.

Excerpts from *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands*, Wight, Moody Press, 1983