

January 1

Beginnings

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...
And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. —Genesis 1:1&3

[Luke 1:1-4] Since many have undertaken to set in order a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write to you in order, most excellent Theophilus; that you might know the certainty concerning the things in which you were instructed.

[John 1:1-18] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him. Without him was not anything made that has been made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness hasn't overcome it. There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came as a witness, that he might testify about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but was

sent that he might testify about the light. The true light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world didn't recognize him. He came to his own, and those who were his own didn't receive him. But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. John testified about him. He cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me, for he was before me.'" From his fullness we all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The one and only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him.

1. Everything begins...except God! How do Luke and John's beginnings differ?
2. Why is it important to have eyewitnesses? What was John the Baptizer's role?
3. God, I want to truly believe what the Bible says about the Word; today please...

January 2

Roots

A shoot will come out of the stock of Jesse,
and a branch out of his roots will bear fruit. – Isaiah 11:1

[Matthew 1:1-17] The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham – Isaac – Jacob – Judah and his brothers – Perez and Zerah by Tamar – Hezron – Ram – Amminadab – Nahshon – Salmon – Boaz by Rahab – Obed by Ruth – Jesse – King David – Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah – Rehoboam – Abijah – Asa – Jehoshaphat – Joram – Uzziah – Jotham – Ahaz – Hezekiah – Manasseh – Amon – Josiah – Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the exile to Babylon. After the exile to Babylon, – Shealtiel – Zerubbabel – Abiud – Eliakim – Azor – Sadoc – Achim – Eliud – Eleazar – Matthan – Jacob – Joseph, the husband of Mary, from whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the exile to Babylon fourteen generations;

and from the carrying away to Babylon to the Christ, fourteen generations.

[Luke 3:33-38] Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years old, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph - Heli - Matthat - Levi - Melchi - Jannai - Joseph - Mattathias - Amos - Nahum - Esli - Naggai - Maath - Mattathias - Semein - Joseph - Judah - Joanan - Rhesa - Zerubbabel - Shealtiel - Neri - Melchi - Addi - Cosam - Elmodam - Er - Jose - Eliezer - Jorim - Matthat - Levi - Simeon - Judah - Joseph - Jonan - Eliakim - Melea - Menan - Mattatha - Nathan - David - Jesse - Obed - Boaz - Salmon - Nahshon - Amminadab - Aram - Hezron - Perez - Judah - Jacob - Isaac - Abraham - Terah - Nahor - Serug - Reu - Peleg - Eber - Shelah - Cainan - Arphaxad - Shem - Noah - Lamech - Methuselah - Enoch - Jared - Mahalaleel - Cainan - Enos - Seth - Adam - God.

1. Why is David before Abraham in the opening? Why list >7 non-direct male ancestors?
2. Why does Matthew only list 41 names? Why the post-Davidic discrepancy with Luke?
3. Jesus, I'm so glad you were born of a human mother in the line of David so that...

January 3
The Fuse is Lit

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of
Yahweh comes." – Malachi 4:5

[Luke 1:5-25, Jerusalem and the Judean hill country] There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the priestly division of Abijah*. He had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. They were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they both were well advanced in years. Now it happened, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. The whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.

An angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Don't be afraid, Zacharias, because your request has been heard, and your wife, Elizabeth, will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. You will have joy and gladness; and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. He will turn many of the children of

Israel to the Lord, their God. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' [Malachi 4:6] and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to prepare a people prepared for the Lord."

Zacharias said to the angel, "How can I be sure of this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."

The angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God. I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. Behold, you will be silent and not able to speak, until the day that these things will happen, because you didn't believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time."

The people were waiting for Zacharias, and they marveled that he delayed in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them, and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple. He continued making signs to them, and remained mute. It happened, when the days of his service were fulfilled, he departed to his house. After these days Elizabeth, his wife, conceived, and she hid herself five months, saying, "Thus has the Lord done to me in the days in which he looked at me, to take away my reproach among men."

*Abijah's division served mid May and mid November

1. It was 400 years since God spoke to Malachi; why the delay? How did Zacharias feel?
2. Which of God's promises do you doubt? Would you doubt if God sent an angel to you?
3. Yahweh, you command history, yet you care enough to take away my reproach by...

January 4

Mary, mother of our Lord

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin will conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel... I went to the prophetess, and she conceived, and bore a son — Isaiah 7:14, 8:1

[Luke 1:26-38, Nazareth] Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. Having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, you highly favored one! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women!"

But when she saw him, she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered what kind of salutation this might be. The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and will call his name 'Jesus.' He will be great, and will be called the Son of the

Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. There will be no end to his Kingdom."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, seeing I am a virgin?"

The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore also the holy one who is born from you will be called the Son of God. Behold, Elizabeth, your relative, also has conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For everything spoken by God is possible."

Mary said, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord. Be it to me according to your word."

The angel departed from her.

1. How is Gabriel's news different this time? How does Mary respond? To what outcome?
2. How do you respond when you find out your plans are disrupted? Why?
3. Lord, Isaiah's wife and Mary conceived, despite Ahaz's refusal and Mary's virginity...

January 5

Revolution!

He pours contempt on princes,
and causes them to wander in a trackless waste.
Yet he lifts the needy out of their affliction,
and increases their families like a flock. – Psalm 107:40-41

[Luke 1:39-56, Judean hill country] Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah, and entered into the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. It happened, when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, that the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She called out with a loud voice, and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! Why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came into my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy! Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord!"

Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord.

My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior,
for he has looked at the humble state of
his handmaid.

*He has put down princes
from their thrones, and
has exalted the lowly*

For behold, from now on, all generations
will call me blessed.

For he who is mighty has
done great things for me.

Holy is his name.

'His mercy is for
generations of generations
on those who fear him.' [Psalm 103:17]

He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered the proud in the
imagination of their hearts.

He has put down princes from their
thrones,

and has exalted the lowly.

'He has filled the hungry with good things.'
[Psalm 107:9] He has sent the rich away
empty.

He has given help to Israel, his servant,
that he might remember mercy,

As he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and his seed forever."

Mary stayed with her about three months,
and then returned to her house.

1. What kind of baby was Mary expecting? How did she know? Is this how you see Jesus?

2. Would you call Mary blessed? How so? Do you praise God's might and mercy?

3. Lord, my soul magnifies you, making you the biggest thing in my world, for you have...

January 6
The Sun is Rising

But to you who fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings. – Malachi 4:2

[Luke 1:1-17, Judean hill country] Now the time that Elizabeth should give birth was fulfilled, and she brought forth a son. Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had magnified his mercy towards her, and they rejoiced with her. It happened on the eighth day that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him Zacharias, after the name of the father. His mother answered, "Not so; but he will be called John."

They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name." They made signs to his father, what he would have him called.

He asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, "His name is John."

They all marveled. His mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue freed, and he spoke, blessing God. Fear came on all who lived around them, and all these sayings were talked about throughout all the hill country of Judea. All who heard them laid them up in their heart, saying, "What then will this child be?" The hand of the Lord was with him. His father, Zacharias, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,

for he has visited and worked redemption for his people;

*Because of the tender mercy
of our God...the dawn from
on high will visit us*

and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David

(as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets who have been from of old),

salvation 'from our enemies', and 'from the hand of all who hate us' [Psalm 103:10];

to show mercy towards our fathers, to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he spoke to Abraham, our father,

to grant to us that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.

And you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High,

for you will go 'before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways' [Malachi 3:1],

to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission of their sins,

because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dawn from on high will visit us,

'to shine on those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death' [Isaiah 9:2];

to guide our feet into the way of peace."

The child was growing, and becoming strong in spirit, and was in the desert until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

1. Describe this circumcision party. What was the climax? What did Zacharias know?
2. From which enemies did Jesus save us? Was this what Zacharias described?
3. Jesus, thank you for remitting—pardoning—my sin so I can know the salvation from...

January 7

A Savior Wrapped in Bands of Cloth

Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust, and will not be afraid; for Yah, Yahweh, is my strength and song; and he has become my salvation. – Isaiah 12:2

[Matthew 1:18-25, Bethlehem] Now the birth of Jesus Christ was like this; for after his mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, before they came together, she was found pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband—being a righteous man and not willing to make her a public example—intended to put her away secretly. But when he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take to yourself Mary, your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She shall bring forth a son. You shall call his name Jesus, for it is he who shall save his people from their sins.”

Now all this has happened, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son.

They shall call his name Immanuel;” [Isaiah 7:14]

which is, being interpreted, “God with us.”

Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took his wife to himself; and didn’t know her sexually until she had brought forth her firstborn son. He named him Jesus.

[Luke 2:1-7] Now it happened in those days, that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to enroll themselves, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; to enroll himself with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him as wife, being pregnant.

It happened, while they were there, that the day had come that she should give birth. She brought forth her firstborn son, and she wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a feeding trough, because there was no room for them in the inn.

1. If you were in Joseph’s shoes, how would you feel when Mary returned from Elizabeth?
2. Why is “God with us” the key miracle from which all others flow?
3. Jesus, thank you for becoming my salvation, being made flesh so that I can be saved...

January 8

The Angels and the Shepherds

When the flame went up toward the sky...the angel of Yahweh ascended in the flame...Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of Yahweh. – Judges 13:20-21

[Luke 2:8-20, near Bethlehem] There were shepherds in the same country staying in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. Behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be to all the people. For there is born to you, this day, in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This is the sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth, lying in a feeding trough." Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God, and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,
on earth peace, good will toward men."

It happened, when the angels went away from them into the sky, that the shepherds said one to another, "Let's go to Bethlehem, now, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." They came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby was lying in the feeding trough. When they saw it, they publicized widely the saying which was spoken to them about this child. All who heard it wondered at the things which were spoken to them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, just as it was told them.

1. Why did God tell shepherds, whose job was considered lowly (night security guards)?
2. How did they respond initially, and after the angels left? Do you respond like this?
3. Christ my Lord, you are good news of great joy to me and all the people because you...

January 9
Simeon and Anna

I will also give you for a light to the nations, that you may be my salvation to the end of the earth. — Isaiah 49:6

[Luke 2:21-38, The Temple in Jerusalem]
When eight days were fulfilled for the circumcision of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

When the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord” [Exodus 13:2]), and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” [Leviticus 5:11]

Behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. He came in the Spirit into the temple. When the parents brought in the child, Jesus, that they might do concerning him according to the custom of the law, then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,
“Now you are releasing your servant,
Master,

***A sword will pierce
through your own soul***

according to your word, in peace;
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared
before the face of all
peoples;
‘a light’ for revelation ‘to the nations’ [Isaiah 49:6],
and the glory of your people Israel.”

Joseph and his mother were marveling at the things which were spoken concerning him, and Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary, his mother, “Behold, this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which is spoken against. Yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

There was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (she was of a great age, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, and she had been a widow for about eighty-four years), who didn’t depart from the temple, worshipping with fastings and petitions night and day. Coming up at that very hour, she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of him to all those who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem.

1. How would it feel to be Simeon, to hold baby Jesus knowing you won’t see his adult life?
2. Imagine being Mary. How would you feel hearing that a sword would pierce your soul?
3. Jesus, I live in a time when so much has been fulfilled, yet so much will still happen...

January 10

Worship the Shepherd King!

He shall stand, and shall shepherd in the strength of Yahweh,
in the majesty of the name of Yahweh his God:
and they will live, for then he will be great to the ends of the earth.. – Micah 5:4

[Matthew 2:1-12, Jerusalem/Bethlehem]
Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of
Judea in the days of King
Herod, behold, wise men
from the east came to
Jerusalem, saying,
“Where is he who is born
King of the Jews? For we saw his star in
the east, and have come to worship him.”
When King Herod heard it, he was troubled,
and all Jerusalem with him. Gathering
together all of the chief priests and scribes
of the people, he asked them where the
Christ would be born. They said to him, “In
Bethlehem of Judea, for this is written
through the prophet,

‘You Bethlehem, land of Judah,
are in no way least among the princes
of Judah:
for out of you shall come forth a governor,
who shall shepherd my people, Israel.’”
[Micah 5:2,4]

*They rejoiced with exceedingly
great joy... and they fell down
and worshiped him*

Then Herod secretly called the wise men,
and learned from them exactly what time
the star appeared. He
sent them to Bethlehem,
and said, “Go and
search diligently for the
young child. When you
have found him, bring me word, so that I
also may come and worship him.”

They, having heard the king, went their
way; and behold, the star, which they saw
in the east, went before them, until it came
and stood over where the young child was.
When they saw the star, they rejoiced with
exceedingly great joy. They came into the
house and saw the young child with Mary,
his mother, and they fell down and
worshiped him. Opening their treasures,
they offered to him gifts: gold, frankincense,
and myrrh. Being warned in a dream that
they shouldn't return to Herod, they went
back to their own country another way.

1. Again, imagine being Mary. How would it feel to have these wise men worship Jesus?
2. Herod wanted to destroy Jesus; the wise men wanted to worship; what will you do today?
3. Jesus, you are king over all true sons of Israel—including me; today, please rule over...

January 11
Jesus' Earthly Father

I taught Ephraim to walk.
I took them by his arms...
I drew them with cords of a man – Hosea 11:3-4

[Matthew 2:13-23, Bethlehem, Egypt, and Nazareth] Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him."

He arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called my son." [Hosea 11:1]

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked by the wise men, was exceedingly angry, and sent out, and killed all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all the surrounding countryside, from two years old and under, according to the exact time which he had learned from the wise men. Then that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled, saying,

"A voice was heard in Ramah,
lamentation, weeping and great mourning,

**He arose and took the
young child and his
mother by night**

Rachel weeping for her children;
she wouldn't be comforted,
because they are no more."

[Jeremiah 31:15]

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, for those who sought the young child's life are dead."

He arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in the place of his father, Herod, he was afraid to go there. Being warned in a dream, he withdrew into the region of Galilee, and came and lived in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."

When they had accomplished all things that were according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. The child was growing, and was becoming strong in spirit, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him [Luke 2:39-40].

1. Imagine being Joseph. Would you wake up from a dream and leave with your family?
2. The final quote is not from the Old Testament. What do you think "Nazarene" means?
3. Lord, the prince of this world wanted to destroy your son; now he's trying to destroy...

January 12
Jesus' True Father

I have become a stranger to my brothers,
an alien to my mother's children.
For the zeal of your house consumes me. — Psalm 69:5-6

[Luke 2:41-52, Jerusalem] His parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast, and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. Joseph and his mother didn't know it, but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey, and they looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances. When they didn't find him, they returned to Jerusalem, looking for him. It happened after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers,

***Your father and I were anxiously
looking for you...Didn't you know
that I must be in my Father's house?***

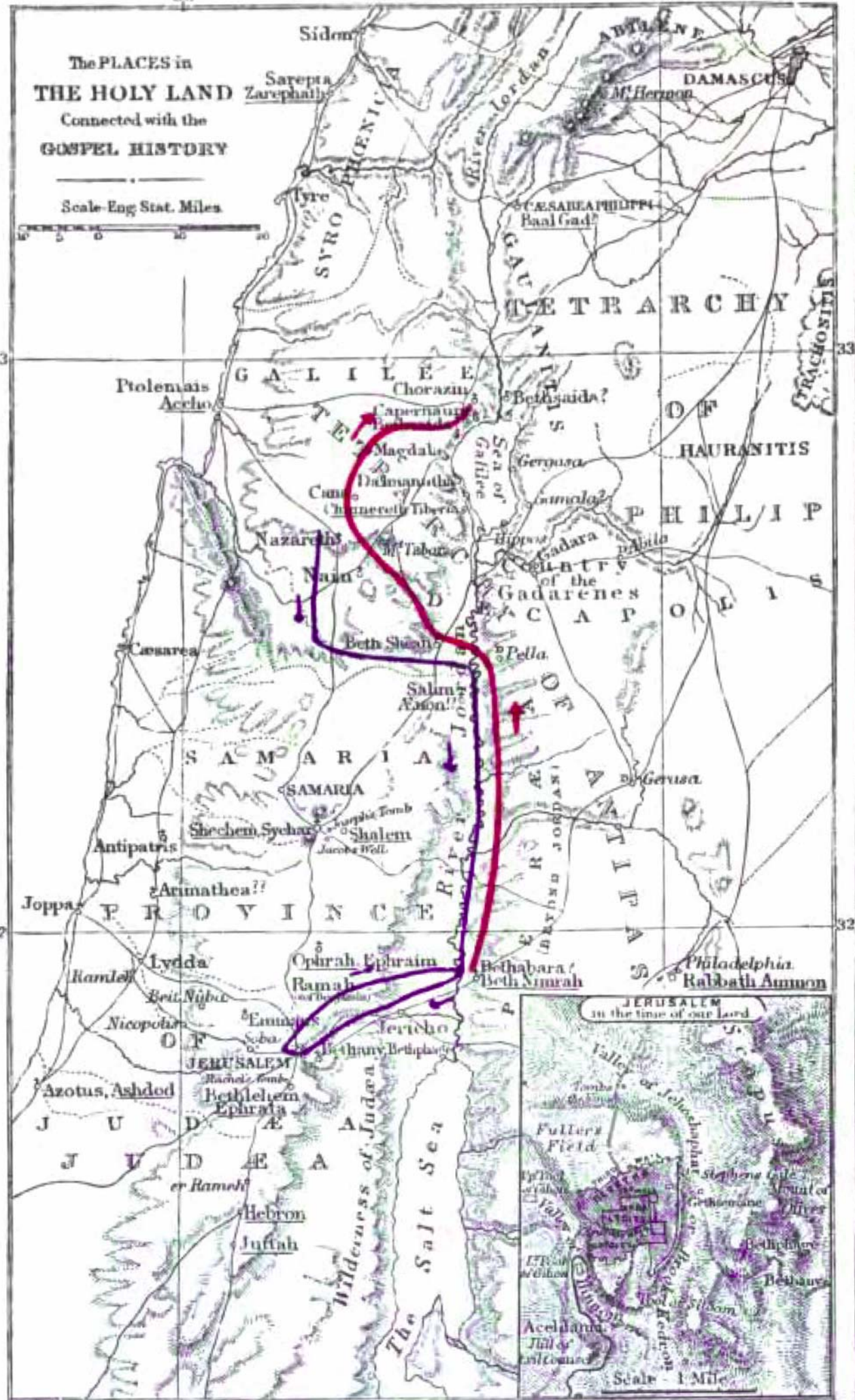
both listening to them, and asking them questions. All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When they saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us this way? Behold, your father and I were anxiously looking for you."

He said to them, "***Why were you looking for me? Didn't you know that I must be in my Father's house?***" They didn't understand the saying which he spoke to them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth. He was subject to them, and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

1. Once more, imagine being Mary. How would you feel when Jesus amazed the teachers?
2. Did Jesus sin by separating from his parents for over three days without telling them?
3. Jesus, at times you do things that make me so anxious, but please help me remember...

The PLACES in
THE HOLY LAND
 Connected with the
GOSPEL HISTORY

Scale—Eng Stat. Miles



Previous page: From Nazareth to Capernaum

This is the first of five maps, which have been arranged to show, by means of colored lines, the journeys of Jesus, and also to call attention to the places and order of time connected with prominent events of his life.

At Nazareth the birth of Jesus was announced. He was born at Bethlehem, carried into Egypt, and afterwards to Nazareth, where the years preceding his public ministry were spent. These first journeys are not indicated by lines.

As shown by the blue line, Jesus journeyed from his home at Nazareth, to the river Jordan, where John was baptizing (Jan. 14*); thence, through the wilderness of Judea (Temptation, Jan. 15), to Jerusalem, and back to Jordan (Jan. 16 and 17), where the first disciples were called.

As shown by the red line, Jesus went from Bethabara back to Galilee, where his first miracle was performed, at Cana (Jan. 18), and then made a brief stay at Capernaum. Thus was completed his first circuit, of which the record is very concise. From this time Capernaum is the starting-point of each circuit, as shown in succeeding plates.

*This date, and all subsequent dates, are the dates in this one-year study where these events can be found. They are not the dates on which these events occurred in the life of Jesus.

January 13

Time to Turn

He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse. – Malachi 4:6

The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophets,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.” [Malachi 3:1]

The voice of one crying in the wilderness,

‘Make ready the way of the Lord! Make his paths straight!’ [Isaiah 40:3]

[Luke 3:1-18, Jordan River] Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the Baptizer, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness of Judea. He came into all the region around the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for remission of sins; saying, “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!” As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord.

Make his paths straight.

Every valley will be filled.

Every mountain and hill will be brought low.

The crooked will become straight, and the rough ways smooth.

All flesh will see God’s salvation.’ [Isaiah 40:3-5]

Now John himself wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. Then people from Jerusalem, all of Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him. They were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. He said therefore to the multitudes of Pharisees and Saducees who went out to be baptized by him, “You offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring

Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance

forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and don’t begin to say among yourselves,

‘We have Abraham for our father;’ for I tell you that

God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones! Even now the axe also lies at the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that doesn’t bring forth good fruit is cut down, and thrown into the fire.”

The multitudes asked him, “What then must we do?”

He answered them, “He who has two coats, let him give to him who has none. He who has food, let him do likewise.”

Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what must we do?”

He said to them, “Collect no more than that which is appointed to you.”

Soldiers also asked him, saying, “What about us? What must we do?”

He said to them, “Extort from no one by violence, neither accuse anyone wrongfully. Be content with your wages.”

As the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether perhaps he was the Christ, John answered them all, “I indeed baptize you with water, but he comes who is mightier than I, the latchet of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down to loosen. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire, whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor, and will gather the wheat into his barn; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Then with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people.

[Matthew 3:1-7, Mark 1:1-2]

1. How did John the Baptizer embody the spirit of Elijah? (see 1 Kings 18:21, etc.)
2. How are you like the Pharisees, the tax collectors, or soldiers? How can you repent?
3. Father, I want to have my heart turned back to you today; so, to bear fruit, I will...

January 15
Jesus and Satan

Hear, Israel: Yahweh is our God; Yahweh is one: and you shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

— Deuteronomy 6:4-5

[Matthew 4:1-11, wilderness of Judea] Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. *He was with the wild animals, and* when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry afterward (he ate nothing in those days). The tempter—the devil—came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

But he answered, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’” [Deuteronomy 8:3]

Then the devil took him into Jerusalem, the holy city. He set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, ‘He will put his angels in charge of you to guard you.’ and,

‘On their hands they will bear you up,

so that you don’t dash your foot against a stone.” [Psalm 91:11-12]

Get behind me, Satan! ... ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve him only.

Jesus said to him, “Again, it is written, ‘You shall not test the Lord, your God.’” [Deuteronomy 6:16]

Again, the devil took him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and their glory. He said to him, “I will give you all of these things, if you will fall down and worship me. I will give you all this authority, and their glory, for it has been delivered to me; and I give it to whomever I want. If you therefore will worship before me, it will all be yours.”

Then Jesus said to him, “Get behind me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve him only.’” [Deuteronomy 6:13]

When the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him until another time, and behold, angels came and served him.

[Luke 4:1-13, Mark 1:13]

1. What kind of temptations did Jesus face? What kinds do you face today?
2. How did Jesus resist the devil? How will you resist him today?
3. Yahweh, you are my one and only God; please help me love you with all my heart...

January 16
(Beginning of Jesus' First Year of Ministry)

John versus the Inquisition

The uneven shall be made level,
and the rough places a plain.
The glory of Yahweh shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together. — Isaiah 40:4-5

[John 1:19-34, near Jordan] This is John's testimony, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

He declared, and didn't deny, but he declared, "I am not the Christ."

They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the prophet?"

He answered, "No."

They said therefore to him, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' [Isaiah 40:3] as Isaiah the prophet said."

The ones who had been sent were from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then do you baptize, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?"

John answered them, "I baptize in water,

but among you stands one whom you don't know. He is the one who comes after me, who is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I'm not worthy to loosen." These things were done in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The next day, he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who is preferred before me, for he was before me.' I didn't know him, but for this reason I came baptizing in water: that he would be revealed to Israel." John testified, saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending like a dove out of heaven, and it remained on him. I didn't recognize him, but he who sent me to baptize in water, he said to me, 'On whomever you will see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' I have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

"Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." ...but among you stands one whom you don't know.

1. Why did John say he wasn't Elijah (see John 7:8, Matthew 7:6, 11:14, 17:12 and 21:25)?

2. What do you do to tell others what you know about Jesus? What will you do today?

3. Lord Jesus, today I will prepare my heart for your glory to be revealed in me by...

January 17
Jesus' Core Team

‘I will bring forth my servant, the Branch...’
‘In that day,’ says Yahweh of Armies, ‘you will invite every man his neighbor
under the vine and under the fig tree.’ – Zechariah 3:8,10

[John 1:35-51, near Jordan] The next day, he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who is preferred before me, for he was before me.’ I didn’t know him, but for this reason I came baptizing in water: that he would be revealed to Israel.” John testified, saying, “I have seen the Spirit descending like a dove out of heaven, and it remained on him. I didn’t recognize him, but he who sent me to baptize in water, he said to me, ‘On whomever you will see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

Again, the next day, John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned, and saw them following, and said to them, “*What are you looking for?*”

They said to him, “Rabbi” (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher), “where are you staying?”

He said to them, “*Come, and see.*”

They came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first

found his own brother, Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah!” (which is, being interpreted, Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, “*You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas*” (which is by interpretation, Peter). On the next day, he was determined to go out into Galilee, and he found Philip. Jesus said to him, “*Follow me.*” Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, “We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote: Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

Nathanael said to him, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”

Philip said to him, “Come and see.”

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said about him, “*Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!*”

Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?”

Jesus answered him, “*Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.*”

Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are King of Israel!”

Jesus answered him, “*Because I told you, ‘I saw you underneath the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these!*” He said to him, “Most certainly, I tell you, hereafter you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

1. Jesus’ team wasn’t high class or educated (Acts 4:13). Why did Jesus choose them?
2. How do you tell others about Jesus? How do you worship him as God’s Son and King?
3. Jesus, today you’re asking me to “come and see”; I will follow you and help others to...

January 19
Fierce Jesus

Let the fierceness of your anger overtake them...
For they persecute him whom you have wounded. – Psalm 69:24,26

[John 2:13-25, Jerusalem] The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting. He made a whip of cords, and threw all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables. To those who sold the doves, he said, "Take these things out of here! Don't make my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will eat me up." [Psalm 69:9]

The Jews therefore answered him, "What sign do you show us, seeing that you do these things?"

Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

**Many believed in his name,
observing his signs which he did. But
Jesus didn't trust himself to them.**

The Jews therefore said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple! Will you raise it up in three days?"

But he spoke of the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he said this, and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in his name, observing his signs which he did. But Jesus didn't trust himself to them, because he knew everyone, and because he didn't need for anyone to testify concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man.

1. What kind of Jesus is found in this account? How do you imagine him when you pray?

2. Why didn't Jesus explicitly tell the disciples about his death until later in his ministry?

3. Jesus, you were fierce on earth and you're still fierce in heaven, today I trust you to...

Previous page: From Capernaum to Jerusalem and back.

As shown by the blue line, Jesus went from Capernaum up to Jerusalem to the first Passover of his ministry (see Jan. 19). Here he met Nicodemus (Jan. 20); then he went into the country of Judea, near to the place of John's baptizing (Jan 21), and there baptized.

As shown by the red line, Jesus returned into Galilee by the way of Jerusalem and Samaria, and near Sychar (Jan. 22) talked with the women of Samaria; continuing his journey, he healed a nobleman's son at Cana (Jan. 24); was rejected at Nazareth, his old home (Jan. 25), and making a circuit through the cities of Galilee, reached Capernaum again, where he wrought many miracles (Jan. 26-28), In the vicinity of this city the Sermon on the Mount was preached (Jan 29), and a leper cleansed; also the daughter of Jairus was raised from the dead (Feb. 3), and two blind men restored to sight (Feb. 4), in Capernaum.

The next journey, which was to the second Passover of the public ministry at Jerusalem, and return to Capernaum, is not delineated on the map, as it is similar to that marked on this plate (Feb. 6-8).

January 20
Midnight Visitor

Yahweh said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard: and it shall happen, that everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." – Numbers 21:8

[John 3:1-21, Jerusalem] Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The same came to him by night, and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him."

Jesus answered him, "Most certainly, I tell you, unless one is born anew, he can't see the Kingdom of God."

Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

Jesus answered, "Most certainly I tell you, unless one is born of water and spirit, he can't enter into the Kingdom of God! That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Don't marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born anew.' The wind blows where it wants to, and you hear its sound, but don't know where it comes from and where it is going. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Nicodemus answered him, "How can these things be?"

Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and don't understand these things?"

*As Moses lifted up the
serpent...so must the Son
of Man be lifted up*

Most certainly I tell you, we speak that which we know, and testify of that which we have seen, and you don't receive our witness. If I told you earthly things and you don't believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into

heaven, but he who descended out of heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through him. He who believes in him is not judged. He who doesn't believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God. This is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and doesn't come to the light, lest his works would be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his works may be revealed, that they have been done in God."

1. Why did Nicodemus come at night? Who was Jesus to him? What was Jesus answering?

2. What confused Nicodemus? What confuses you? Do you continue to ask Jesus?

3. Jesus, you were willing to become sin for me and to be lifted up on the cross so that...

January 21

Behold the Bridegroom!

You shall be called Hephzibah...for Yahweh delights in you...as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you. – Isaiah 62:4-5

[John 2:22-36, Jordan Valley] After these things, Jesus came with his disciples into the land of Judea. He stayed there with them, and baptized. John also was baptizing in Enon near Salim, because there was much water there. They came, and were baptized. For John was not yet thrown into prison. There arose therefore a questioning on the part of John's disciples with some Jews about purification. They came to John, and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, the same baptizes, and everyone is coming to him."

John answered, "A man can receive nothing, unless it has been given him from heaven. You yourselves testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the

bridegroom's voice. This, my joy, therefore is made full. He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all. He who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. What he has seen and heard, of that he testifies; and no one receives his witness. He who has received his witness has set his seal to this, that God is true. For he whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for God gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand. One who believes in the Son has eternal life, but one who disobeys the Son won't see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."

[Luke 3:16,18-20] John preached good news to the people, but Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things which Herod had done, added this also to them all, that he shut up John in prison.

1. The Jews from Jerusalem were constantly arguing with John and Jesus' disciples. Why?
2. Do you believe that what you do is because you've received it from heaven? How so?
3. Jesus, my joy is full when you get the glory; help me today to obey you and give you...

Rejected by the Jews—Redeemed by their Messiah

Thus says Yahweh of Armies, “Behold, the man whose name is the Branch...and he shall build the temple of Yahweh – Zechariah 6:12

[John 4:1-26, Sychar] Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself didn't baptize, but his disciples), he left Judea, and departed into Galilee. He needed to pass through Samaria. So he came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son, Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being tired from his journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

The Samaritan woman therefore said to him, “How is it that you, being a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”

The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. From where then have you that living water? Are you greater than our father, Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, as did his children, and his livestock?”

Jesus answered her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst

again; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I don't get thirsty, neither come all the way here to draw.”

Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”

The woman answered, “I have no husband.”

Jesus said to her, “You said well, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands; and he whom you now have is not your husband. This you have said truly.”

The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.”

Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour comes, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, will you worship the Father. You worship that which you don't know. We worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such to be his worshippers. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah comes,” (he who is called Christ). “When he has come, he will declare to us all things.”

Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who speaks to you.”

1. What does Jesus mean by ‘living water’? Do you have this water? How do you know?
2. Did this outcast woman believe in God's Messiah? Do you tell others about him? How?
3. Jesus, you are the one who declares all things, I want others to know about you, so I'll...



January 23

Confused Disciples—Enlightened Samaritans

Wicked people earn deceitful wages,
 but one who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward...
 There is one who scatters, and increases yet more...
 He who waters shall be watered also himself. – Proverbs 11:17,24-25

[John 4:27-42] At this, his disciples came. They marveled that he was speaking with a woman; yet no one said, “What are you looking for?” or, “Why do you speak with her?” So the woman left her water pot, and went away into the city, and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything that I did. Can this be the Christ?” They went out of the city, and were coming to him.

In the meanwhile, the disciples urged him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”

But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you don’t know about.”

The disciples therefore said one to another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?”

Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work. Don’t you say, ‘There are yet four months

*My food is to do the will
 of him who sent me, and
 to accomplish his work*

until the harvest?’ Behold, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and look at the fields, that they are white for harvest already. He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit to eternal life; that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true, ‘One sows, and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you haven’t labored. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

From that city many of the Samaritans believed in him because of the word of the woman, who testified, “He told me everything that I did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they begged him to stay with them. He stayed there two days. Many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of your speaking; for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

1. The disciples have known Jesus a few months. How does he break their/your paradigms?
2. Have people that you told about Jesus experienced him for themselves? How so?
3. Jesus, today I’ll sow your seed or reap what others have sown so that I can gather...

January 24

Cynical Countrymen—Believing Father

Now therefore fear Yahweh, and serve him in sincerity and in truth...choose this day whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh.

— Joshua 24:14-15

[John 4:43-54, Galilee/Cana] After the two days he went out from there in the power of the Spirit and went into Galilee. For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. So when he came into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast, for they also went to the feast, and news about him spread through all the surrounding area. He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all, *preaching the Good News of the Kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand! Repent, and believe in the Good News."*

Jesus came therefore again to Cana of Galilee, where he made the water into wine. There was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to him, and begged him that he would come down and heal his son,

for he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said to him, "Unless you* see signs and wonders, you* will in no way believe." [*plural]

The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.

The nobleman said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies."

Jesus said to him, "Go your way. Your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. As he was now going down, his servants met him and reported, saying "Your child lives!" So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. They said therefore to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour, the fever left him." So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." He believed, as did his whole house. This is again the second sign that Jesus did, having come out of Judea into Galilee.

[Luke 4:14-15, Mark 1:15]

1. How do we know Jesus got no honor from Galilee? To whom did he say "Unless..."?
2. Do you believe the words you read and hear from Jesus? What have you seen happen?
3. Jesus, my household and I believe your word, please help us today to have faith that...

January 25

Inciting the Hometown Crowd

For as the earth brings forth its bud, and as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord Yahweh will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations. – Isaiah 61:11

[Luke 4:16-30, Nazareth] He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. He entered, as was his custom, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. The book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. He opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to deliver those who are crushed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” [Isaiah 61:1-2]

He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began to tell them, “Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

All testified about him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, and they said, “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?”

He said to them, “Doubtless you will tell me this parable, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done at Capernaum,

do also here in your hometown.” He said, “Most certainly I tell you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But truly I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky

was shut up three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land. Elijah was sent to none of them, except to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. There were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed, except Naaman, the Syrian.”

They were all filled with wrath in the synagogue, as they heard these things. They rose up, threw him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill that their city was built on, that they might throw him off the cliff. But he, passing through their midst, went his way.

[Matthew 4:13-16, Luke 4:31] Leaving Nazareth, he came and lived in Capernaum, a city of Galilee, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness saw a great light, to those who sat in the region and shadow of death, to them light has dawned.” [Isaiah 9:1-2]

1. What was inflammatory about Jesus’ words? Have you made your ‘hometown’ upset?

2. What’s your reaction to Jesus “passing through their midst”? How did he do that?

3. Jesus, you were powerful and inflammatory on earth, help me to proclaim your truth...

January 27

Popularity

Behold, my servant...he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Like as many were astonished at you...so shall he sprinkle many nations; – Isaiah 52:13-15

[Mark 1:21-38, Capernaum] They went into Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and immediately on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught. They were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes, for his word was with authority. Immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit (demon), and he cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Ha! Ah! What do we have to do with you, Jesus, you Nazarene? Have you come to destroy us? I know you who you are: the Holy One of God!"

Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!"

The unclean spirit, when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him, having done him no harm. They were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this word? A new teaching? For with authority and power he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him!" The report of him went out immediately everywhere into all the region of Galilee and its surrounding area.

Immediately, when they had come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a great fever, and immediately they told him about her and begged him for her. He came and took her by the hand, stood over her, rebuked the fever, and raised her up. The

"Everyone is looking for you." He said to them, "Let's go elsewhere"

fever left her, and she served them. At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to him all who were sick, and those who were possessed by demons. All the city was gathered together at the door. He healed many who were sick with various diseases, *He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He took our infirmities, and bore our diseases."* [Isaiah 53:4] Demons also came out from many, crying out, and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" and he didn't allow the demons to speak, because they knew him.

Early in the morning, while it was still dark, he rose up and went out, and departed into a deserted place, and prayed there. Simon and those who were with him followed after him; and they found him, and told him, "Everyone is looking for you." and the multitudes looked for him, and came to him, and held on to him, so that he wouldn't go away from them.

He said to them, *"Let's go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach the good news of the Kingdom of God there also, because I came out for this reason."*

Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people. The report about him went out into all Syria. They brought to him all who were sick, afflicted with various diseases and torments, possessed with demons, epileptics, and paralytics; and he healed them. Great multitudes from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and from beyond the Jordan followed him.

[Luke 4:31-43, Matthew 8:16-17, 4:23-25]

1. Why didn't Jesus allow demons to speak? Why did he depart to a deserted place?
2. Have you been popular? Did it last? How did it affect your prayer life?
3. Jesus, your Father lifted you up, then the crowds turned on you; help me to stay...

The Kingdom Fulfilled

For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
 “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also who is of a contrite and humble
 spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble – Isaiah 57:15

[Matthew 5:1-20, Horns of Hattin(?), ~8 miles from Capernaum] Seeing the multitudes, he went up onto the mountain.

When he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He opened his mouth and taught them, saying,

“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
 for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. [Isaiah 57:15; 66:2

Blessed are those who mourn,
 for they shall be comforted. [Isaiah 61:2; 66:10,13]

Blessed are the gentle,
 for they shall inherit the earth. [Psalm 37:11]

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness,
 for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful,
 for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,
 for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
 for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake,
 for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

“Blessed are you when people reproach you, persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be

exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Don't think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I didn't come to destroy, but to fulfill

“You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its flavor, with what will it be salted? It

is then good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under the feet of men. You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill can't be hidden; neither do you light a lamp, and put it under a measuring basket, but on a stand; and it shines to all who are in the house. Even so, let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

“Don't think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I didn't come to destroy, but to fulfill. For most certainly, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not even one smallest letter or one tiny pen stroke shall in any way pass away from the law, until all things are accomplished. Whoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and teach others to do so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever shall do and teach them shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way you will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. The first three Beatitudes are Isaiah/Psalms paraphrases. How would Jews receive them?

2. How do you live up to these Beatitudes? To being salt and light? What can you change?

3. Jesus, crowds followed you because you taught the truth about life; I will apply these...



Living Perfectly

You shall not endanger the life of your neighbor. I am Yahweh – Leviticus 19:16

[Matthew 5:21-48] “You have heard that it was said to the ancient ones, ‘You shall not murder;’ [Exodus 20:13] and ‘Whoever shall murder shall be in danger of the judgment.’ But I tell you, that everyone who is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whoever shall say to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council; and whoever shall say, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of the fire of Gehenna.

“If therefore you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are with him in the way; lest perhaps the prosecutor deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be cast into prison. Most certainly I tell you, you shall by no means get out of there, until you have paid the last penny.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery;’ [Exodus 20:14] but I tell you that everyone who gazes at a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away from you. For it is more profitable for you that one of your members should perish, than for your whole body to be cast into Gehenna. If your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off, and throw it away from you. For it is more profitable for you that one of your members should perish, than for your whole body to be cast into Gehenna.

“It was also said, ‘Whoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce,’ [Deuteronomy 24:1] but I tell you that whoever puts

away his wife, except for the cause of sexual immorality, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries her when she is put away commits adultery.

Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect

“Again you have heard that it was said to them of old time, ‘You shall not make false vows, but shall perform to the Lord your vows,’ but I tell you, don’t swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shall you swear by your head, for you can’t make one hair white or black. But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No.’ Whatever is more than these is of the evil one.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ [Exodus 21:24] But I tell you, don’t resist him who is evil; but whoever strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. If anyone sues you to take away your coat, let him have your cloak also. Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and don’t turn away him who desires to borrow from you.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor, [Leviticus 19:18] and hate your enemy. [not found in the Bible]’ But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you, that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same? If you only greet your friends, what more do you do than others? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

1. Are “peacemakers” and “the gentle” described here? How? Do you exhibit these traits?
2. How do these standards compare to the 10 commandments? How can you live them out?
3. Jesus, your teachings are perfect for living a whole life; please help me today to...

I, Yahweh, search the mind, I try the heart, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. – Jeremiah 17:10

[Matthew 6:1-18] “Be careful that you don’t do your charitable giving before men, to be seen by them, or else you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Therefore when you do merciful deeds, don’t sound a trumpet before yourself, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may get glory from men. Most certainly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you do merciful deeds, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand does, so that your merciful deeds may be in secret, then your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

“When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Most certainly, I tell you, they have received their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. In praying, don’t use vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be

Your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly

heard for their much speaking. Therefore don’t be like them, for your Father knows what things you need, before you ask him. Pray like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. Let your Kingdom come. Let your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.’

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you don’t forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

“Moreover when you fast, don’t be like the hypocrites, with sad faces. For they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen by men to be fasting. Most certainly I tell you, they have received their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face; so that you are not seen by men to be fasting, but by your Father who is in secret, and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

1. What things do you do differently when others might notice? How can you avoid this?

2. How do you put your spiritual life on display? Will you “enter your inner room” today?

3. Father, I want to do everything only for you and let you tell others or reward me for...

Treasures and Worries

When the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, and...the attendance of his ministers, and their clothing...She said to the king, "...I didn't believe the words until I came...the half was not told me! – 1 Kings 10:4-7

[Matthew 6:19-34] "Don't lay up treasures for yourselves on the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves don't break through and steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You can't serve both God and Mammon. Therefore, I tell you, don't be anxious for your life: what you will eat, or what you will drink; nor yet for your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food, and the body more than clothing? See the birds of the sky, that they don't sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into

barns. Your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you of much more value than they?

Therefore don't be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself

"Which of you, by being anxious, can add one moment to his lifespan? Why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies

of the field, how they grow. They don't toil, neither do they spin, yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today exists, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, won't he much more clothe you, you of little faith?

"Therefore don't be anxious, saying, 'What will we eat?', 'What will we drink?' or, 'With what will we be clothed?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first God's Kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore don't be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Each day's own evil is sufficient.

1. Where are you storing up treasure? Do you see how your heart is there, too?

2. What makes you anxious? Do you believe that God richly provides, like for Solomon?

3. God, I'm sorry for repeatedly breaking Jesus' command "don't be anxious"; today I'll...