

Today is a continuation of the series entitled *True Life Story of Christ*, and this is *Part 3* of that series.

In *Part 2* we covered the story of how the shepherds went to see Christ, and as we're going through this we're pointing out things that are misunderstood by traditional Christianity, that aren't taught in a true fashion whatsoever, having more to do with things that Christ even spoke of, of fables and so forth, that people pass along generation by generation. We understand that in some of these stories, things like Christmas, things of Easter, and some of the things that have happened that's gone on for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years, that doesn't come out of scripture anywhere.

So again, we addressed some thing about the shepherds and putting everything in a truthful light, but it's all about a context as well of the purpose of Christ's first coming, which is about Passover, to fulfill the Passover. That's the reason this series is being given, because it has everything to do with his life leading up to what took place in the last just three weeks of his life. So, incredible story as we go through this.

Also, we brought out how that the shepherds, when they came to him, it wasn't in the wintertime. Because you see these scenes and hear these stories about how they came into Bethlehem and all this was done on December 25, making it very clear that the shepherds weren't out in their fields watching sheep at nighttime around December as something that was definitely taking place at other times of the year, and especially in this case here, probably around September, somewhere in there.

Then we went on to the story about the magi and those individuals who generally represented kings, leaders there in the far east, farther east, anyway, of Jerusalem, and Persia, in some of those regions, and how they came and gave gifts to, as it says, the child. There is a distinction made then in the infant concerning the shepherds that came to see the infant and then the child later on. That's why Herod then wanted a particular age range and killed children from birth up to two years old, because of that difference there of not knowing how old the child was specifically but knowing it was in that area.

Again, we addressed all those things and how that they followed his star, followed an angel which is referred to as a star, not a literal shining star. Some of these crazy things that sometimes are passed down. Kind of like children's stories; they're not true at all.

Anyway, we're continuing on today and coming up to the point in time where Joshua was baptized. This raises some questions as well that have come up, has come up over time and God has blessed us to answer some of those in some of the things we've gone through. To me, it's

exciting to be able to see some of this, to understand why he went through this process, why he did what he experienced here with John the Baptist, so let's pick up that story.

This is the story of John the Baptist. **Matthew 3:1**, it says, **In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea.** This is an amazing thing that took place because God was working with him to be the beginning of a process here of bringing it to people's minds about the coming of the Kingdom of God, something that the Jewish people had long looked to, wanting a government established, wanting the King to come, the anointed King, the Messiah. This was a part of this, the beginning of this, to stir up the minds of people. God was working with people to do just that but through John and through the message of what he was preaching. It's an incredible thing being discussed here.

As he was saying here, it says he was **saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.** Now, they understand what was being said. People in traditional Christianity that read this don't grasp what it's talking about.

First of all, it's important to notice that he said to repent. Well, that's what you do because of sin, which means disobeying God, not living by God's law, yet there is a problem there because traditional Christianity wants to say that the law has been done away with, and so, there is this conflict, how do you address this, how do you deal with this?

So, they use these terms, they speak of repentance at times, they speak of sin at times, some things in that category, but not as much as they should, obviously, and not the kinds of things that God is referring to or that we have to refer to when we're first being called by God to see, to know, and to understand the truth.

Especially here where it says, "For the kingdom of heaven is at hand." What did that mean? They knew exactly what it meant. "The kingdom." What is a kingdom? It's a government. It was about the Messiah. They knew it was about the Messiah. They knew it was about his coming. It was a matter of be right with God, be close to God, because now is the time that the Messiah is going to come and establish his kingdom. That's basically the thought that's in their mind as they're hearing John the Baptist talk about the kingdom of heaven is at hand, which means it's now upon us.

Again, it's to me so frustrating what has happened in traditional Christianity because there is a being that has done this, that has been behind this, to cloud everything, to confuse things, to keep things in the dark. This is one of them.

This kingdom of heaven, some people talk about it's something that's in your heart. You think, it's just crazy some of the ideas that people come up with, and it definitely wasn't about a place in heaven. That's another concept then, that it's in heaven, once you die you go there and then you're in the kingdom of heaven.

That's not the message. That's not the story of the Bible. And how blessed are we that we grasp that, that we know that? It's incredible what we see, what we understand.

It says, **For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah.** So, this is speaking of John the Baptist now, recorded here in Isaiah that's being given, Isaiah 40:3 where it speaks of this. **The voice of one calling in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord.**

So again, this is understood. It's about the coming of Christ. It's about the coming of the Messiah and God's kingdom is at hand. It's now. The time has arrived. This is why so many of them were looking for the coming of the Messiah. They didn't understand though that he wasn't coming as the king; he was coming as the Passover. This is totally lost in traditional Christianity. They can't help it because it hasn't been God's purpose and God's plan but to reveal these things to a few through time with whom He's worked for a purpose. We understand that purpose.

So, **prepare the way of the Lord.** In other words, prepare the way for his coming because now is the time, it's at hand.

So, I think how blessed we are. Well, let me read the rest of this statement. It says **...make his paths straight.** That's the rest of the quotation here, "Make his paths straight." In other words, get your lives right, walk in that way, live that way. Make his paths straight in your life in agreement with him. This is what's being discussed, be right with God, prepare the way for the coming of the Lord, that as a people that we are right.

I think about us and what God has blessed us to do. You think of the name. At one point there because of what God was doing in the world with technology it was the *Radio Church of God*, and then it became the *Worldwide Church of God*, and then as time has gone along and we had an apostasy we finally came to a time where it's the *Church of God - Preparing for the Kingdom of God*. Incredible how blessed we are that we bear that name.

Because this is where we are again. With John the Baptist it was about preparing for his first coming as a Passover, and what we're blessed to be a part of is the preparing of his coming this time as the actual Messiah, the King, as a Lion of God, not as a Passover this time, and just to know those things we are awesomely blessed. We have to think about that, we need to think about that from time to time, and we need to think about that now as we go through this because it's easy to begin taking these things for granted and as stories, and you don't want that to happen in your life.

So again, **The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord,** in other words for his coming, **make his paths straight.** And **John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. And his food was locust and wild honey.** Think, you know, he led an incredible life and meager existence, in that respect, and his total focus here in what was given to him was to preach this, to preach that message.

That was the primary focus. It was about the coming of the Messiah. But again, they didn't grasp what this was about. They didn't grasp that he was going to be the Passover, that he was going to die, that the Kingdom or the government of God was not going to be established at his coming.

Then it goes on in **verse 5—Then Jerusalem, Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to meet him.** Now, scriptures, some translations make it sound like everybody, all of Jerusalem, all of Judea, and all of the region around the Jordan came. That's not what it's talking about. It's kind of a poor translation, in that respect, because not everyone came, but a lot of people did come out to see John, to hear John, and to be baptized of John. But it's just showing that from all these regions, from out of all these regions of Judea and Jerusalem, and the region around about the Jordan, that people were coming out to hear him.

So, they went out to meet him **and were baptized by him in the Jordan**, in the Jordan River there, **acknowledging** (it says "confessing") **their sins.** Well, this is more of a thought of traditional Christianity again, especially the big church, of confessing sins, of going to a priest and confessing sins, that this is something that people should do. Then depending on whatever it is they have done that isn't right – they don't generally refer to it in the same respect, but it's like acknowledging certain bad things that you've don't in your life, but it's not genuine repentance.

It's like you can go in there each week or whenever, ever how often you want to, if you're not feeling good about how you're living your life and going to church on Sunday - and people don't do that very much anymore as a whole anyway...well, especially right now - and to confess their sins. It's a false concept that people are supposed to confess their sins when they come to God.

They are to God. They're to confess their sins to God, they're to acknowledge those things, to own them, because that's a part of owning up to what they have done wrong and admitting those things before God, but not to some person in the sense that you've got to tell them everything that you've done wrong, that's led you to a point of wanting to be baptized.

Now, there might be a time when someone has something because of their past they want to counsel about and that they realize is having an affect on them. That's a different matter. But to think that a person has to go through and talk about those things? No. It's a private thing between you and God. God knows your mind and He knows whether you're being genuine and truly repenting before Him so it's more a matter of acknowledging sins and acknowledging, in this respect, that's why they're wanting baptized. They're acknowledging their sins, that they need to be baptized, that they need to change their ways, that they need to do things in order to bring their lives into greater harmony, unity, oneness with God, if you will, to walk in His ways.

**But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, You den of vipers!** You know, what an incredible thing, a bunch of snakes. Okay. He obviously never read the book *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie that happened, of course, many centuries later. But that's not what that was about. He wasn't trying to and he was just telling it as it was. He was inspired to say those words so that they could be written here as well.

**You den of vipers!** You know, **Who has warned you, as it says here, to flee the wrath to come?** So because of this message coming from John and about the coming of the Messiah and the

Kingdom of God is at hand, and the need for people to begin to live right, to walk in the right way, to make His paths straight in their life, he's asking them, "Who has warned you to flee from the wrath?" Because that has to do with not living by God's way of life. And so, "Why are you doing this? Why have you come out here?"

So, they were going through the motions of something to have a bit of a hold still on people. Because it's like here all these people are going there and if we don't show a little bit, in that respect, of something that, yes, we believe that the Messiah is going to come and that people need to make their ways right with God, so we're in agreement with that kind of a thing, so we're going to participate in this as well.

But that's not really what it was all about for them. It's about people. It's about keeping people. It's about having a control or politics or various things that go on in religion. That's what was happening here. It wasn't genuine at all as far as they were concerned and that becomes obvious in the story of Joshua as they're working with him and dealing with him, how they dealt with him. But anyway.

It says, **Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance.** So, if you're genuine, you need to bring forth fruits. Well, what does that mean for them? Well, again, what this is talking about, you need to live a life that reflects that you're making changes. That would mean a lot for them, in that respect, so it's not something that they enjoyed, wanted to have said or to hear John saying.

But I think about people in the Church when we talk about this. Sometimes we speak of bearing fruit worthy of repentance as people are coming to baptism and so we'll give that kind of council or that kind of instruction. Those things are written, that if someone is seeking baptism, they need to bring forth fruit. They need to produce fruit in their life that's reflective of the fact that they are in a repentant process.

Well, what does that mean for someone coming along and wanting to be baptized? So often as far as the world is concerned when it comes to a church organization people can just show up. It's "come as you are" type of philosophy and teaching, "Just come as you are, it doesn't matter, we accept everyone, our doors are wide open."

Well, God's Church isn't wide open to everyone. It's only open to those whom He calls and He doesn't want in it that which is not seeking to make it's life right with Him, and so very guarded in that respect as to the fellowship of the Body, of the Church.

Paul talks about those kinds of things, of being very guarded and people standing up for what is true and not allowing sin, which goes with this period of time talking about coming out of sin, Passover, the need then to come out of sin, to repent.

Because that's what follows Passover, that's what follows the life of Christ in His first coming, to learn from that, is we're to come out of sin. Just as the children of Israel came out of Egypt, spiritually for mankind that's to come out of sin, to make your life unleavened and to get rid of the leavening. So again here, it's about repentance so things have to change in your life.

Well, people coming along to the Church before they're invited into fellowship, before they're invited to come to a point where they can be baptized then they have to begin obeying the Sabbath day. That should be apparent. One should know that yes, I'm listening to Sabbath services every Sabbath. I'm changing my lifestyle. I no longer work on that day. I've changed my lifestyle. Fruit worthy of, meet for repentance, it reflects repentance. Then the matter of tithing.

Those are the two primary areas of things that people have to change in the beginning. Because not working on the Sabbath is a financial hit in a person's life. You're going to have to change your lifestyle if you've been working at that time because now you're going to have to budget differently, you're going to have to reorganize your life. That brings a person to the point, are you really serious about changing your life? Are you really repenting and desiring God's way of life?

So again, this is something that happens that lead up to baptism. These are very closely associated with what John the Baptist did because that was a baptism unto repentance. It wasn't the kind of baptism that is in God's Church, obviously; there is more with that because of the laying on of hands that follows. But theirs was more a physical thing and an acknowledgement that I have sin, I have come to be baptized because I do want to have a relationship with God, something they only understood on a physical plane was that they knew they had to make some changes in their life, especially if the Messiah, "Especially if this is the time that the Messiah is going to come, I want to be right with God."

So anyway, "to bear fruit worthy of repentance," "meet for repentance." Again, for people wanting baptism or wanting to be a part of God's Church these are the things they have to address. Tithing as well because that helps to reflect is a person really starting to change their life. Because to obey that is not a small thing. Sometimes people come along, even get baptized, and it becomes a battle and a trial and it takes them out of the Church because they won't do it, because they won't give Holy Day offerings to God as He commands.

Because these are the things that really try people and test people. What is more valuable? A new apartment? A new home? A new car? A different car? An upgraded car? Those things are good to have if you can afford them, and other things in life that people want, whatever it might be.

I remember visiting someone one time in a different region of the world who had even been ordained to an elder and had come to the point where there was a problem in this particular area as far as Holy Day offerings. You think, well, even if a person doesn't have a job, doesn't matter what it is in life, God commands us to give Holy Day offerings. We learn that in the Church, so once a person has been in the Church for a time then on Holy Days it's just what we do.

In that visit it was like, "Can't afford it. Can't do it," and I look around the room and all this electronic equipment, TV, the sound system was elaborate, and you think, "You can afford all that but you can't afford to give a pound, a dollar, a euro to God, whatever? You can't do that? You can buy other things in your life, but you can't acknowledge God and be thankful to Him on a

High Day when He says we're to bring something before Him as that which reflects the fact that we're grateful and thankful for the incredible calling we have?"

So, it is something that tries people. It puts people to the test because that's just the way we are as human beings. We can be very material, in that respect, as far as what we think we should have and that then is weighed against what God says He is to have, that we're to give to Him with a right heart. Not begrudgingly or out of necessity because it's required, because it's commanded; because it's in our heart, it's what we want to do.

So, this is a part of bearing fruit worthy of repentance, meet for repentance. It reflects, yes, I want to be right with God. These things are telltale signs. Some of the greatest that there are.

And so, he says, **Do not think to yourselves**, in other words, try to claim justification for your actions and how you're living and that you won't make certain changes you den of vipers, as he was saying. So, don't think to try to justify yourself that you can just say that **I am of the seed of Abraham, or Abraham is our father**, as it says here.

Because that's the thinking. "I am justified. I'm okay. I'm good because I'm a descendant of Abraham. And because of that and because I profess" whatever belief, Sadducee, Pharisee, whatever it is, "I'm a religious person. And because I'm a part of Abraham then I'm a part of a promise." It's like, "No, you're not. It's how you live. It's what you live that becomes important."

Most certainly I think of how Paul addressed those things later on, especially in the Book of Romans and other areas, something that traditional Christianity just doesn't grasp. There are works required - obedience to God. Repentance means obedience to God. So, if we're really repenting then we're going to change how we observe the Sabbath, we're not going to work on that day, we're going to listen to sermons. That's going to be the main part and most important aspect of a Sabbath. We're going to tithe. We're going to give Holy Day offerings because that's just going to be a part of us. We're going to obey God. So, it's in the works.

But traditional Christianity says you don't have to have works. Yes, you do. They have works but they don't say that's what those things are, whatever it is. Easter, Christmas, that's their belief, that's their works. How they live around those things, do those things, Sunday worship, whatever it might be, that's what they believe, that's their works. Whether they do it faithfully or not is another matter, obviously.

Going on: **Because I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones**. So, the point being is here, it's not about lineage. It's not about the fact that you are a part of Abraham in ancestry. It's not about the fact that you are Jewish or whatever other tribes you are that you claim. Of course, by this time it was only the Jews. And so, it's not a matter of that whatsoever. It's not a matter that you're of Abraham, it's a matter of what you live.

Because as, again, Paul made it very clear, the gentiles are able to become of Abraham, Israel. That's what it's talking about. It's not the physical lineage that's important, it's the meaning of the names, and especially the name of Israel, that everyone in time can become a part of Israel,

a part of, as it says here, “I can raise up children to Abraham.” So, it’s a spiritual thing. That’s what people don’t grasp until their minds are open.

**Verse 10—And now the ax is laid to the root of the trees or is being laid to the root of the trees.** What does that mean? It means the system is changing, what you have done physically for so long. Now, he didn’t teach all this to them. They wouldn’t be able to grasp it. How much was given him to say, immaterial at this point. This was written for the Church. It’s showing that a transition is taking place, and what is meant by “the ax being laid to the tree,” it’s that everything about that which was the old way is being cut down.

Traditional Christianity thinks that’s the law is done away with, that’s what’s old that’s being done away. Not the case. It’s the system. It’s the system of the Levitical priesthood. It’s the system of the Levites and the offering up of sacrifices and so forth, that this process that was physical for a people, for the lineage of Abraham, is not going to go on.

I think of some beautiful scriptures we went through recently that explains some of that, about this matter, and a change that’s taking place, so the ax is put to the tree. You remember the verses we talked about some time back here where it talks about being grafted in, and so forth, and they can come back in as well? Because that’s what it was discussing here, that that old way is being cut down and now it can come back in, it can become a part of what it had before but far more because now it’ll be spiritual. It’s changing. It’s going to be built upon Christ and not upon Abraham, the promises and so forth.

**...the ax is being laid to the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree which does not bear fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.** The context here now is that which isn’t right with God it’s going to be cut down and cast into a fire.

Then it goes on to say here, **I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I am, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the holy spirit and fire.** So, I think of this scripture here, this verse here that talks about being baptized with the holy spirit and fire and people don’t grasp here this is talking about judgment. What was said to the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Scribes, I should say, before here when he called them a den of vipers, it has to do with judgment. “Who do you think you are? Who has warned you to escape the judgment, the wrath that’s coming?” That’s about those who disobey God.

He’s talking about here this process here that there is one coming after me. He said, “I’m baptizing in water but the one who’s coming after me is going to be baptizing,” as it says here, “with the holy spirit and fire.” There are people in traditional Christianity, some few that desire this thing of being baptized with the holy spirit and fire. It’s like this Pentecostal type of thing where they go back to this concept or idea of the holy spirit coming down and cloven tongues upon the heads of the disciples on the first time and only time that this took place, in that respect, in this manner with so many at that point in time. Just a few: obviously, the disciples.



But what was taking place then is something that was manifested that people could see to be moved by. It doesn't say how many saw it, but it was seen, it was observed, it was witnessed. And so, they confuse those things with the holy spirit. It's like, "I want that baptism of the holy spirit and fire," and they don't understand the fire is not something you want to be immersed in because it's about immersion. You want to be baptized, immersed in water, but you don't want to be baptized in fire, and so, we understand that. Baptism in water and then of the holy spirit that follows that because of being able to have hands laid upon us. Again, we understand that in the Church.

But you think, sad, the world of traditional Christianity can't grasp it because it hasn't been given to them yet. It's not their fault. It's been given to a few by God because of His purpose. We're no better, it's just a matter of God's timing and when He calls us.

It goes on to say, **His winnowing fan is in his hand**. It makes it clear here about what this is, or it should make it clear what this winnowing fan is about and about the fire is not a good thing. It says, **that winnowing fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn**, the produce, that which is to be kept, that which is the produce of work is going to be used, is going to be saved and utilized, **but He's going to burn up**, as it says here, **the chaff with unquenchable fire**. That just means, unquenchable means until it's gone. So, it's not going to be put out. So, when it comes to chaff it has to be thoroughly burned.

That example is given as a matter of judgment. Those who don't choose and live God's way of life, when that comes to them, this is going to eventually be the result. If people don't repent it's going to be this kind of baptism, immersion in fire.

That's why I think about the book has made that so clear that there are choices to make. We're entering into that age, as we approach the Millennium and as the Millennium becomes established, and then the Great White Throne, that people have to make those choices. They couldn't before because they weren't given the ability to see what is true but that ability is now going to begin to be given as it leads up to the Millennium, and especially then from the Millennium on.

People have to make a choice. What is that choice going to be? It's going to be one or the other - live God's way of life or reject it. Baptism by the holy spirit, learning, growing in God's spirit or being immersed in fire. The point of being baptized in the holy spirit is to be impregnated with it in order to grow spiritually. To refuse it, well, that's a choice. What a horrible choice.

Then it says, **verse 13—Then Joshua came into Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. Then John tried to prevent him...** It's like, "I'm not worthy," as he just said here earlier, "to carry his sandals," and "Now you want to be baptized of me?" He said, **I need to be baptized of you, and you are coming to me?**

So, he didn't understand that. Now, he knew who he was, you know, that relationship. Just like it goes back and talks about Mary and Elizabeth and their meeting together and the baby leaping in the womb in the story of what took place concerning John the Baptist. These stories of things that they knew and shared because of their relationship and so forth. As he grew then he knew who he was.

When he came to him then, he believed certain things. God had given him the ability to see and believe certain things to this point, obviously, of who he was and what he was to preach, and yet not understanding he was coming as a Passover. There are things that they just didn't know. It wasn't revealed to them. But he was the Messiah and that much they were given to know.

Then it goes on in **verse 15** to say, **But Joshua answered and said to him, Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.** In other words, it has to be done because this is the right way, this is God's way. Anyway, the point being in all this is he's setting an example of something for others who are going to follow though he didn't need to be forgiven of sin, he didn't need to repent of sin because there had been no sin he committed. But yet he went through the process there because of what was going to follow, what did need to take place and what was going to be given as a result of him dying as our Passover, the ability to receive God's spirit, the impregnation of God's spirit in the mind after baptism.

It says, **This has to be done for righteousness sake**, to fulfill. In other words, there's a process of fulfilling certain things of God's righteous plan and purpose. It says, **Then he allowed him.** So, John went ahead and baptized him.

**And when he had been baptized, Joshua came immediately up from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him.** It sounds like it's referring to John is the one who saw this and witnessed this and certain things are recorded. Christ may have as well. It sounds like both of them may have in the story flow here of things that go back and forth. But again here, certainly heard certain things. Others, whether they did or not, it doesn't say. It doesn't say whether everyone saw that and heard what was stated.

But it goes on to say, **Then suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.** So, what an incredible thing that God did at that time, something that was boomed out like that that people heard, or at least John heard and Christ, undoubtedly, but it's talking to others because, "This is My beloved Son," it's informing others, "in whom I am well pleased." In other words, "I'm just revealing this to Christ." Christ already knew who he was and that's something unique because of his mind, the word of God made flesh, and things he saw, things he knew.

I love the way that some of this comes out in what Christ says later on in talking to God, and so forth. But anyway, let's go ahead and jump ahead.

I wanted to mention, too, the thing about his baptism. Again, not about repentance, though he set the example because there is a way, a process that people must go through and he set those examples. Though he was going to fulfill Passover, he kept Passover with the disciples and then he instituted a new Passover service with them, doing the same things that they did as an example's sake. He was the Passover. He was going to fulfill it, but he gave those things to them.

So again, incredible story when you think about his life and what he did and how he lived it. Then in this point here about receiving of the holy spirit, it talks about the holy spirit was given to him. Then the question has come up in times past, well, didn't he already have God's spirit?

He was the Word of God made flesh and he had the ability to see things on a spiritual plane, which means he had God's spirit in him, but he needed to receive as well the impregnation of God's spirit in the mind which is a matter of a spiritual thing that leads to, leads the way to, if you will then, that which is going to be eternal, that which is going to be resurrected, that which continues on and that which is in the mind that continues to grow then in a very powerful and unique way above and beyond the life he had up to that point in time.

We only have a small portion of that, measure of that as we're being called of God's spirit, drawn, and we're able to see truth. Well, we only see portions of whatever God gives to us in whatever we're able to to that point in time leading up to baptism that we can glean, depending on the present truth.

Christ saw way, way beyond that because of God's spirit, because of that life in him, that mind that was his from his Father, of things that are very difficult for the carnal human mind, even with God's spirit, to comprehend. But to make that comparison is the right comparison to make if we can grasp that what he was experiencing was many, many times beyond what we do when our minds are opened up. He had it from birth.

We come up to a point of time then when we are able to then be baptized because we need to be forgiven of sin, we need to go in the water, immersed in water, and then we need the immersion into God's holy spirit, of God dwelling in us and we in God. That comes as a result then even more so because of what takes place in the mind because that's what's going to become a part of Elohim. It's that mind that's given of the impregnation of God's spirit.

So, it's one thing to be born of the Son of God, it's another thing to be impregnated with the spirit of God that goes even beyond that. So, it's an incredible thing that happened in his life that has happened in no other human being's life—incredible!—but all as a part of a process and something that had to be fulfilled in this manner.

So, now it's time to jump ahead and begin focusing on the latter part of Joshua's life, which mostly was taking place, these things that we're going to go into now, were in the last three weeks of his life. So, there are things that happened in the ministry, his ministry, that 3½ year ministry, and from the time of being baptized and the things he did, and those things are spoken of throughout scripture. We're not going to go through all those. We're going to focus more on

those things that led up to him fulfilling Passover because that's the vast majority of things, the things that took place, where the greatest of teachings took place.

Matter of fact, some of the greatest teachings took place on the very night that he was going to be betrayed, that he was betrayed. Some of the things he taught in this last three weeks, some of the miracles, some of the greatest miracles then were performed in the last three weeks. So that life span leading up to that point in time were built up and magnified many times over just in the short period of time. It's an incredible story.

I can't help but think of how we live our lives with all the knowledge we have and we know that certain things are going to come to pass, and yet they're not upon us yet and we keep going forward. But the vast majority of them are going to be fulfilled, of things we see that are going to come to pass in the end of this age when the events of the first four Trumpets begin to take place. Those things are going to be a smaller portion of our life, but the greatest of events that lead to the Millennium and Christ's coming will happen in that period of time, and so, the crescendo of it all.

This was the crescendo, in that respect, of Christ's physical life leading up to Passover and the entire purpose of why he came the first time. So, first we simply have some basic accounts in scripture that show the beginning of this final journey that he's beginning to make now on the way down to Jerusalem. They're up in the area of Galilee, which is to the north of Jerusalem, and then they're going to come down through Samaria, which is farther south of that, which is next to the Jordan River.

So the Sea of Galilee is up there, obviously, in that particular region of Galilee, and then the river, Jordan, that comes down south then, southward, and that's the direction they're travelling, and even by the river. Some things are a little confusing at times here by how it's stated whether they went across at a certain point and then came back again across the Jordan because of their travel, but it was along that river as they are going south toward an area of finally when they went toward Jericho and then on into Bethany, if you look at a map.

But anyway, an incredible story here of this journey and walking and travelling down there. We pick it up here then in Luke 17:11. Now, the timing in some of this may not be absolutely perfect. There may be things come along that show certain portions here within a day or so, but that's minor compared to things that are out there that are not known, not even in the *Harmony of the Gospels* and things like that that are a matter of a time order. They get a little twisted up at times. So again, awesome the truth that God has given to us to see things in a much clearer way.

**Luke 17:11—Now it happened as he went to Jerusalem that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as he entered a certain village...** Now, the reason, again, for this journey here is because that's where people were living. You know, you live closer to a river like that, more fertile land, and if you know that area there down through Jericho, if you remember the account here of the children of Israel coming. That's the region they came in, was by Jericho, and it's a very, in that respect with the water and the land there, fertile area.

**Then as he entered into a certain city he was met there by ten men who were lepers, who were standing a distance away. And they lifted up their voice and said, Joshua, Master, have mercy on us!** Now, it's interesting as you go through the story in this last journey here in this last period of time of about three weeks when it started the journey and then on through, that people knew him all along the way. They knew of him or had heard him before and knew him, and when these things are spread around, they knew when he was coming.

A lot of things have happened as far as his ministry was concerned and people were being moved by, starting with John and what John was doing, and the message was he is the Messiah. A lot of people were moved to believe this, that he was going to bring the Kingdom of God at that time and he was going to be the King that was prophesied of the lineage of David.

And so, they said, **Joshua, teacher, in other words, have mercy on us! Then he went and saw them, and he said to them, Go, show yourselves to the priests. And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.** So, they were asking his intervention, their help concerning their leprosy, and so he just simply told them go and present yourselves to the priest. So, it was a matter of are you going to do it the way I say to do it? Are you going to listen?

So, it has to do with listening, so often, what God tells us, whether it makes sense to us or not sometimes. That's not what it's about.

I think of the king out of Syria, wasn't it? He was told to dip himself seven times in a river and he wanted to go back to his own country. He thought that, basically, I can go up there and do it there. Incredible story there. You think, just do it the way God says to do it and He'll bless you.

So again here, listening, whether we do it. It's like going up the way of the Red Sea and there is no way of the Red Sea. "Why did you lead us here? There is no place called the way of the Red Sea." But after God got through with it there was a way through, and then He closed up the water again. But you know, things that don't look right.

That's the whole point. It's a spiritual thing when it comes down to it. It's a matter whether we look to God as the Great God. We may not understand certain things at times, but we do them. We may not grasp certain things that God says to do in a certain way, but as we learn to apply those things in our life, even those things God gives through the Church, to a Church, and as people live by them, sometimes there may be a battle in doing certain things because we don't see it. It's like, "I have to understand it first" or "I don't really agree with that. I think I could do it a different way." That's not what it's about. It's about doing it God's way. It's about whether we're tuned in to God, willing to listen to God, and if we are then God will bless us. So, it's a spiritual thing, a spiritual matter in our thinking.

Going on. So again here, it says here that as they were going then they were cleansed. What an incredible thing. Ten lepers walking along and all of a sudden, it's gone, and they hadn't even made it to the priest yet. Well, they were still supposed to do that, obviously, to follow through with that process and just do it that way. It wasn't the priests that were going to do anything. It

was the fact that they listened to instruction and they were going to be blessed for it, basically, because Christ said so. He said, “Do it this way.”

In **verse 15** it says, **then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God.** He went back to thank Joshua and to glorify God for what had happened, he was so moved by what took place. ...and he fell down on his face at his feet, **giving him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.** That even made it more incredible, in that respect; here one of the ten, a Samaritan that would do this, to acknowledge something like this and thank Joshua for his words, knowing that it came through him from God that he was given this blessing of healing. He came back with great gratitude. It says a lot. It’s incredible. It’s a thinking of the mind.

I’m reminded again, how thankful are we for everything we receive from God, the word of God, about the story of the life of Joshua? Because I am concerned that from time to time we can go through various things like this story here and we hear it as a story. But you don’t want to receive it just as a story like the world does, like traditional Christianity hears stories and it’s like, “Well, that’s a nice story. That has a nice lesson to it.”

No, it goes so far beyond that and it’s something that should move us, motivate us, excite us. If it ever comes to a time where we don’t have excitement for reading about his life story, for what he went through, why he went through it, the relationship between him and his Father and what it means to us personally. If that doesn’t move us each time we think about it, each time we hear it, then we’ve got a problem. We really do. We need to ask God for help. Candidly, being carnal, physical human beings that will happen, that can happen from time to time.

So, the reality is we need to examine ourselves and make sure that as we do something like this that we sense that. It should excite us. It should motivate us. It should move us with thankfulness as well, gratitude to our elder brother. It should mean something to us. It should come alive, is what I’m talking about, and if it doesn’t come alive (and this is what we need to ask), then what’s wrong with me?

That’s when we need to go before God and say, “Help it to come alive. Help me to be moved and motivated by Your life, by Your Son’s life, by Your plan and purpose. Don’t let me get to a point...” We should fear doing something like that, come to a point where we take things for granted. Because that happens in God’s Church, we begin to take things for granted.

Now we can’t have Sabbath services together and I’m sure that right now we’re probably far more grateful and thankful for the times that we, treasure it probably more, the fellowship that we were able to have before! Well, we may not have it again, I don’t know, on the same level where we come together as a little larger group. We experienced being whittled down to size after the Apostasy. That was a hard and humbling thing. Now we can’t even do it, as a whole, except maybe a few now just starting up a little bit.

But those are the kinds of things that should help us to see ourselves as to whether or not we're maybe taking some things for granted in our life, and relationships a little more for granted than what we should, and fellowship, and what that means, because it's a spiritual thing if it indeed it is in our lives with others, and to value that then toward others as a part of God's Family.

The same thing is true in Joshua's life. Do we sense those things? Do we feel that motivation? Because if we're getting sleepy and tired in listening to a story because it's a story and we know it so well, then we need to kick ourselves in the you-know-what and ask God for help and for mercy and for being stirred up in His holy spirit. Look how long God waited before He introduced His own Son to mankind. Look at His patience that He's had for the first phase of His plan, to train, to work with, to mold and fashion only a certain number up to a point in time of Christ's coming to be in the first resurrection.

Sometimes we just can't grasp what we've been given; the mercy, that patience, the love of God, that we share in something that goes beyond anything human beings have ever thought or heard. Don't let it happen.

**So he asked the question, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?** Good question. Where are the nine? When I see something like that I can't help but think of all who have ever been called and gone by the wayside, the choices that have been made to not stick to the trunk of the tree, to not remain loyal and faithful to what God has given. I think of the thousands and thousands and thousands who went by the wayside in the time that I was called into the Church and that began to grumble against God's apostle, against Mr. Armstrong and things that he would say and things that he would do and "Why are you building that building out there and we're strapped for finances, and going into all the world with the *Plain Truth* and other things, but now you're building a building out there and we can hardly afford it, and maybe putting us in jeopardy. And maybe God's trying to show him that we shouldn't do this."

You think, wow, keep your mouth shut. Don't you know what you're doing? Those people went by the wayside. It didn't take long. People that grumbled and murmured and complained, God doesn't take lightly when they murmur and complain in such a manner. I saw that over and over and over again.

Then I think of what happened after the Apostasy and people who were called to be a part of a remnant and minds opened up to things that they had not known before about what it meant that all the stones would be cast down, that of the temple. What it meant to be spewed out of God's mouth, to be, everyone, that we're a part of Laodicea, to come to that point to acknowledge that, to be awakened once again from a sleep, or you know, awakened out of sleep and to have that opportunity of that and to know that and then to go back to some of that which they were a part with that teaches 15<sup>th</sup>, 14/15<sup>th</sup> Passover and other things. It boggles the mind that such things can happen! But they do.

So how thankful are we when God gives us things? That's the danger of something like this. We've really got to value it. The more we really value it, the more thankful we are. The less we value

something, the less we're going to thank God for it. And sadly, that happens in people's lives too often then; we get to a point where how much thankfulness is there in the prayer? Or is it just like well, I'm in this pickle, I'm in that pickle, and I need help to get out of this, and I need help to get out of that, and life is hard here and life is hard in that, and I have this and I have that? Me-me-me-me-me. I-I-I-I-I.

Well, what do you have? Do you have something that's a lot more valuable than everything else you're wanting? How much value is there in that then? How thankful are we for what we do have? Incredible how the human mind works sometimes.

He says, "Where are the other nine?" Why weren't they moved? Why weren't they stirred up? Why weren't they thankful for what had been given to them, what God did for them? Where did they go? Did they go on to the priests or not?

**Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?** So, a powerful teaching tool, and one, primarily, for the Church. **Then he said to him, Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.** So, "Because you believed, because you believed what I said..." First of all, now, this was on a physical plane and choices that were made, but it's with the truth, it's with the Son of God. It's with the one who brings all truth, through whom all truth comes. And so, there is that portion of a relationship, but not a spiritual one with this leper. It was on a physical plane, but he was moved and motivated of something he believed, of something he saw about the Messiah. Incredible. Physical, in that respect, but a physical thing and yet he was thankful, he was grateful.

This is a part of the story here. It says, "Your faith has made you well." Again, what he believed with what he was given, to that point in time, he was judged by that and he was judged. "You have come back. You have thanked God. You have been thankful for what you've received. Go your way. You did the right thing." The other nine? Don't know what happened to them.

John 11. So then by all indications the next account is about when it was first revealed to the disciples it was now time to begin their journey down to all the way to Jerusalem. They were traveling down through there, started the journey and then Christ revealed to them the purpose of some of these things as they were going along, and revealed different things as they were travelling.

In **John 11:1** it says, **Now a certain Lazarus of Bethany was sick, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. And it was that Mary who anointed the Lord, so it's telling about which Mary it was, who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped his feet with her hair, so it's leading up all the way to the time before he went on into Jerusalem and was betrayed on Passover night. It's leading up to that time because we recognize then the account here, of what it's referring to that we're going to cover later on, and so, it's just jumping ahead in the story and saying this is that Mary who did this to Christ and the relationship they had then.**



...she's the one who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore, the sisters sent to him, saying, Lord, he whom you love is sick. So, there was that relationship they had. They, obviously, over time here had developed. They knew each other well. Anyway, so she sends this message out through a courier to go and find him and tell him Lazarus is sick and needs you.

**And when Joshua heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it.**

Now Joshua loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So again here, he's discussing certain things of what's going to take place. He knew what was going to happen. He knew what God was going to do - the Word of God made flesh, this mind that was in him is so far above and beyond any that any human being has ever had with God's spirit, the Son of God. These things, he knew exactly what was going to transpire and what was going to take place. All of his teachings, everything he said was with that knowledge, with that insight, with that understanding of everything he was to do along the way and how he was to do it, that unity and oneness with God, of that same mind. Its incredible!

So why did he say that "this sickness is not unto death?" Well, because of what transpires later, what takes place, what the purpose of it all is. It says here "...but to the glory of God." What's going to take place is to God's glory. It's to reveal even more so that which is being done, as it says, "that the Son of God may be glorified by it." That it's going to elevate and reveal even more powerfully, more mightily who he is, that he indeed is the Messiah, that he is the Son of God, that no human being can do things like this except that God is in it.

So, it goes on then and talks about how Joshua loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. **Verse 6— So, when he heard that he was sick, he stayed two more days...** So, some could find fault in that. There might have been questions about that in some people's minds. If he loved him why isn't he going on down right away after he heard this? Not knowing what's going through the minds of people, but he's staying there two more days and lets time pass.

**...he stayed two more days in the place where he was.** That's why it's mentioned here, so that we can grasp what takes place in human thinking. There is God's way and then there is mans way. There is a way we think about things.

I think of the matter of the Great White Throne Judgment, that sometimes it's hard for people to grasp this, it's hard for people to grasp matters of death because we think in physical terms and we put a greater value on this life than we do the one to come. Now, it's understandable. We're physical human beings and we're thankful for this life that we have that leads to another one later on, but sometimes we don't grasp the portion of God's plan of what it's all about.

So, when we think of all the people who have died through time, people who have suffered and died and children who have died, sometimes this is hard for people to deal with and it's like why would God allow this? Well, because there is something far greater beyond this, and if a child dies

then you can have the comfort of knowing they're going to be in the Great White Throne. There should be, with truth, with the understanding of God in the mind, God's spirit in the mind, that that child is going to be so blessed. They don't have to have a mind that is going to be so corrupted. Because the older you get, the more corruption enters into the mind, the more that has to be unlearned.

I think of first coming into the Church, and I wasn't a religious person, but I'd had enough of those things in my mind, about this picture I'd seen and known of Christ, supposedly, on a cross and long hair. And candidly, in the first year or so when you pray, it took me a time to get rid of that in my mind even though I knew the truth, that he had short hair, that he wasn't on a cross. Still, that garbage of what was put into the mind and that image and those pictures you see, it takes a while sometimes to get rid of that, to discard all that. You think of, then, all the false doctrines that people have for those who do believe that they're religious. The more they're steeped in it sometimes the worse or the harder it becomes.

I think of people who have gone through things who have various (quote/unquote) "religious experiences," perhaps speaking in tongues and so forth, and sometimes that's a very difficult battle for some people because they know they've experienced something that wasn't of them. But they equate that, because that happened, that that's of God. They don't understand where it came from, and so, to tell them otherwise sometimes puts people to the test.

But you think, that kind of corruption, you don't just get out of right away. Just because you've learned the truth about the Sabbath, the Holy Days, and God's plan doesn't mean that that corruption leaves your mind. I think of the age we live in, candidly, and some prayers of recent time is about that very thing, that I know there is going to be massive destruction, but I think of for young people as well, children, all ages of people, but I think what they have waiting for them. They're not going to have suffering. We don't. When it comes to death, it's over with, it's gone, and then the next thing is a rich life, healthy life.

When you have that peace of mind and know that, that that age is going to be so much better for them. So candidly, in some cases, the younger they are the better off they are, in one respect, if you understand things that have happened in the last 6,000 years, although we're getting ready to go into the Millennial period. It's still the same thing as to what they're going to receive and they're going to have the opportunity of learning things, of seeing things that are going to be beautiful, awesome indeed. It's just a different time for them.

But sometimes people can judge that and in an improper way. I think of the death penalty for someone that is spoken of in the Old Testament, and it was, basically, put them to death, those who have killed others. I think of society today, and even so-called a religious society, but sometimes I've known this is a matter that can be hard for some in God's Church as well. It's like, shouldn't people just be given longer life? In other words, a life sentence, or something, isn't that more merciful? The reality is, no, the death sentence is better—to be resurrected later on—

because they're going to be in an environment where their mind is going to become more corrupted, worse.

Anyway, sometimes it's easy to judge, misjudge, if you will, things that come from God and not understand God. It's difficult because it's a spiritual thing, the thing of another life, if you will, a resurrection in the future in the Great White Throne. Just to know, have the knowledge, is not enough. The conviction of the beauty of it, the joy of it, the excitement of it, and the peace of mind that comes with that is something on a spiritual plane because it has to come from God.

It goes on to say they stayed two more days. It says, **And then after this he said to the disciples, Let us go up to Judea again**, so now he's telling them at this point in time. He'd already started the journey down there, knew exactly where he was going, what was going to take place, why he was going there. He knew this was the time that he was going to be betrayed and suffer mightily to become the Passover of all mankind, but they didn't know it. He even tells them this along the way and they still don't know it.

He said, **Let's go up to Judea again**. So, they've been up in Galilee. He isn't well received down in Judea, as you get closer to Jerusalem, obviously, and so it says here, **The disciples replied to him, Teacher, lately the Jews have been seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?** So the closer you get to them, to where they're in authority, to where they have power, and they want to stone you anyway, you want to go back? It's like, is this really a good thing to do? Again, incredible here some of the stories of things that take place sometimes and what's brought out in this particular story here.

Let's turn over to Matthew 19. We're going to look at some of the corresponding accounts of this journey through Galilee and Samaria and on their way down toward Jerusalem. In this short period of time there were numerous parables, teachings from Christ along this journey just in the last three weeks, and miracles just continued to increase and become greater and more significant as the timing went on here.

So the story goes then in **Matthew 19:1**, it says, **And then it came to pass, when Joshua had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee and came unto the coasts of Judea on the other side of the Jordan**. So each account addresses things differently and different parts of the journey. This is jumping ahead a little bit here in some of the things and where they were now at this point in time. So, it's wrapping up part of things. These started in Galilee and now they've come all the way down to the coasts of Judea, meaning the areas that border Judea on the other side of the Jordan on the east side, as it's talking about here.

So, the Jordan River here toward the east side from which the Israelites came in when they came into the promised land going west. So, at some point here going across the river. Again, all these villages all along this area down through here because there were more people, so the reason for the traveling through that region and where he was going, it was the travel route and places where people stayed, or lived, greater numbers.

It says here that **great multitudes followed him...** So, they were actually following him, and they heard the stories of all the healings and things that were taking place and that he was the one who was the Messiah. There were people who were believing these things and others wondering about these things, "Could this be the time? Could this be true?" and a hope and a desire they had to be taken out from under the thumb of the Roman rule at that time.

It says here **great multitudes followed him and he healed them there. The Pharisees also came to him, testing him.** So, they were still reaching out in different regions there and different areas, and because they were hearing these things too, he was a threat to what they were teaching, and so, they would send different ones. The thing here about testing is they're trying to find something wrong - which we're accustomed to - something, anything that can be found wrong.

Well, we know what they try to find. Basic thing now is about timing and so forth, 2012, and so that proves everything that they're doing is right and we know now that he's wrong. He can't be who he said.

Same sort of thing here, in that respect, except this here, again, they're trying to find something that conflicts with what they believe, with what they believe is in the old scriptures, the first five books, if you will, of the Bible. They **came to him and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every case?**

So again, they're trying to find some edgy thing, something on the edge here of what they believe in their minds and something they want to see what he's going to say about it so they can say, "Oh, see, this is what he had to say," and then say, "See, he doesn't teach what's true and what's right." They're just looking for fault. That's what this means.

Then on down in **Matthew 20:17**. So we know part of the story here. It's just an ongoing thing that he lived with all his life, in that respect, and people do those things to try to justify themselves and their thinking and show credibility then for why they're doing as they are. Pharisees, Sadducees do that all the time.

**Then Joshua, as he was moving toward Jerusalem, says, took the twelve disciples aside along the way and said to them, Look, we are going up to Jerusalem.** Now it's no longer just a matter of Judea, "We're going right up to Jerusalem," and **the Son of Man will be betrayed unto the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn him to death.** Now, they didn't grasp all that was being said. So, parts of it? He may be put to death - or not that he would be put to death but to be condemned is one thing, but to be put to death, he's the Messiah, this isn't going to happen to him. The fact that he was going to die wasn't in their thinking totally, fully, so that'll come out in part of the story a little bit later here.

It says and **will deliver him to the gentiles to mock and to whip and to kill him on a pole.** So, they couldn't deal with this. It's amazing how the mind works, and certain things are heard

physically and so there is certain belief here, so how were they dealing with that? It's hard to grasp some of this, really, but it just wasn't given them to grasp it all. It really wasn't.

It says, **And the third day he shall rise again.** So again, this matter of three days and three nights and in the third day or on the third day, if you will. In other words, at the very, very end of that day while it's still in that third day is when he's going to be resurrected. Not in the fourth day, not at the beginning of it, but on that third day.

Then Mark's account, **Mark 10:33—And Joshua said...** I mean this is what he said. He said, **Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and then they will condemn him to death and will deliver him to the gentiles; then they'll mock him, whip him, spit on him, and kill him. Then the third day will rise again.**

So again, they didn't grasp all these things. I think of the women that went to the tomb to bring the spices and this is what they were told, "Do you not remember," the angel that spoke to them saying in essence that, "he'll rise the third day?" It says, "then they remembered." But they didn't get it. They had no idea what was taking place, what had happened even then as far as a resurrection was concerned let alone his death.

Then Luke's account, **Luke 18:31** says, **Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be fulfilled. For he will be delivered unto the gentiles and will be mocked, mistreated, spit on, and whipped, put to death, and on the third day he will rise again. Yet they did not understand these things.**

They didn't understand what he was saying. **...and this saying was hidden from them, so that they could not perceive what was spoken.** God didn't let them see. God didn't let them grasp. It's like things that we can look at in a scripture and see and read many, many times, and then all of a sudden when it's God's time to reveal it as the present truth, all of a sudden, it's like, why didn't I see? That's so clear! But you can't see it until God just gives it to you, and then it is clear. But it's by God's spirit that those things become clear, that something becomes clear.

Mark 10. There are a couple of other accounts we're going to look at before the journey continues on down toward Bethany. Again, Bethany is before you get up to Jerusalem. It's only a couple miles outside of Jerusalem and so this is where they're going, where Martha and Mary and Lazarus lived, where their home was.

**Mark 10:46—Then they were in Jericho.** So now getting close. They're on the west of the Jordan river. Now they're down in the area of Jericho which is not too far then on the way down to the area of Bethany. Now they're closing in on the trip here.

**And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples, and a great number of people...** So again, all these people, a great number of people were still following all the way through on this trip because of the excitement of believing who he was and he's going on down toward Jerusalem.

God's spirit, again, working with people to stir people as well that these things should happen like this, that they had a belief that he was the Messiah.

So, absolutely, if you believe he's the Messiah, that this could possibly happen now, you're going to want to be around him if you can, you're going to want to see what takes place next.

Then it says **...great number of people**. Then it says, **blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the side of the road begging**. Then, when he heard that it was Joshua of Nazareth, **he began to cry out and say, Joshua, Son of David, have mercy on me!** So here he is blind, but he's heard all these stories. He's heard about him. He knows of him full well and so much so he recognizes him as the Messiah. He says, "You Son of David." That's what that means. He recognizes him as the Son of David, the descendent who is to be the Messiah, who is to be the King. This is what all the excitement was about.

It says, **Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more**. That didn't quiet him down. People, you know, sometimes somebody is maybe embarrassing, or they don't want you to say anything, and yet here he is crying out like he is, loud. Incredible. He was excited. He wanted to be recognized, to say these things, and he wasn't being held back whatsoever. It says he cried out all the more so he got even louder.

It says, **Son of David, have mercy on me! So, Joshua stood still and directed for him to be called over**. He stopped, whatever motion or whatever, told someone to have him brought over. **And then they called the blind man, saying to him, Take courage. Rise up, for he is calling you over**. So, "He's heard you. Come on over."

**Verse 50—Then throwing aside his garment, he rose up and went to Joshua**. There were those that had to lead him, take him over there, obviously, he's blind. **So Joshua answered and said to him, What do you want me to do for you? The blind man said to him, Teacher, that I may receive my sight. Then Joshua said to him, Go your way; your faith has made you well**.

These incredible things. This was just these things happened one after another on the way down to Bethany and then on toward Jerusalem, but just getting greater and greater as this period goes on and the teachings that went with all this as well as time was going on here in this entire period of time.

It says, **Then immediately he received his sight and followed Joshua on the road**. So now he can see. Now he's following him as well. He entered in with the rest of the crowd. They're all buzzing about this. Here is a blind man, "You're Timaeus," he was the son of Timaeus, I should say. What was his first name here? Just means Bar, I guess it is, son of.

So anyway, next we come to the point, area where Zacchaeus was the tax collector, very rich individual, shorter in stature and he wanted to have a good view of Joshua. They knew he was coming. Just shows there are so many people. But he wanted to have a good view seeing him come. It was exciting. Here he's a rich individual, he climbs up into the sycamore tree in order to have a better view as he's coming into town.

**Luke 19:5**—Then when Joshua came to the place, in other words, where Zacchaeus was up in the tree, says, **he looked up and saw him and said unto him, Zacchaeus, hurry and come on down, because today I must abide in your house.** Incredible, stories like this, and calls him out by name, tells him, “I’m going to stay in your house tonight.” It had to be an incredible moment, indeed. You think about the excitement he had. He was so excited anyway he climbed up in the tree, a wealthy individual wanting to see the Messiah coming into town. This is what’s in his mind. Now he’s being told, “I’m going to stay at your place tonight.”

**So he came down quickly and was happy to receive him.** Again, these stories. They should do something to us. They should move us to realize this life that he lived, how he lived it, what he did, what he was leading up to, what was in his mind, what he knew he was going to do. He’s called an elder brother for a reason and these things are to move us as an elder brother on a spiritual plane, truly.

**Verse 7**—Then when they saw it, they all murmured, saying that he was going to be guest to a man who is a sinner. So, there are those in the group there as well, some of those, and this just didn’t fly with the fact that he could be the Messiah, that he could do these things, that he could be speaking and God’s working with him and through him, because now he’s going to go with a sinner and be with him. So, they’re just murmuring and all this gossip that goes around sometimes. So that disproves it. Incredible how people think sometimes.

It was in this occasion then that Joshua used this occasion to teach the parable of the pounds. Again, different parables and things that were taught all along the way, all these things that continued to happen in this last three weeks and speaking about the coming into the Kingdom of God. It’s just more and more just kept being given, and meatier and meatier things, if you will, more meaningful things and even greater miracles as we go along here.

I think this would be a good place to stop. We’ll just stop there because we’re coming up to the point where he’s going to be coming on into Bethany and it’s quite a while to get through that particular story and I’d really rather not break into a part of it here. But good spot. We’ll begin here in John 11 next week with *Part 4*.