

Through the Bible

LUKE-I

Zac Poonen



Illustrations by Vinay Kuruvilla

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CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

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LUKE WAS THE ONLY WRITER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WHO WAS **NOT** A **JEW**. IT WAS A **GREEK** MAN WRITING TO A **GREEK** MAN TRYING TO SHOW HOW **JESUS** CAME TO **EARTH** AS A **MAN** AND HOW HE **LIVED** AND FULFILLED **GOD'S** PURPOSES. LUKE SPEAKS MUCH ABOUT THE **MINISTRY** OF THE **HOLY SPIRIT** IN THE TWO BOOKS THAT HE WROTE.




IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, LUKE MENTIONS THE HOLY SPIRIT MORE THAN **50** TIMES. LUKE WAS UNDOUBTEDLY A **SPIRIT-FILLED** MAN AND WAS **EXCITED** ABOUT THIS **NEW-COVENANT** LIFE THAT WAS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE **GIFT** OF THE **HOLY SPIRIT**. I WONDER HOW MANY **CHRISTIANS** ARE AS **EXCITED** AS HE WAS.

HOW DOES THE **DEVIL** ENSURE THAT BELIEVERS WILL **NEVER** GET BAPTISED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?



FIRST OF ALL, BY GIVING SOME OF THEM A COUNTERFEIT - A **PHYSICAL** OR **EMOTIONAL** **EXPERIENCE**. THEY LACK THE **POWER** TO **OVERCOME** SIN AND TO **SERVE** THE **LORD**.



SECONDLY, SATAN GETS SOME OTHER BELIEVERS TO **REACT** AGAINST THESE OBVIOUS **COUNTERFEITS** AND TO **STAY** AWAY FROM THE **GENUINE BAPTISM** OF THE SPIRIT ALTOGETHER.



HOW WAS JOHN FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT FROM HIS MOTHER'S **WOMB**? DID HE **TARRY** FOR THE SPIRIT IN HIS MOTHER'S WOMB AS A **FOETUS**? DID SOMEBODY **EXHORT** HIM INSIDE THE WOMB TO PRAY? NO. **GOD** FILLED HIM. IT IS **GOD'S** **WORK** TO FILL **YOU** WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. IF WE **SUBMIT** TO HIM, HE WILL FILL US. HERE IS SOMETHING THAT WILL **STIMULATE** YOUR FAITH: IF GOD CAN FILL A **HELPLESS FOETUS** IN A MOTHER'S **WOMB** WITH THE **HOLY SPIRIT**, WHY CAN'T HE FILL **YOU**?



WHEN **JOHN** WAS FILLED WITH THE **HOLY SPIRIT**, HE BECAME **GREAT** IN THE SIGHT OF THE **LORD** (1:15). THIS IS WHAT THE SPIRIT WANTS TO MAKE **US** TOO -- **GREAT** IN **GOD'S** SIGHT, NOT **MAN'S**.

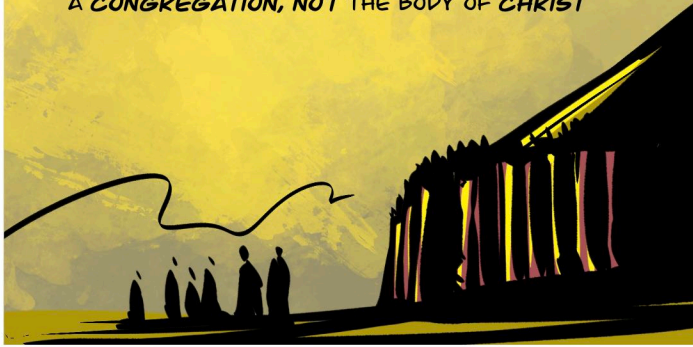


IN 1:34, 35, WE READ THAT WHEN **GABRIEL** CAME TO MARY, SHE QUITE **NATURALLY** ASKED HIM, "HOW CAN THIS BE? I AM A **VIRGIN**. HOW CAN A VIRGIN HAVE A **BABY**?" THE ANGEL REPLIED, "THE **HOLY SPIRIT** WILL COME UPON YOU, AND THE POWER OF THE MOST HIGH WILL OVERSHADOW YOU." THE HOLY SPIRIT ALWAYS BRINGS THE **POWER OF GOD** TO US (SEE ACTS 1:8 AND 10:38). AS THE SPIRIT OF GOD CAME ON MARY TO PRODUCE **JESUS** IN HER, SO THE SPIRIT COMES UPON US **PRIMARYLY** TO PRODUCE **CHRIST** IN US. THAT IS THE CLEAREST GUIDELINE YOU CAN HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR LIFE AND IN OUR SERVICE FOR THE LORD. AS IT TOOK **TIME** FOR THAT BODY TO GROW INSIDE MARY'S WOMB, IT WILL **TAKE TIME** FOR CHRIST TO BECOME **MANIFEST** IN OUR LIVES TOO. IN 1:37, WE SEE A LOVELY PROMISE, "**NOTHING** WILL BE **IMPOSSIBLE** WITH GOD." ("NO WORD THAT GOD SPEAKS WILL BE WITHOUT POWER.") LET US **BELIEVE** THIS.

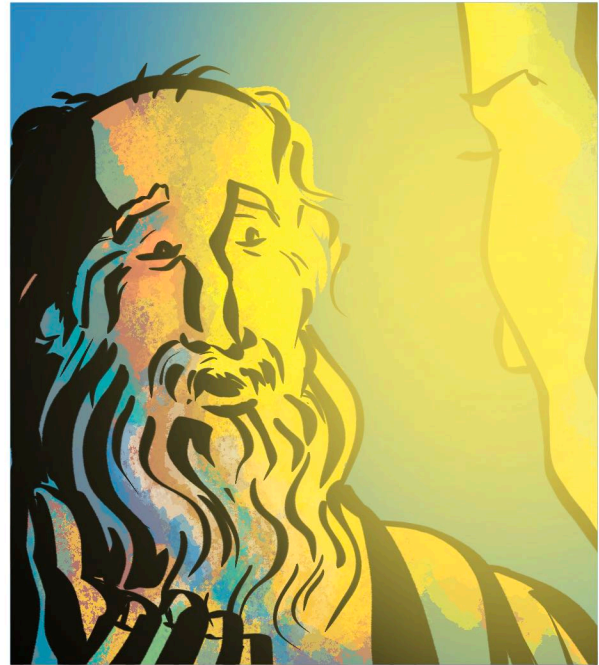


READ LUKE 1:46--55 AND SEE HOW **MATURE** MARY IS AND HOW STEEPED IN **SCRIPTURE** HER **SONG** IS. IT IS **AMAZING** HOW MATURE ONE CAN BECOME EVEN BY THE AGE OF 18, IF A PERSON IS **GOD-FEARING**. MARY **KNEW** THAT EVERYONE IN NAZARETH WOULD SPREAD **SCANDALOUS** STORIES ABOUT HER WHEN THEY KNEW SHE WAS **PREGNANT**. **NO-ONE** WOULD BELIEVE THAT THIS WAS THE WORK OF THE **HOLY SPIRIT**. AND SHE WAS WILLING TO **SUFFER** THAT **REPROACH** -- TO BRING FORTH THE BODY OF **JESUS** FROM HER BODY. DO YOU WANT TO BUILD THE BODY OF CHRIST IN YOUR TOWN? DO YOU WANT **HONOUR** FOR THAT OR ARE YOU WILLING TO SUFFER "THE **REPROACH OF CHRIST**".

GOD DOES NOT SUPPORT THOSE WHO SEEK FOR HONOUR IN HIS WORK. SUCH PEOPLE WILL ONLY BUILD A CONGREGATION, NOT THE BODY OF CHRIST



BUILDING THE BODY OF CHRIST WILL ALWAYS BRING REPROACH, MISUNDERSTANDING, WAGGING TONGUES AND GOSSIP -- AS MARY FACED IN NAZARETH. THE BODY OF CHRIST WILL COME FORTH WHERE PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO "GO OUTSIDE THE RELIGIOUS CAMP OF DENOMINATIONAL CHRISTENDOM AND BEAR HIS REPROACH".



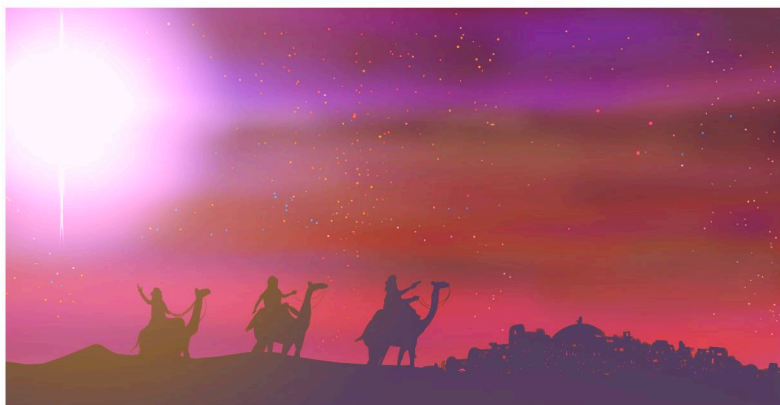
NOTICE HERE THAT ZACHARIAS AND MARY ASKED THE ANGEL ALMOST THE SAME QUESTION: "HOW CAN THIS BE?" (1:18, 34). WHY THEN WAS ZACHARIAS STRUCK DUMB AS A PUNISHMENT AND NOT MARY? BECAUSE OF TWO REASONS. FIRST OF ALL, ZACHARIAS HAD AN EXAMPLE BEFORE HIM OF AN OLDER COUPLE WHO HAD A CHILD -- ABRAHAM AND SARAH. SO THERE WAS NO EXCUSE FOR HIS UNBELIEF. MARY, HOWEVER, DID NOT HAVE ANY EXAMPLE BEFORE HER OF A VIRGIN CONCEIVING AND GIVING BIRTH TO A CHILD. SECONDLY, ZACHARIAS WAS A LEADER WHO HAD STUDIED THE SCRIPTURES FOR MANY YEARS. MARY WAS A YOUNG GIRL. TO WHOM MORE IS GIVEN, FROM THEM MORE WILL BE REQUIRED.



IN 1:74, WE READ ZACHARIAS PROPHECYING SAYING, "NOW THE LORD HAS COME TO GRANT THAT WE WILL BE DELIVERED FROM THE HAND OF OUR ENEMIES AND SERVE HIM WITHOUT FEAR." THOSE ENEMIES ARE OUR SINS WHICH ENSLAVED US. THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS COME TO DELIVER US FROM ALL OUR ENEMIES AND TO ENABLE US TO SERVE GOD WITHOUT ANY FEAR. THROUGHOUT THE 1500 YEARS OF THE OLD COVENANT, ISRAEL SERVED GOD OUT OF FEAR. ZACHARIAS PROPHECIED THAT A NEW AGE WAS DAWNING WHERE PEOPLE WOULD SERVE GOD OUT OF LOVE AND NOT OUT OF FEAR.



GOD ANNOUNCED THE BIRTH OF HIS SON TO ONLY FOUR GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO CAME TO SEE THE BABY JESUS -- SOME POOR SHEPHERDS, SOME WISE MEN FROM PERSIA, AN OLD SPIRIT-FILLED MAN (SIMEON) AND AN OLD PRAYING WOMAN (ANNA). THESE WERE ALL VERY DIFFERENT TYPES OF PEOPLE, OF DIFFERENT AGES AND FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES -- BUT THEY WERE ALL HUMBLE, GOD-FEARING PEOPLE. AND THEY ARE A PICTURE OF THE REMNANT THAT GOD IS PREPARING ALL OVER THE WORLD TODAY FOR THE SECOND COMING OF HIS SON.



IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT OUT OF THESE FOUR GROUPS OF PEOPLE, THREE OF THEM ARE **SIGNIFICANT** FOR THEIR ACTIVITY AT **NIGHT**. THE **SHEPHERDS** WERE WATCHING THEIR **FLOCKS** AT **NIGHT**. THE **WISE MEN** TRAVELLED AT **NIGHT** WATCHING THE **STAR**. (THEY COULD NOT TRAVEL DURING THE DAY, BECAUSE THE **STARS** ARE VISIBLE ONLY AT **NIGHT**). **ANNA** WAS FASTING AND PRAYING AT **NIGHT**. THOSE WHO ARE A PART OF THE REMNANT TODAY ARE ALSO PEOPLE WHO SEEK GOD IN THE **NIGHT SEASONS**. WHEN OTHERS ARE **SLEEPING**, THEY ARE **SEEKING GOD**. GOD REVEALS THINGS TO THEM THAT HE NEVER REVEALS TO **LAZY** CHRISTIANS WHO ARE LOOKING ONLY FOR A **COMFORTABLE LIFE ON EARTH**.

JESUS REVEALED HIMSELF TO **SADHU SUNDAR SINGH**, A NON-CHRISTIAN, IN A VISION, BECAUSE HE **SOUGHT GOD EARNESTLY** AS A **14-YEAR-OLD BOY**. HE WAS LIKE ONE OF THOSE **WISE MEN** FROM THE EAST WHO HAD **NO KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST** OR THE **SCRIPTURES**, BUT WHO **SOUGHT GOD** AND FOUND HIM. GOD IS A **REWARDER** OF THOSE WHO **DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM EVEN TODAY**.

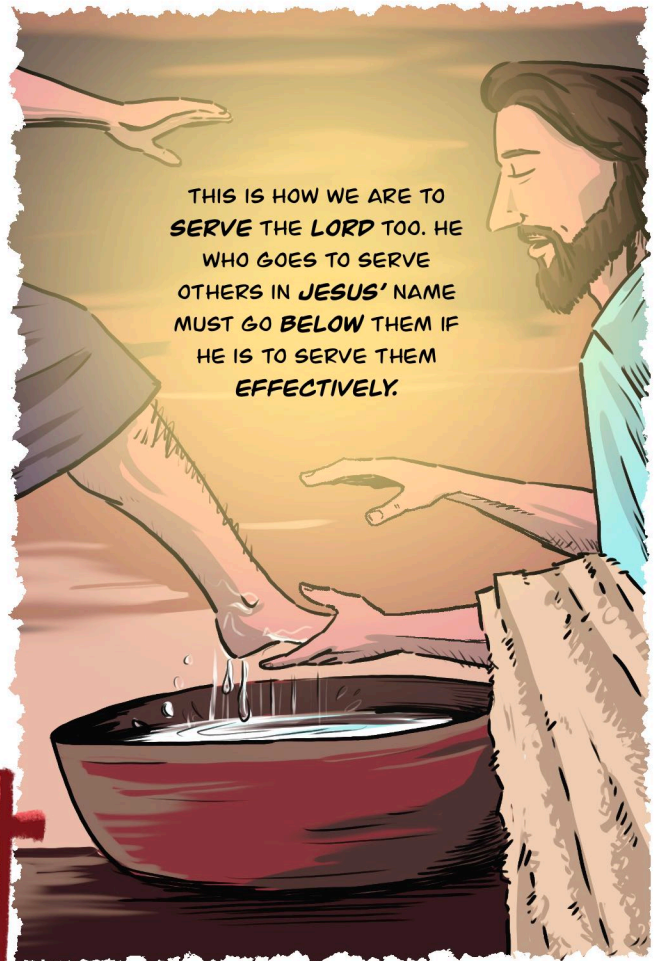


WE READ IN 2:4--7 THAT **JESUS** WAS BORN IN **BETHLEHEM**. THIS WAS **PROPHESIED** IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. AND SO WHEN THE TIME FOR HIS BIRTH CAME, **GOD** MADE **CAESAR**, IN **ROME**, TO PASS AN ORDER THAT EVERYONE IN **ISRAEL** SHOULD GO TO THEIR **HOMETOWN** FOR A CENSUS. SO **JOSEPH** AND **MARY** WENT TO **BETHLEHEM**. THIS WAS NO DOUBT **INCONVENIENT** FOR THEM, FOR THEY HAD TO TRAVEL THE **100 KILOMETRES** FROM **NAZARETH** TO **BETHLEHEM** ON A **DONKEY**.

BY THE TIME THEY ARRIVED IN **BETHLEHEM** THERE WAS **NO ROOM** IN ANY OF THE **INNS** THERE. WOULD IT HAVE BEEN **DIFFICULT** FOR **ALMIGHTY GOD** (WHO HAD **ALL ETERNITY** TO **PLAN** THE BIRTH OF **JESUS**) TO KEEP A **ROOM EMPTY** FOR THEM WHEN THEY ARRIVED IN **BETHLEHEM**? **NOT AT ALL**.

BUT GOD WANTED HIS SON TO BE BORN IN A **COWSHED** AND TO BE LAID AS A BABY IN A **MANGER** (THE LITTLE **TROUGH** THAT **COWS** EAT FROM). GOD MIGHT EVEN HAVE **DELAYED** THEM ON THEIR JOURNEY SO THAT BY THE TIME THEY REACHED BETHLEHEM, ALL THE ROOMS IN THE HOTELS WERE FULL. GOD'S **DELAYS** ARE ALL PART OF HIS **PLAN** -- JESUS HAD TO BE BORN IN A **COWSHED**. THINK OF THE **SHAME** OF BEING BORN IN A **COWSHED**. BUT JESUS HAD COME TO SERVE ALL HUMANITY. AND SO HE HAD TO GO **UNDERNEATH** ALL MEN -- SO THAT **NO-ONE** WOULD EVER FEEL THAT HE WAS **TOO LOW** FOR JESUS TO LIFT HIM UP.

THIS IS HOW WE ARE TO **SERVE** THE **LORD** TOO. HE WHO GOES TO SERVE OTHERS IN **JESUS'** NAME MUST GO **BELOW** THEM IF HE IS TO SERVE THEM **EFFECTIVELY**.



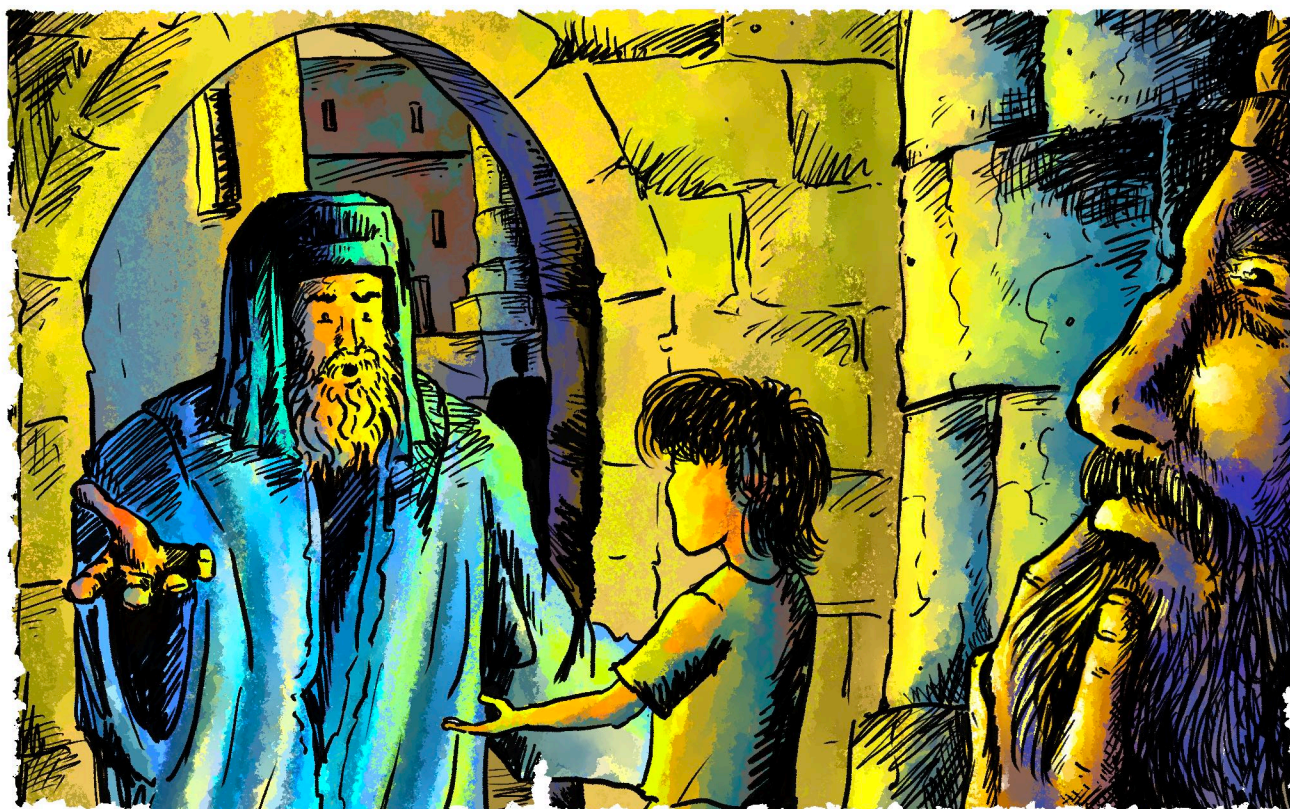
JESUS **STARTED** BELOW EVERYONE AT BIRTH AND THAT IS WHERE HE WAS AT THE **END** OF HIS LIFE TOO -- **WASHING** THE **FEET** OF HIS DISCIPLES, AS A **SERVANT**. HE WAS BORN IN A **DIRTY COWSHED** AND DIED ON A **SHAMEFUL CROSS**.



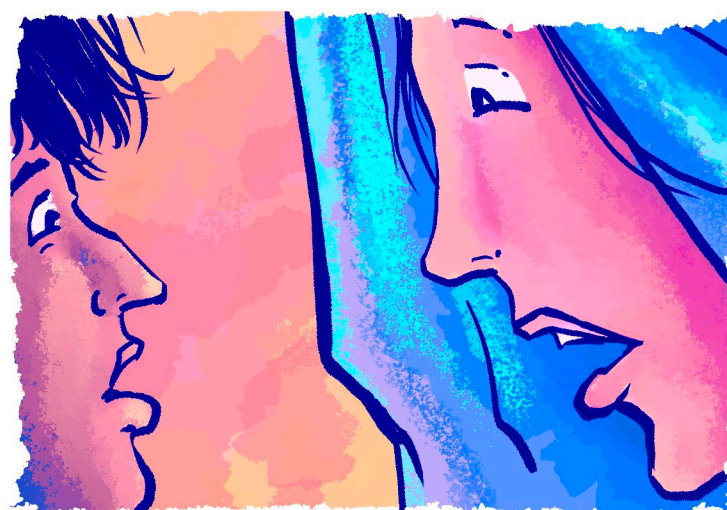
CAN YOU IMAGINE JESUS BEING BORN INTO AN ATMOSPHERE OF **COMPLAINING** AND GRUMBLING ? GOD WOULD NOT HAVE PERMITTED THAT. SO HE NEEDED A GIRL WHO WOULD **NOT** COMPLAIN. THAT WAS WHY HE CHOSE MARY TO BE THE MOTHER OF JESUS -- ONE WHO HAD LEARNT IN HER **YOUTH** TO BE CONTENT WITH **POVERTY** AND **DIFFICULT** CIRCUMSTANCES.



IN 2:34, 35, WE READ **SIMEON'S** PROPHECY: "THIS CHILD IS APPOINTED FOR THE **FALL** AND **RISE** OF MANY PEOPLE IN ISRAEL AND FOR A **SIGN** TO BE **OPPOSED**. A SWORD WILL PIERCE YOUR OWN SOUL TO THE END THAT THE **THOUGHTS** OF MANY **HEARTS** WILL BE **REVEALED**." IF YOU ARE A LEADER IN THE **BODY** OF CHRIST TODAY, YOU TOO WILL BE **OPPOSED** AS **JESUS** WAS. AND IT IS **RELIGIOUS** PEOPLE LIKE PHARISEES WHO WILL **OPPOSE** YOU. BUT, AS THEY OPPOSE YOU, THE THOUGHTS OF THEIR HEARTS WILL BE **REVEALED**



IN 2:47--52, WE READ OF THE TIME WHEN JESUS WENT TO JERUSALEM, AND JOSEPH AND MARY LEFT HIM BEHIND IN THE TEMPLE. AT THE AGE OF 12, JESUS **KNEW THE SCRIPTURES BETTER** THAN ALL THE **SCHOLARS** IN ISRAEL. THEY WERE **AMAZED** AT HIS **EXPLANATIONS** OF THE **SCRIPTURE**. JESUS DID **NOT** HAVE A **BIBLE** AT HOME. THERE WERE NO **PRINTED** BIBLES IN THOSE DAYS AND IT WAS VERY EXPENSIVE TO HAVE A **HANDWRITTEN SCROLL** OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. **NO-ONE** HAD ONE AT **HOME**. HOW THEN DID JESUS KNOW THE SCRIPTURES BY THE AGE OF 12? HE **LISTENED CAREFULLY** WHEN IT WAS READ IN THE **SYNAGOGUE** AND IN THE **SCHOOL**. IF YOU ARE **DILIGENT** TO STUDY THE **SCRIPTURES** AND SEEK TO BE FILLED WITH THE **SPIRIT**, GOD WILL USE YOU MIGHTILY. SO FROM YOUR **EARLIEST** DAYS WHEN YOU ARE **CONVERTED** GET INTO THE HABIT OF **MEDITATING** ON GOD'S WORD. THUS YOU WILL KNOW GOD'S **MIND** AND GOD'S **WAYS**.



IN 2:49, WE SEE JESUS HAD A GREAT BURDEN AND PASSION FOR "THE **FATHER'S BUSINESS**" (KJV). MANY PREACHERS STUDY GOD'S WORD TO GAIN **HONOUR** AS PREACHERS, AND NOT TO DO THE FATHER'S BUSINESS. WE MUST **KNOW** GOD THROUGH HIS WORD AND WE MUST HAVE A **PASSION** FOR HIS **WORK**. OTHERWISE, WE WILL WASTE OUR LIFE ON EARTH. WE WERE SENT TO EARTH TO DO A **WORK** FOR GOD.

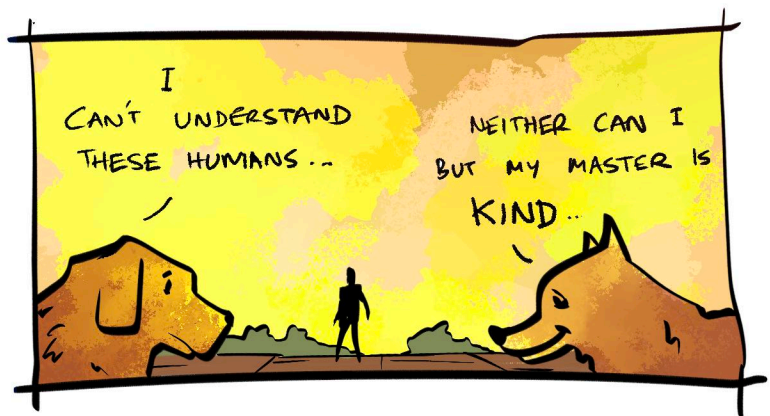


IN 3:1, 2, WE READ OF THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. THE WORD FROM GOD BYPASSED ALL THE **GREAT MEN** OF THE TIME AND CAME TO AN **UNKNOWN** MAN IN THE **WILDERNESS** CALLED JOHN THE BAPTIST. IT IS THE SAME TODAY. THE WORD FROM GOD WILL BYPASS ALL THE **GREAT MEN** AND COME TO US IF WE WILL BE LIKE JOHN THE BAPTIST -- **LONGING** TO **DECREASE** SO THAT CHRIST MIGHT **INCREASE** (JOHN 3:30), WILLING TO BE AN **UNKNOWN** VOICE IN THE **WILDERNESS** (3:4).



IN 3:8--13, WE SEE THAT JOHN THE BAPTIST'S MINISTRY WAS **FIERY** AND VERY **PRACTICAL**. HE DID **NOT** BAPTISE EVERYBODY WHO CAME TO HIM. HE HAD **DISCERNMENT**, AND WHEN HE DISCERNED THAT SOME LIKE THE PHARISEES HAD NOT **REALLY REPENTED**, HE REFUSED TO BAPTISE THEM. HE KEPT THE STANDARDS **HIGH** IN HIS PREACHING, BECAUSE HE WAS **NOT** INTERESTED IN NUMBERS BUT IN **QUALITY**. HE WAS NOT **ENSLAVED** TO ANY MISSION BOARD BY HAVING TO SEND REPORTS TO THEM. HE GAVE SOME "**DOWN-TO-EARTH**" PRACTICAL ADVICE TO ALL WHO ASKED -- WHETHER TAX COLLECTORS OR SOLDIERS. "DON'T EXPLOIT PEOPLE", HE TOLD THEM. MANY PREACHERS HAVE BEEN TAUGHT IN BIBLE-SCHOOLS THAT THE BEST PREACHING IS **EXPOSITORY** -- EXPLAINING THE WHOLE BIBLE VERSE BY VERSE. BUT WE NEVER SEE **JESUS** OR ANY OF THE APOSTLES, PROPHETS OR TEACHERS IN THE BIBLE DOING THAT. THEY ALWAYS PREACHED **TOPICALLY** WITH OCCASIONAL EXPLANATIONS OF SOME OLD TESTAMENT VERSE.

IN 3:21, 22, WE READ ABOUT THE BAPTISM OF JESUS. HE **OVERCAME** TEMPTATION FOR 30 YEARS THROUGH THE **SPIRIT'S** POWER. YET WE READ HERE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME UPON HIM WHEN HE WAS 30 YEARS OLD AND ANOINTED HIM FOR HIS **MINISTRY** (SEE ACTS 10:38).



JESUS HAD THE HOLY SPIRIT IN HIM FOR 30 YEARS. YET HE NEEDED TO BE ANOINTED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT BEFORE HE BEGAN HIS MINISTRY. TO TRY AND EXPLAIN THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FULLY WOULD BE AS **FOOLISH** AS ONE **DOG** TRYING TO EXPLAIN **HUMAN** BEHAVIOUR TO **ANOTHER DOG!!** THAT DOG CAN EXPERIENCE HIS **MASTER'S GOODNESS**, BUT HE **CANNOT** EXPLAIN HIS **MASTER'S PSYCHOLOGY**. SO IT IS WITH US AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. WE CANNOT EXPLAIN HIS ACTIVITY FULLY. BUT WE CAN **EXPERIENCE** HIS **LOVE**, HIS **GOODNESS** AND HIS **POWER** -- AND THAT IS ENOUGH. THE **DISTANCE** BETWEEN **GOD** (THE CREATOR) AND **MAN** IS FAR **GREATER** THAN THE DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO CREATED BEINGS -- **MAN** AND A **DOG**.



IN 4:1--14 WE READ THAT AFTER JESUS WAS TEMPTED (SEE MATTHEW 4:1--10), HE CAME IN THE **POWER** OF THE **SPIRIT** AND **PREACHED**. OVERCOMING **TEMPTATION** EQUIPS US TO **PREACH GOD'S WORD** WITH **POWER**.



THE **SPIRIT** OF GOD **ANOINTED** HIM TO **BLESS OTHERS** -- TO **PREACH** THE GOSPEL TO **OTHERS**, TO **RELEASE OTHERS** FROM PRISON, TO **OPEN THE EYES** OF **OTHERS**, AND TO **SET OTHERS** FREE. EVERY **RESULT** OF THE **ANOINTING** WAS FOR **OTHERS**.



IN 5:1--11 WE READ OF A **MIRACULOUS** CATCH OF FISH. JESUS TOLD SIMON TO GO OUT INTO THE SEA AND CAST HIS NETS FOR A CATCH. SIMON HAD **ALREADY** TRIED ALL OF THE **PREVIOUS** NIGHT AND CAUGHT **NOTHING**. BUT HE DECIDED -- WITHOUT MUCH FAITH -- TO **OBEY** THE LORD. AND HE CAUGHT THE **BIGGEST** CATCH OF FISH HE HAD EVER GOT IN HIS **WHOLE** LIFE. WHEN THE LORD TELLS US TO DO SOMETHING, WE MAY SAY, "LORD, I'VE **TRIED** THAT **SO MANY** TIMES. BUT IT DIDN'T **WORK**." BUT THE LORD SAYS, "BUT DO IT NOW BECAUSE I TELL YOU TO DO IT." YOU WILL BE SURPRISED AT THE **RESULTS** YOU SEE. IT IS BEST TO GO TO PLACES THE **LORD** TELLS YOU TO GO TO AND NOT ELSEWHERE.

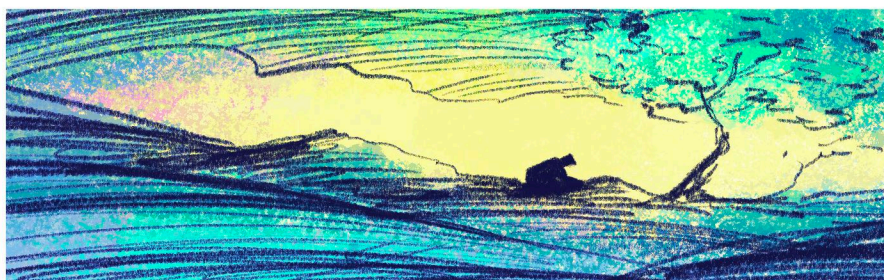


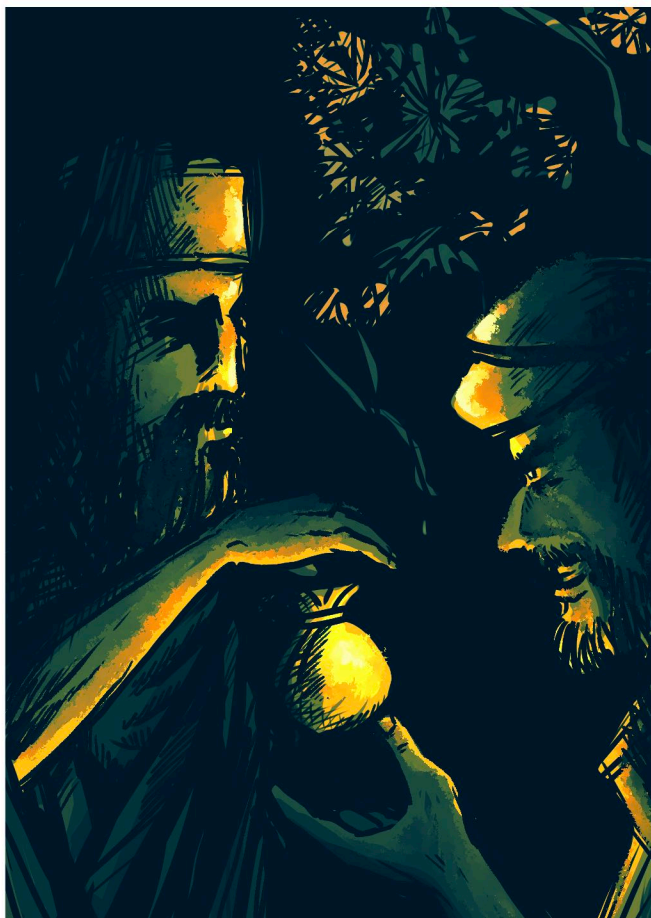
5:15, 16, WE READ THAT **LARGE** CROWDS CAME TO HEAR JESUS AND TO BE **HEALED** OF THEIR SICKNESSES. (WHEN STUDYING THE SCRIPTURES, IT IS GOOD AT TIMES, TO PLACE **OURSELVES** IN THAT SITUATION AND CONSIDER WHAT **WE** WOULD HAVE DONE THERE). IF YOU HAD SEEN SUCH RESULTS IN YOUR MINISTRY, WHAT WOULD YOU BE IN DANGER OF? **PRIDE**. JESUS WAS **TEMPTED** LIKE US. WHAT DID HE DO? "HE WOULD **OFTEN SLIP AWAY** INTO THE **WILDERNESS** TO PRAY" (5:16). WHILE OTHER PEOPLE WERE SITTING AROUND AND TALKING, HE WOULD SLIP AWAY TO GET ALONE WITH HIS **FATHER** AND TO **PRAY**. IT'S GOOD TO BE WITH PEOPLE. BUT YOU NEED TO HAVE **PLENTY** OF TIMES WHEN YOU ARE **ALONE** WITH **GOD**. THE MORE YOUR MINISTRY **SPREADS**, THE **MORE** YOU NEED TIME TO GET ALONE WITH **GOD**.



IN 5:27--29, WE READ OF **MATTHEW** (LEVI) BEING CALLED BY JESUS AND ARRANGING A **BIG** FEAST FOR THE LORD. IF YOU COMPARE THIS WITH WHAT MATTHEW HIMSELF WROTE ABOUT THIS FEAST IN HIS GOSPEL, YOU WILL SEE THAT HE **DOESN'T** SAY A WORD ABOUT THE FACT THAT IT WAS **HE** WHO ARRANGED THIS GREAT FEAST (MATTHEW 9:9, 10). IF YOU DO SOMETHING GOOD, LET **OTHER** PEOPLE REPORT ON IT, AND NOT YOU YOURSELF.

IN 6:12, 13, WE SEE HOW JESUS CALLED HIS DISCIPLES. HE PRAYED **ALL NIGHT** -- BECAUSE HE WANTED TO BE **CLEAR** IN HIS MIND AS TO WHOM TO CHOOSE. EVEN A **SINLESS JESUS** NEEDED TO **PRAY** TO KNOW THE **FATHER'S** WILL.





IT SAYS IN 6:16 THAT JUDAS ISCARIOT "**BECAME A TRAITOR.**" HE WAS NOT A TRAITOR **WHEN HE WAS CHOSEN.** HE **BECAME** A TRAITOR LATER. WHEN HE WAS SELECTED, HE WAS AS **WHOLEHEARTED** AND **SINCERE** AS PETER, JAMES AND JOHN. JESUS CHOSE A **WHOLEHEARTED** SINCERE MAN WHO LATER **BECAME CROOKED** AND WENT TO HELL.



IN 6:20--49, WE HAVE THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT IN CONDENSED FORM. THOSE WHO ARE SERVING THE LORD IN **DIFFICULT** SITUATIONS ARE PERSECUTED, MISUNDERSTOOD, CRITICISED, HARASSED, HUMILIATED, INSULTED AND PHYSICALLY ASSAULTED. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE **BLESSED** WHEN MEN **HATE** YOU AND WON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOU AND SCORN YOUR VERY NAME? THIS COULD BE YOUR RELATIVES, OTHER CHRISTIANS, NON-CHRISTIANS, YOUR NEIGHBOURS OR ANYONE. IF THEY **REJECT** YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE A DISCIPLE OF **JESUS**, AND PROCLAIM THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD, YOU ARE SO **BLESSED** THAT JESUS SAID THAT YOU SHOULD JUMP FOR **JOY**. THAT IS THE TIME TO "**DANCE IN THE SPIRIT**".



IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, **ALL THE PEOPLE PRAISE** YOU AND SAY **NICE** THINGS ABOUT YOU, THAT PROBABLY PROVES THAT YOU ARE A **FALSE** PROPHET -- BECAUSE **FALSE** PROPHETS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WERE ALWAYS **HONoured** AND **PRAISED**. **FALSE** PROPHETS ARE **ALWAYS PRAISED** AND **HONoured**, AND **TRUE** PROPHETS ARE ALWAYS **CRITICISED** AND **REJECTED** -- IN **EVERY CENTURY**.



HOW SHOULD WE TREAT THESE PEOPLE? 6:27 SAYS, "LOVE THEM AND DO **GOOD** TO THEM. **PRAY** FOR THEM". WE BELONG TO A KINGDOM WHICH IS FULL OF **LOVE**. THERE IS NOT AN ATOM OF HATRED THERE AND SO WE CAN **BLESS** ALL WHO **CURSE** US (6:28). YOU **CANNOT** LIVE THIS LIFE IF YOU ARE **NOT** FILLED WITH THE **HOLY SPIRIT**. WHEN PEOPLE MISTREAT YOU, IT IS NOT ENOUGH IF YOU JUST **FORGIVE** THEM. THAT'S **GOOD**. BUT YOU HAVE TO **PRAY** FOR THEM TOO.



WE REFUSE TO FIGHT WITH THE ONE WHO SLAPS US ON THE CHEEK. IF THEY TAKE AWAY OUR COAT, WE SAY THAT THEY CAN HAVE OUR **SHIRT** TOO. THIS IS A **COMPLETELY DIFFERENT** WAY OF LIFE FROM THE WAY OF THIS **WORLD** WHERE EVERYBODY IS SEEKING TO **PUSH OTHERS DOWN** AND **GET UP HIGHER**.



JESUS WENT ON TO SAY THAT IF WE DID **GOOD** ONLY TO THOSE WHO DID **GOOD** TO **US**, WE WON'T GET ANY MARKS FOR THAT (VERSE 33). IF WE GIVE GIFTS TO SOMEONE WHO GAVE US GIFTS, WE GET **0%** FROM GOD FOR THAT. BUT IF WE DO **GOOD** TO SOMEONE WHO DID **HARM** TO US, THEN WE GET **100%** FROM **GOD**.



DO YOU WANT **OTHERS** TO SPEAK **EVIL** ABOUT YOU BEHIND **YOUR BACK**? NO. THEN DON'T SPEAK **EVIL** ABOUT **OTHERS** BEHIND **THEIR BACK**. DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO **FORGIVE** YOU WHEN YOU HAVE MADE A **BLUNDER**? YES. THEN FORGIVE **OTHERS** WHEN THEY COMMIT **BLUNDERS**. IT IS AS SIMPLE AS THAT.



IN 6:36, JESUS SAID THAT IN **ONE AREA** WE MUST BE AS **PERFECT** AS OUR **HEAVENLY FATHER** IS -- IN THE AREA OF **MERCY**, COMPARE THIS WITH MATTHEW 5:48: "BE PERFECT AS YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN IS PERFECT".

WE **CANNOT** BE AS **HOLY**, AS **LOVING**, AS **WISE** OR AS **POWERFUL** AS **GOD**. BUT WE CAN ALL BE AS **PERFECT** AS HE IS, IN **FORGIVING OTHERS**. THAT MEANS THAT IF WE HAVE **TEN ENEMIES**, WE FORGIVE **ALL TEN**. "BE **MERCIFUL** AS YOUR **HEAVENLY FATHER** IS **MERCIFUL**." DON'T **JUDGE** OTHERS (6:37). LEAVE IT TO **GOD** TO **JUDGE** THEM. HE DOESN'T NEED YOUR HELP TO DO THAT.

DON'T BE **TIGHTFISTED** BUT GIVE **GENEROUSLY** TO THE **NEEDY** (6:38) -- AND **GOD** WILL GIVE **GENEROUSLY** TO YOU. A RICH BUSINESSMAN WHO REPORTEDLY USED TO GIVE **90%** OF HIS INCOME TO THE LORD, ONCE SAID, "I SHOVEL **OUT** THE MONEY, AND **GOD** SHOVELS IT **BACK** TO ME --

BUT **GOD** HAS A

**BIGGER
SHOVEL!"**



IN 6:40, JESUS **ASSURED** US THAT IF WE **ALLOW** HIM (OUR **TEACHER**) TO **TRAIN** US **FULLY**, ONE DAY WE **WILL BE** LIKE HIM. PRAISE **GOD** FOR SUCH A **WONDERFUL** PROMISE.

LET US THEN **ALLOW** HIM TO **TRAIN** US THROUGH THE **DIFFICULTIES** AND **TRIALS** HE TAKES US THROUGH.



IN 7:13, WE SEE AGAIN HOW JESUS WAS MOVED WITH **COMPASSION** WHENEVER HE SAW **HUMAN SUFFERING**. WHEN THE LORD SAW THIS **WIDOW** IN NAIN HAVING JUST **LOST** HER **ONLY SON**, HE WAS **MOVED** WITH **COMPASSION** FOR HER. WE READ IN THE GOSPELS THAT IT WAS **COMPASSION** THAT MOVED JESUS TO **HEAL** THE SICK, **FEED** THE MULTITUDES AND EVEN **TEACH** THE SCRIPTURES. **EVERY MINISTRY** IN THE CHURCH MUST **FLOW** OUT OF THE **COMPASSION** OF JESUS FILLING OUR HEARTS.