

YOUTH



LEVEL 8

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 6



The Training of Christ's Disciples—Part 2

THE TRAINING OF CHRIST'S DISCIPLES PART 2

We learned in previous lessons about the beginning of Christ's ministry, the calling of the twelve disciples and their early training in preparation for their responsibilities as apostles. As apostles (apostle means "one sent forth"), they would be sent to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the world, after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Since the disciples were to carry on the Work of God after Jesus died, He had to instruct them fully in the laws of God, the meaning of the Gospel and how they should carry on His Work.

The disciples could not learn all this in just a few days or weeks! Their training took a full three and one-half years, during which time they lived almost day and night with their teacher, Jesus Christ. Even then, after intensive and personal training, the disciples could not remember or fully understand all that they needed to know in order to successfully carry out their commission.

It would not be until the day of Pentecost, fifty days after Christ's resurrection, that the disciples would be given the Holy Spirit. It would enable them to better understand and remember the things Jesus had taught them (John 14:26).

But the time for this had not yet come. Christ had not yet finished personally training

His disciples for their jobs as apostles. There was still much left for them to learn!

In this lesson, we will continue to learn many lessons from what Christ taught and from the example He set. We will study a series of parables Jesus gave about the Kingdom of God, and learn some of the reasons why the Work of God is conducted the way it is today!

JESUS ACCUSED FALSELY

On one particular day, Jesus and the disciples were all gathered together in a house. There were many people there who had come to hear Him speak and to have Him heal their illnesses.

One of the persons Jesus healed was a man who could not see or speak. Jesus healed the man by casting out the demon that caused this condition. After seeing this miracle, many believed that Jesus truly was the prophesied Messiah, the son of David.

This greatly angered the scribes and Pharisees, who had been sent from Jerusalem to discredit Jesus. They feared that He was becoming a threat to their authority and influence over the people.

These Jewish leaders expected the prophesied Messiah to deliver the physical nation of Israel from domination by the Roman government. They did not understand that Christ—the Messiah—did not come to set up His world ruling government at that time. That government—the Kingdom of God—will be established over all nations at Christ's Second Coming!

ABOUT OUR COVER . . .

The Sea of Galilee, where Jesus gave a series of parables about the Kingdom of God.

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The scribes and Pharisees falsely accused Christ, saying, "He hath Beelzebub [is possessed by Satan], and by the prince [Satan] of the devils casteth he out devils [demons]" (Mark 3:22). They accused Christ of using Satan's authority to cast out demons, hoping this lie would turn people away from following Him.

Jesus had come to bear a message about the Kingdom of God, and qualify to *replace* Satan. Now He was accused of being in league with Satan!

Turn to Matthew 12:25-26 to see how Jesus answered His false accusers. "Every _____ against itself is brought to _____; and every city or house _____ against itself _____: And if _____ cast out Satan, he is _____; how shall then his _____?"

Christ was saying that if He was using Satan's authority to cast out demons, then Satan was working in opposition to himself and



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The Garden Tomb in Jerusalem, traditional site of Christ's burial. By rising from the grave after three days and nights, Christ fulfilled the "sign" proving His Messiahship.

his kingdom would fall as a result. But Satan does not deliberately work against himself! What did Jesus further say in verses 27 and 28?

"And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils [demons], by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."

Those who came to discredit Jesus were themselves discredited! Jesus clearly showed that His accusers were in the wrong. Since their authority was now in question with the people, the scribes and Pharisees felt it necessary to defend themselves. But how? The accusers knew they were defenseless against the truth!

The cunning scribes and Pharisees decided to place the burden of proof back on Christ. Putting on a false show of humility, they said, "Master, we would see a sign from thee" (verse 38).

Jesus was well aware of their cunning approach. His adversary, Satan, had tried to use it on Him twice during the temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4:3, 6). They wanted Him to perform a miracle to prove that He was truly the Christ.

Rather than *exalt* Himself by performing a miracle, Jesus showed that it would be God who would exalt Him through a resurrection from the dead, proving that He was truly the Christ! Christ's reply to His accusers, found in verses 39 and 40, was that "An _____ and _____ seeketh after a _____; and there shall no _____ be given to it, but the sign of the _____: For as _____ was _____ and _____ in the _____; so shall the _____ be _____ and _____ in the heart of the earth."

As an assignment for this lesson, read pages 1-4 and 11 of *The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday* booklet, published by the Worldwide

Church of God. This booklet proves that Jesus perfectly fulfilled this prophecy. It was the only sign Jesus ever gave of His Messiahship!

Jesus never tried to exalt Himself, draw attention to Himself or push Himself up front. In Matthew 23:12 He said, "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Even before His false accusers, Jesus humbled Himself. He directed people's attention towards God—never to Himself!

In Philippians 2:3-8, Paul wrote that Christians should strive to have the same humble attitude that Christ had as a human being. Read and summarize these verses on a separate piece of paper. Then read verses 9 and 10 which show that it was God who highly exalted Christ.

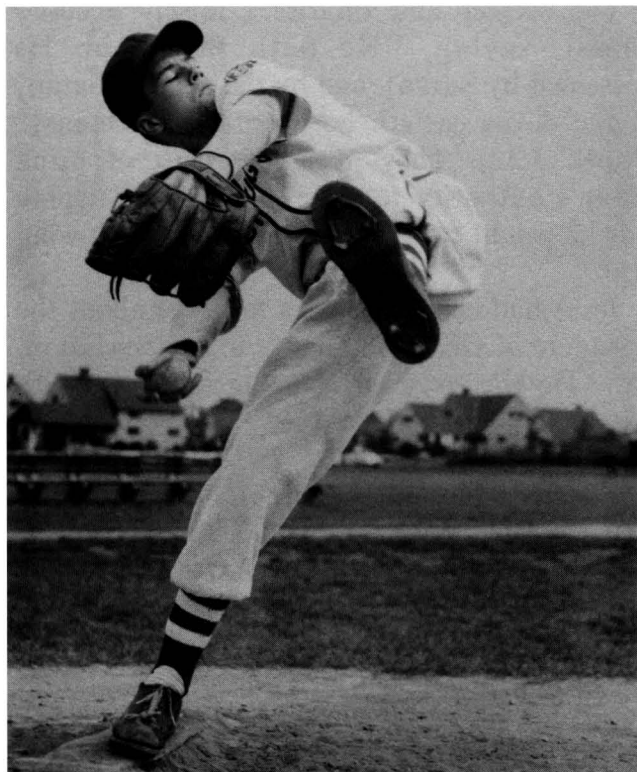
Those striving to obey God should have the same humble attitude. Christ certainly would not approve of someone trying to push himself into a place of honor, such as the captain or pitcher of a baseball team, or as a class representative. One should be a good ball player and student, and do his best at whatever he's asked to do. God recognizes such effort and will bless the person at the proper time.

JESUS' SPIRITUAL FAMILY

While Jesus and the disciples were still in the house, His mother and brothers came to the house to speak to Him. They could not enter the house because of the great crowd of people, so they sent word to Him that they were there. The message got passed through the crowd until someone near Jesus finally said, "Your mother and brothers are outside desiring to see you."

Jesus gestured toward His disciples, who were near Him, and said, "These are my family members, for whoever does the will of God is my brother, my sister and mother." By this, Jesus showed that all those who do the will of God will ultimately be a part of God's Family.

Jesus knew that He had come to make it



H. Armstrong Roberts

One should not try to push himself into an esteemed position, such as the pitcher of a baseball team.

possible for those who would repent and be baptized to receive the Holy Spirit, so they could ultimately be born as spirit beings into the divine Family of God.

Jesus Christ was the only begotten son of God, and the firstborn into the God Family upon His resurrection (Revelation 1:5; Colossians 1:18). Those who follow Christ now, as His spirit-begotten brothers and sisters, will become part of His spirit-born Family when He returns to establish the Kingdom of God on earth (I Corinthians 15:23). It is members of the God Family who will make up the Kingdom of God! Jesus was showing that being part of the spiritual family of God is much more important and enduring than being a part of a physical family.

How Well Do You Remember?

Indicate whether the following statements are true or false by placing a T or an F in the spaces provided. If the answer is false, explain

why on a separate piece of paper.

_____ 1. The scribes and Pharisees feared that Christ was becoming a threat to their authority and influence over the people.

_____ 2. The Jews of Christ's day thought the prophesied Messiah would deliver the physical nation of Israel from the Roman government.

_____ 3. Jewish leaders accused Jesus of being possessed by Satan, even though they knew it was a lie.

_____ 4. The Jewish leaders felt it necessary to defend their authority, just as Christ did.

_____ 5. It was God the Father who exalted Jesus Christ.

_____ 6. The Family of God is the most important family in the universe, and the only family that will live forever.

_____ 7. The Kingdom of God will be composed of members of the God Family.

THE KINGDOM PARABLES

Jesus and the disciples left the house, followed by the large crowd that had gathered, and went down to the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Entering a small fishing boat, Jesus pushed off a little way from shore. The natural amplification from the water and the rolling hills on the shore, where the crowd was gathered, made a natural amphitheater. All were able to hear Jesus clearly as He continued to teach them.

Seated in the boat, Jesus began a series of parables about the Kingdom of God (Matthew 13:1-3). A parable is a short story that teaches an important lesson, and was a commonly used teaching method of the day. But the parables Jesus gave were not understood by the masses. Their meaning He explained only to the disciples.

The first parable Jesus gave was the "Parable of the Sower." Read about it in Matthew 13:3-9 and then summarize it on a separate piece of paper. This parable is one of the most important parables Jesus ever gave

(Mark 4:13). Make sure you include each of the four types of soil the seed fell on, and what happened in each instance.

WHY JESUS SPOKE IN PARABLES

After Jesus gave this parable and several others which will also be discussed, He sent the crowd home and explained the meaning of the parables to the disciples. The twelve asked Jesus why He gave the parables to the multitude, but then didn't explain their meanings to them (Matthew 13:10, 34). It is important to understand this before studying the rest of the parables. Jesus' answer even helps to explain the "Parable of the Sower!" Read Mark 4:11-12 and fill in the blanks.

"And he said unto them, Unto _____ it is given to _____ of the kingdom of God: but unto them that _____ [those whose minds have not yet been opened to spiritual truth by God], all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and _____; and hearing they may hear, and _____; lest at any time [or, at *this* time] they should _____, and their sins should be forgiven them."

God is calling only a few people now to help prepare for the Second Coming of Christ. Jesus spoke in parables so that *only* those whom God calls before the Second Coming of Christ—the disciples, and those who are members in God's true Church—would be able to understand. A person is able to understand spiritual truth—God's truth—only when he has God's Holy Spirit.

Those whom God is not yet calling are not able to understand the truth, even though they may hear it. This is the explanation of the first part of Jesus' parable. In Matthew 13:18-19, Jesus said, "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and *understandeth it not*, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that

which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.”

There are millions of people around the world who have read an issue of The PLAIN TRUTH magazine, or heard Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong on the radio or television. These people have heard the Gospel of the Kingdom, but have not understood it. Perhaps they would have continued to listen or study, but something came up that distracted them. They are like many in the crowds whom Jesus taught, who heard His message, but were distracted or confused by the false accusations against Him, and did not follow Him.

Those who have not understood will have their chance in the second resurrection when God then calls them to learn His truth and to become part of His Family. The majority of people who have ever lived fall in this category and will have their opportunity then.

THOSE WHO DO UNDERSTAND GOD’S TRUTH

The remaining three examples of seed that fell on different types of soil represent three different types of people who understand the Gospel and are converted.

The stony ground on which the “seed,” or Word of God, fell represents the type of person who hears the Gospel and is very glad to have this new knowledge. He is converted, with great joy, but simply has no spiritual depth of character, and endures only for a while. He is just like a seed that sprouts in rocky soil. It grows quickly—but too quickly for its roots to fully develop (verses 20-21).

A young plant needs good, strong roots that will nourish and strengthen the growing stem and leaves. Roots bring moisture to the plant from deep underground. Without strong roots, the plant dries up in the heat of the sun—like a man who doesn’t have a lot of strength will “give in” when things get difficult (tribulation), or when others tease or make fun of him, or exclude him from jobs or games because he’s different (persecution).

It takes a strong individual to stand up against pressure like this! But one who has deep, strong roots knows that God’s way is right and best. He knows that when things get difficult, God will be there to help (Romans 8:31-39).

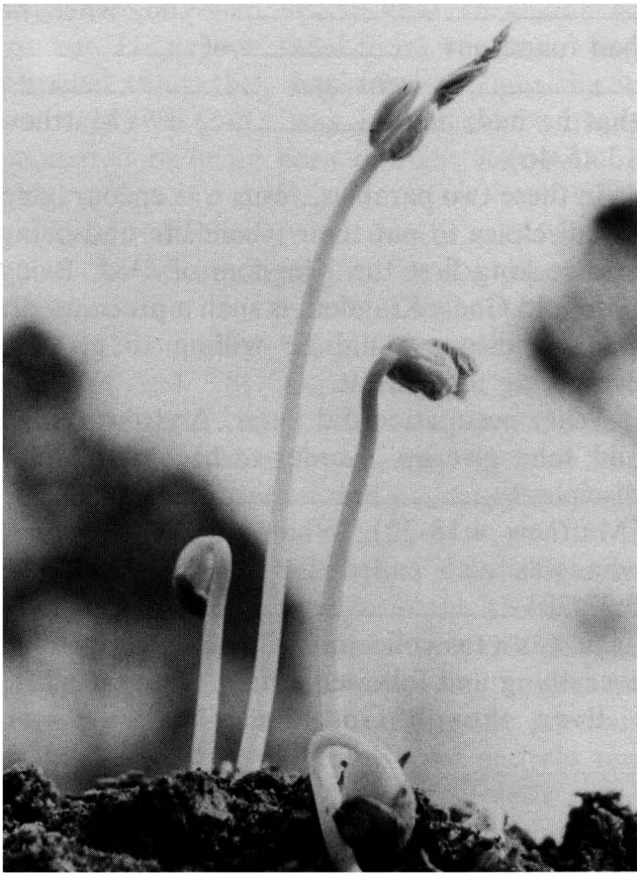
Now notice Matthew 13:22 which describes what happened to the seed that was sown among thorns. This represents the type of person who is converted, receives God’s Holy Spirit, but then lets the cares of this life cause him to lose interest in making it into the Kingdom of God. As a result, this person “brought forth no fruit to perfection”—he did not grow spiritually—but let the material things of this life become more important to him. He did not follow what Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, “But seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [basic necessities of life] shall be added unto you.”

The good ground on which the seed fell represents the type of person who is converted, receives God’s Holy Spirit and really lives God’s way fully and totally (Matthew 13:23). He strives not to let anything get in the way of serving God and of keeping God’s laws. He brings forth fruit—grows spiritually—and develops spiritual character. God blesses this kind of person with many physical and spiritual blessings—including kingship with Christ in the Millennium!

There are many scriptures that show God’s promise of rulership to those who overcome and endure until the end of their lives or until Christ returns. Revelation 3:21 is one of them. Can you find others?

FIVE MORE PARABLES TO THE MULTITUDES

While Jesus was still seated in the boat, He gave five more parables to the crowd gathered on shore. Three of these are recorded in the gospel of Matthew, and two of them in the gospel of Mark. Each parable reveals an important point about the Kingdom of God.



Y.E.S. Photo

Christ compared the Kingdom of God to a seed which, after it is planted, sprouts, grows and is finally harvested.

The “Parable of the Wheat and the Tares” is found in Matthew 13:24-30. Like the “Parable of the Sower,” Jesus later explained its meaning to the disciples. The meaning is found in verses 36 to 43. In explaining this parable, who did Jesus say the “enemy” is? _____ . The “good seed”? _____ . Who do the “tares” represent? _____ . (Tares, or darnel, are weeds that grow with wheat and *look very much like it*. But when the tares grow to maturity and flower, they are easily distinguishable from the wheat.)

Jesus was saying that the saints, or “children of the kingdom,” would live in this world (“the field,” verse 38) along with the unrighteous until Christ returns at “the end of this world (age).” The wicked (those who have refused God’s calling) will ultimately be burned in the

lake of fire, but the saints will be glorified, receiving spirit bodies when they are born into the Kingdom of God. They will “shine forth as the sun” (verse 43). I John 3:2 says that “it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he [Jesus Christ] shall appear, *we shall be like him*; for we shall see him as he is.”

What does the glorified Jesus look like? Read Matthew 17:2 and Revelation 1:14-16. That is what the saints will look like when they are glorified in the Kingdom!

The “Parable of the Mustard Seed” and the “Parable of the Leaven” (Matthew 13:31-33) show that the Kingdom of God has the smallest of beginnings. Jesus chose just twelve disciples, and even today the Church of God has only a very small number of members compared to the total number of people now living. But the Kingdom of God will expand to include the whole earth and all people in it.

In the “Parable of the Lamp Under a Bushel” (Mark 4:21-23), Jesus was showing that the true Gospel, which had been a mystery to the world and hidden from men’s understanding, would surely be preached to all the world. In Matthew 10:26-27, Jesus specifically told the disciples “there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness [or, in private], that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.”

The true Church of God today is continuing the job that Christ first gave to the disciples of preaching the Gospel to the world. Jesus prophesied that in the end-time the “. . . gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world . . .” (Matthew 24:14).

The “Parable of the Seed Growing of Itself” in Mark 4:26-29 shows that, once the seed is sown, it is God who gives the increase (compare this with I Corinthians 3:6-7). God’s Church proclaims the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, but it is God who then calls people into His Church, ultimately to be in the Kingdom.

These then were the parables Jesus spoke to the multitudes gathered on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. When He was finished, Jesus sent the crowd away and then privately explained the meaning of the parables to the disciples. Then, Jesus gave the disciples four more parables about the Kingdom of God.

PARABLES FOR THE DISCIPLES

In the first of these parables for the disciples, the "Parable of the Hid Treasure," Jesus said, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto _____ in a field; the which when a man hath _____, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and _____ that he hath, and _____ that field" (Matthew 13:44).

In the "Parable of the Pearl of Great Price," Jesus said, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, _____

_____ _____: Who, when he had found one _____ of _____, went and _____ that he had, and _____ it" (Matthew 13:45-46).

In these two parables, Jesus was encouraging the disciples to put their whole life and being into seeking first the Kingdom of God. Being born into God's Kingdom is such a precious gift that a person should be willing to give up everything to attain it.

What occupation did Peter, Andrew, James and John give up in order to become Christ's disciples? _____ (Matthew 4:18-22). What job did Matthew, who was also called Levi, give up? (Luke 5:27-28) _____. (A publican was a tax collector.) The disciples gave up everything and followed Christ (Mark 10:28).

Even though God doesn't always ask



Y.E.S. Photo

Christ compared the Kingdom of God to a fisherman's net, which, when put into the sea becomes filled with many kinds of fish. The fish then are separated, the good from the bad.

Christians to give up all that they own or possess, He expects them to be willing to. Any physical thing they might have to give up in order to live God's way is just a little thing compared to being born into the Kingdom of God!

The "Parable of the Net" in Matthew 13:47-50 was a warning to the disciples—who were sent out as "fishers of men"—that not every person they "caught" would be truly called of God. The Gospel Message attracts all kinds of people, but not all are truly converted. Jesus said that when He returns, all those who are not truly converted will be separated from those who are.

The final parable Jesus gave His disciples at this time was the "Parable of the Householder," which is found in Matthew 13:52. The disciples were the ones who were "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven" by the previous parables. They were learning some entirely new things "which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (verse 35).

This parable shows that the disciples would not only preach some "old" things—lessons from the Old Testament writers and prophets—but would also preach the "new truths" about the Kingdom of God that Jesus had personally taught them. In like manner, God's Church preaches the same things today.

This concludes the parables of the Kingdom of God that Jesus gave on that particular day. As a review, list these ten parables and indicate which ones He addressed to the people, and which ones He addressed only to the disciples.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

JESUS STILLS A STORM

On a certain day, Jesus and the disciples entered a boat to cross to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. While on their way across, Jesus fell asleep in the boat (Luke 8:22-23).

Before reaching the opposite shore, a sudden storm came up. It must have been an unusually powerful storm, because some of the disciples were seasoned fishermen who were accustomed to the sudden squalls that often came up on the Sea of Galilee. But those experienced fishermen were no match for the waves that were now coming over the sides of the boat and threatening to sink them. They were frightened!

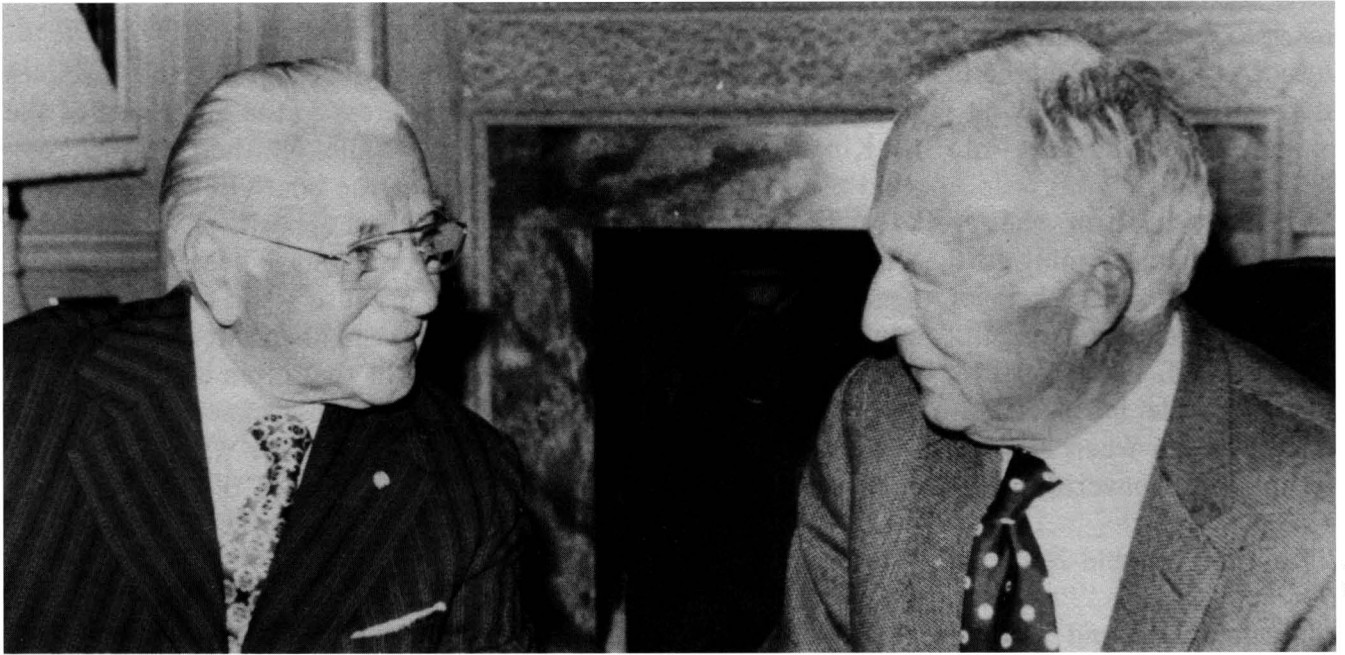
They woke Jesus and shouted over the pounding waves, "Master save us, or we'll perish." Jesus commanded the wind to cease and the water to settle. There was great calm! The disciples were amazed. They had never seen a storm stop at someone's command! (Luke 8:24-25.)

After reaching the eastern shore, Christ and the disciples were immediately met by a man possessed by many demons. Christ cast the demons out of the man and sent them into a herd of swine. The swine ran down the mountainside and drowned in the sea.

What did the people of the area do after hearing about what happened, and seeing the man who had been possessed calmly sitting and talking with Jesus? (Luke 8:34, 37) _____

The people were fearful of Jesus and asked Him to leave! After He left, the man whom He cast the demons out of went all over the countryside telling the people about the great things Jesus had done for him. This man was deeply grateful to Christ, and he wanted other people to know about it!

After returning to Capernaum, Jesus continued teaching and performing many miracles. He visited the town of Nazareth, where He had grown up. Jesus spoke there on the Sabbath,



Y.E.S. Photo

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong proclaims the Gospel of God's coming Kingdom to world leaders. Pictured is Mr. Armstrong speaking with King Leopold of Belgium.

but the townspeople—His one-time neighbors—took offense at His teaching and miracles. Very few there believed on Him. As a result, Jesus did not perform many miracles in Nazareth except for healing a few sick people (Mark 6:1-6).

Jesus then went about the other towns and cities, teaching and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Many did listen, and Christ performed many miracles and healings among these people.

CHRIST SENDS OUT THE TWELVE DISCIPLES

The disciples had been instructed in the meaning of the Gospel of the Kingdom, and had become familiar with Christ's work. They were now ready to be sent out on their first training mission to preach the Gospel.

Today, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong is carrying on this same work, along with the loyal church members God has called to assist him. The instruction Christ gave His disciples just before sending them out is vitally important today. It helps God's people to know how to conduct the Work of God today.

Before sending the disciples, let's notice what powers Christ gave them. Turn to Matthew 10:1 and fill in the blanks as you read.

“And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, _____ them _____ against unclean spirits, to _____, and to _____ all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.”

The disciples did not have the power to do these works themselves. Christ, who was given the power from the Father, gave it to them. Healing and the casting out of demons would be done in the name of, or by the authority of Jesus Christ. This is why, when you are anointed for healing by one of God's ministers, he anoints you with oil and prays for your healing “in Jesus' name.” The minister doesn't heal. It is God who heals!

Continuing in verse 7, what was the message the disciples were told to preach? “And as ye go, preach, saying, The _____ is at hand.” Today, Mr. Armstrong travels to various countries around the world preaching the good

news that the Kingdom of God will soon be established on the earth.

Notice in the last part of verse 8 how Jesus said the Gospel should be preached. "Freely ye have received, _____."

Christ came to give and not take from the people. The disciples, who had freely been taught by Jesus, were to likewise preach the Gospel of the Kingdom and to heal the sick, without asking for anything in return. This is why The PLAIN TRUTH magazine, YOUTH 83, the GOOD NEWS, and other Church publications are sent free to any who ask for them. The Church of God never charges when public appearance campaigns are held, and never asks the public for money.

In verses 11 and 13, notice what else Christ told His disciples. "And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is _____; and there abide till ye go thence. . . . And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be _____, let your peace return to you." Jesus was saying that some people would listen, and others would not.

With these instructions, Jesus also gave the disciples a warning. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils. . . . And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (verses 16-17, 22).

The disciples knew well how the religious leaders hated Jesus. Since they would now be officially representing Christ, the disciples would also be attacked. Later on in their ministry, after the death and resurrection of Christ, some of them *were* brought before "councils," or courts, and tried for their very lives. Just as it happened then, so it will also happen to members of God's Church yet in the future!

After giving these instructions to the twelve disciples, Jesus sent them on their way. They

followed His instructions, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and healing many sick people. When the disciples returned, they told Jesus about what they had done and taught (Mark 6:30).

In the next lesson, we will continue to learn more about the training of the disciples, the many miracles Christ performed and the example He set.

How Well Do You Remember?

Circle the letter of the answer that best completes the statement.

1. Jesus spoke in parables
 - a. so He could be plainly understood.
 - b. about the Kingdom of God.
 - c. to the people, but explained them to the disciples.
 - d. Two of the above.
 2. The Kingdom of God (circle all that apply)
 - a. starts small.
 - b. will be preached in all the world.
 - c. is more precious than silver and gold.
 - d. is an entirely new teaching of Christ.
 3. Even though Jesus Christ performed many miracles,
 - a. He did them by the power of Satan.
 - b. the disciples were not impressed.
 - c. the people of Nazareth didn't believe on Him.
 - d. None of the above.
 4. Healing
 - a. is done by the power of God.
 - b. was one of the things Christ told the twelve disciples to do.
 - c. is done "in the name of Jesus Christ."
 - d. All of the above.
 5. God's Church does not charge for its literature because
 - a. no one would ask for it otherwise.
 - b. Christ gave the truth freely, and instructed that His Church do likewise.
 - c. other churches might get upset if it were not free.
 - d. it is hard to place a value on it.
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