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Messiah

Jewish teachers chose a group of followers to travel with them. They learned by watching their rabbi at work. Jesus' had a different way of teaching. He sent the disciples out into other towns to teach others (Luke 9: 1-10). He even gave them the power to cast out demons and to heal people.

The next event happened right after they returned from their first trip. When the disciples returned, they all had stories to tell. They could not wait to talk to Jesus.

Part One: Bread for Everyone

Luke 9: 10-17

LOOK OVER the Text

1. There are many numbers in Luke 9:12-17. Underline the number words and what they are counting.
2. Read Luke 9: 10-17.

9:10 When the apostles¹ returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida,
9:11 but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.

¹ The apostles are the twelve disciples.

9:12 Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place² here.”

9:13 He replied, “You give them something to eat.”

9:13b They answered, “We have only five loaves of bread and two fish--unless we go and buy food for all this crowd.” 9:14 (About five thousand men were there.)³

9:14b But he said to his disciples, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” 9:15 The disciples did so, and everybody sat down. 9:16 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people. 9:17 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. NIV

LABEL the Text

3. Observations

If you are studying this workbook with a group, meet with two or three other people.⁴ Ask each other observation questions. Go around the circle more than once so that everyone has a chance to ask and answer questions. Think especially about what the disciples are doing and how they react to what is happening. Remember that observation questions are answered directly from the text. You can continue with other types of questions if there is time.⁵

If you are working alone, write questions in the margins of the text.

² They were outside of the city, so there were no places to buy food or a room for the night.

³ They only counted the men. There were five thousand men plus women and children.

⁴ If you are working on the workbook alone, write some observation questions in the margins.

⁵ You can also tell or act out the story to the whole group if you wish.

LEARN from the Text

4. We know that Jesus used every opportunity to teach the disciples. In this miracle, what did Jesus do to teach them? Why *do you think* he used this method?

Part Two: The Christ of God

Luke 9: 18-23

LOOK OVER the Text

1. Before you read, look for questions and answers in Luke 9:18-20. Put the letter “Q” in the margin near the questions Jesus asked and “A” near the answers Peter gave. (Peter is probably answering for all the disciples.)
2. Read Luke 9:18-23.

9:18 Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, “Who do the crowds say I am?”

9:19 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.”⁶

9:20 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

9:20b Peter answered, “The Christ of God.”

9:21 Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. 9:22 And he said, “The

⁶ Luke tells us more about this in Luke 9: 7-9.

Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law,⁷ and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”

9:23 Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny⁸ himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” NIV

LABEL the Text

3. What was Jesus doing at the beginning of this section? Underline the words.
4. After Peter answered, Jesus shared something very important with the disciples. Underline all the verbs in verse 22. Note that three of the four verbs are in the passive tense. The passive tense gives the idea that Jesus will have no control over these things. However, Jesus said they must happen in order for his plan to be completed. He did not give up control of his life; he gave his life willingly.

LINK to the Old Testament and History

“The Christ of God”

The Greek word “Christ” is “Messiah” in Hebrew. The Old Testament says the Messiah is coming as the king and judge of the whole earth.⁹ The Jews thought he would judge the “other” people, such as the Romans. However, God will judge everyone when he comes. We can thank God that he sent the Messiah to save us from our sins first!¹⁰ His death is like a gift to us, a gift of life. When the Judge and King comes back to earth,¹¹ he will gather together all who accept his gift. All others will be judged and sent away from God forever.¹²

Where is the Messiah going to be born? Micah 5:2 in the Old Testament tells us: “The Lord says, ‘Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are one of the smallest towns in Judah, but out of you I will bring a ruler for Israel, whose family line goes back to ancient times.’” GNB

⁷ The “elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law” are the Jewish leaders.

⁸ To deny is to give up or surrender your rights. It also means to refuse to give other people their rights, or to refuse to admit something. Jesus is not denying them; he is asking them to deny themselves.

⁹ King: Zechariah 9:9, Judge: Ezekiel 7:27

¹⁰ Matthew 1:21

¹¹ Luke 9:26

¹² They will be sent to Hell, a place of punishment. They will be there forever.

This tells us that the Messiah was going to be born in _____.

“Take up your cross.”

The Romans used crosses to kill criminals. This was very cruel because the criminal died a slow, painful death. The criminals’ arms were nailed or tied to a large board called a crosspiece. Often the criminal had to walk through the city on his way to the cross. He carried the crosspiece over his shoulders. The people made fun of him. This is the way Jesus died. This is the image, or picture, of “take up your cross.”

Why *do you think* Jesus used this image in Luke 9:23? What was his message to the disciples?



LEARN from the Text

5. In all the texts we have studied, the disciples have been watching Jesus. What has Jesus said or done to give the disciples the idea that he is the Christ of God? Make a list. Use any of the previous lessons in Luke, including Luke 9: 10-17.¹³
 - a. Demons had to obey him.
 - b. He spoke with authority.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

6. Why *do you think* Jesus warned the disciples not to tell anyone that he is the Messiah?

¹³ This is a good activity to do in pairs, then share with others.

7. Imagine you are Peter. You say to Jesus, “You are the Christ of God.”

What *do you think* Jesus will say to you next?

What does Jesus actually say?

8. In Luke 9: 23, Jesus said that his disciples should deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow Him. Give examples of how the disciples have already done this.
- a. Levi gave up his tax collecting business.
 - b.
 - c.

LIVE What you Learn

Discuss one of these questions:

1. Have you heard of people who were hurt or killed because of what they believed? Do you know anyone? (You can change the names to keep the story private.)
2. Is there any person or any belief that you would be willing to die for?

Consider this:

Peter’s answer to Jesus’ question is the turning point of the gospel. A turning point “turns,” or changes the story. It changes the lives of people. Now that Peter and the others understand, Jesus can begin to train them as leaders. They will

become the leaders of the church after Jesus is gone. Years later, Peter, James, and most of the other disciples were killed because they were followers of Jesus.¹⁴

What would you say to Jesus if he asked you, “Who do you say I am?”

The Final Word

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

Jesus in John 15:12-15 NIV

¹⁴ See Acts 12:1-2 regarding James and John 21:18-19 regarding Peter. Tradition says that all the disciples except John died for their faith. John was sent off to the Island of Patmos.

Messiah: An Introduction to the Oratorio

George Frederick Handel's *Messiah* has been one of the greatest pieces of choral music in English for 250 years. It is something like an opera in three parts, but it is performed like a concert with no costumes or action. It tells the story of human redemption—God reaching down to save us and to bring us to Himself. The text is directly from the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments. We love to hear *Messiah* at Christmas because it reminds us that the baby Jesus is also the “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” Handel's friend, Charles Jennen, chose the Biblical text for *Messiah*.¹⁵ He used the English Bible we know as the King James version (1601). Check these verses in your own Bible for better understanding.

Part One: The Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ

The *Messiah* begins with the prophet¹⁶ Isaiah, seven hundred years before Jesus. The Old Testament prophets said that God was going to send the Messiah, the Holy One, to save His people. Handel carefully quotes the Old Testament to show that the Messiah is Jesus. The first song is about someone who will “prepare ... the way of the Lord” (Isaiah 40:3). We know from the New Testament that this is John the Baptist.¹⁷ In other songs we learn that the Messiah will be born from a virgin,¹⁸ and that He will be “God with us” (Isaiah 7:14), “The Mighty God” (Isaiah 9:6), and “The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

8. Alto Recitative:¹⁹ Isaiah 7:14 (Check also Matthew 1:23)

Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, “God with us.”

12. Chorus: Isaiah 9:6

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called: Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace!

¹⁵The Biblical song texts for this introduction came from *Messiah: The Gospel According to Handel's Oratorio*, by Roger A. Bullard (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1993).

¹⁶A prophet is a messenger from God. A prophecy is a message from God about the future or about some other truth.

¹⁷You can read in all the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) about how John the Baptist met Jesus, recognized Him as the Messiah, then told people to follow Him.

¹⁸A virgin is a young woman who has never had sex. Jesus' mother was a virgin (Luke 1 and 2).

¹⁹The words with numbers refer to the types of music. A recitative is a solo, a song by one person. It is more like a musical reading than a song. A chorus is a song that is sung by a group of singers.

The shepherds and the angels tell us that the prophecies of Isaiah have been fulfilled²⁰ in Jesus' birth. This is the Christmas story.

14. 15. 16. Soprano Recitatives: Luke 2:8-11, 13 modified²¹

There were shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And lo! the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them: Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying:

17. Chorus: Luke 2:14

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men!

Part Two: Death and Resurrection

Handel opens Part Two with John the Baptist again. John the Baptist calls Jesus “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). In the Old Testament, people brought lambs to the temple. The lambs were killed to “take away” the people's sins. Jesus died, like one of those lambs, to take away our sin.²²

Handel moves from Jesus' death to His resurrection.²³ Jesus came alive again three days after he died. Jesus proved He was more powerful than death. Handel celebrates this victory with a song for the true King, the “Hallelujah Chorus” (number 44). The words for the chorus come from a vision²⁴ God gave the Apostle John.

22. Chorus: John 1:29, slightly modified

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

26. Chorus: Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

²⁰A prophecy “has been fulfilled” when the event in the prophecy actually happens.

²¹Some of the words have been changed a little from the King James Version. The meaning has not changed. Again, you can check these verses in your own Bible.

²²The price of sin is death. Since Jesus was the Son of God. His death took the place of all our sins for all time (Romans 6:23).

²³Resurrection means physically coming back to life after death.

²⁴A vision is a message from God, but it is a picture, almost a dream, instead of just words.

44. Chorus: Revelation 19:6b, 15, 16b modified

Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, Hallelujah.
The Kingdom of this world has become the Kingdom of our Lord,
and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever, Hallelujah!
King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and he shall reign for ever and ever,
Hallelujah!

Part Three: Living with the King

A lot of people expect Handel's *Messiah* to end after the "Hallelujah Chorus." However, the resurrection is just the beginning. Jesus is alive; He will never die again. If we know Him, we can live with Him now and forever. If we do not know Him, we will be judged when He comes back to earth as the rightful King. The oratorio ends at the end of time when all the people in heaven join the chorus.

53. Chorus: Revelation 5:12b with 5:9 modified, Revelation 5:13b, 14a

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing and honour, glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever, Amen.