

The only thing that matters is that you are reading God's word regularly. While that is still true with this schedule, the goal with this one is to get a better understanding of the entire story of the bible. There is no substitute for reading God's word. Keep reading! My website is at <http://graceofourlord.wordpress.com>. I encourage you to get the actual reading plan I am currently following. You can get it from the same place I do - at [this link](#). They have some great guidance for the reading plan there as well, and they have it all in both PDF and in Kindle format!

August 2012						
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(Week 31)	John 1	Luke 1	1 Luke 2	2 Matthew 3	3 Matthew 4	4
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August Week 4 (Week 35) Summary

John 9, 11, Mark 10, 11, and Luke 20- Click the chapter below to go to the ESV Bible passage for that chapter and read or listen.

[John 9](#) - Upon passing a man who was born blind, some of Jesus' disciples ask a question in verse 2 that seems strange to most of us now - "who sinned, this man or his parents...?" But this mistaken belief about sin and suffering was not uncommon; and we see in verse 34 that the religious leaders that opposed Jesus held the view that the man was born in sin. We know differently, and [Ezekiel 18:20](#) specifically says otherwise, so they should have known as well. Jesus corrects them, letting them know in verses 3-4 that his disability will be used for the glory of God.

We know (and have already read of specific examples) that Jesus could have given the man his sight without even touching him. Some writers have postulated several theories as to why He used the mud that He made from His spittle, before sending the man to the pool of Siloam to wash. Some see a symbolic connection between the scripture's use of the Verb for the word "anoint" to describe how Jesus applied it to his eyes ("Christ" and "Messiah" mean "anointed one"). Others see Jesus purposely making mud (or clay) using his spittle as an analogy to kneading dough, in order to challenge the Pharisees. But we really do not know. There was purpose in everything that Jesus did; and as this was once again on the Sabbath, the point He was making no doubt had its desired effect at that time on those around Him - and the religious leaders that it angered.

At any rate, there is division among these religious leaders at one point (verse 16); and his parents are sent for, and questioned. They confirmed that the man was their son and that he had been born blind. But despite the previously mentioned division, the leaders had made it known that anyone who said that Jesus was the Christ (Messiah), they would be put out of the synagogue. So the man's parents in verses 21-23 seem to be disingenuous as to knowing how he gained his vision; and they pass the buck back to their son. The blind man is interviewed by the Pharisees and other religious leaders for the second time, and was "cast out" of the synagogue for his comments in verses 30-33. He found it amazing that they did not know where Jesus came from. So do we...

Side note: Details and pictures of discoveries at the excavations at the Pool of Siloam are in [this article at BiblePlaces.com](#). That one is a well-written, but older article. A more recent article can be found at [this link to BiblicalArchaeology.org](#).

[John 11](#) - When Jesus receives word that Lazarus is ill, he obviously knows that he is going to die. So some Bible versions are confusing in verse 4. The New American Standard has the best translation - "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it." Verse 6 may mean that Jesus wanted to give the sisters time to mourn after the death of their brother before He arrived to raise him - all the more effective when the Lord's power over death is demonstrated. Verses 9-10 are difficult to understand. The most likely meaning is that since He is the light of the world, those who seek to kill Him will not be able to do so until his "day" - His time among them - is over. His disciples do not understand in verse 11 when He says "Lazarus has fallen asleep," so He tells them plainly in verse 14 that he has died, and that He is glad for their sakes, so that they will believe. Their witness of Him raising Lazarus will be a powerful memory for them.

After He raised Lazarus, the Jews that did not want to believe that He was the Christ went to the Pharisees to tell them what had happened. Their concern about people believing in Jesus as the Messiah was based on the same misguided expectation that the coming of the Messiah would mean he would be a powerful political and military leader. A Messiah that would lead believers in a revolt against Roman rule would result in the coming of the Romans to crush it and remove the leaders (and thus, the Sanhedrin itself) from any position of power. Caiaphas, the high priest of that time (about 18 - 36 AD), proposed that killing Jesus would be best for them all (verse

50). His prophecy in the following verses was unknowingly very foretelling of His resurrection and its effect on God's people.

Jesus did not walk freely among the Jews after that (verse 54); and in verse 56, many were wondering if He would come to the Passover feast at all. Of course He would - He always followed God's commandments.

[Mark 10](#) - Here, Jesus was teaching the crowds that gathered around Him; and once again the Pharisees came to test Him. As He once again condemns divorce in verses 2-12, the exception for adultery is not mentioned here as it is in [Matthew 5:32](#) and [Matthew 19:9](#). This is because there was no disagreement about adultery where divorce was concerned in Jewish, Greek or Roman cultures. But the message is clear - God has always taken marriage seriously, intending one man for one woman from the beginning ([Genesis 2:24](#)).

The rich man in verse 17 wants to know what he needs to do to inherit eternal life. In verse 21, Jesus tells him to "sell all that you have and give to the poor." This is not a command for everyone to give away all of their possessions, nor does it mean that being wealthy is wrong. Jesus knew what was in the man's heart, and his wealth was his god - his idol; and no one can serve two masters ([Matthew 6:24](#)). The reason that He says it is difficult for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven is because of the tendency of man to love earthly possessions so much that they come to believe in their own self-sufficiency. This makes us believe we do not need God. When the Israelites were wandering the desert, God was providing the manna for them ([Exodus 16](#)) daily, teaching them to depend on the Lord. It is when we forget how much we need Him that we lose our way, and fall away from God. Most of us are not wealthy, right? Maybe so, but just remember - a person today making less than \$50,000 per year is still very wealthy compared to the majority of earth's population. And we still have our "idols" today.

Jesus again foretells His death in verses 32-34 - this time giving His apostles even more detail - "they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise." But apparently they still aren't "getting it." In verses 35-37, James and John ask Jesus to give them each a special place beside him when He comes into His glory. It is hard to imagine all that is going through their minds, particularly following Jesus' last prediction of His death. But clearly they have a mistaken understanding of the Kingdom. Jesus tells them they don't know what they are asking. The baptism he is speaking of in verse 39 is of suffering. Jesus uses the occasion to explain that serving others is the work of His Kingdom (verses 42-45) - a point He will continue to drive home before His death. Verse 45 is a fitting summary - "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

[Mark 11](#) - As Jesus approached Jerusalem by way of Bethphage and Bethany, He sent two disciples to get a colt for Him to ride on - fulfilling [Zechariah 9:9](#). Jesus tells them where it will be and what to say when someone asks why they are untying it (including that it will be returned immediately). On the way, He is hailed as the Messiah (verses 9-10). "Hosanna" in verses 9 and 10 comes from an expression found in [Psalm 118:25](#) ("Save us, we pray, O Lord"), which when translated into Greek becomes "Hosanna." In verse 11, He entered the Temple in Jerusalem, just

to look around, then they left for the day. When He returned the next day, He would again cleanse the Temple, driving out the money-changers and those who sold animals. Verse 17 quotes both [Isaiah 56:7](#) and [Jeremiah 7:11](#).

The following day, He saw a fig tree in leaf, even though it was not the season for figs. But the leaves were an outward sign that promised fruit. Yet there was none. The analogy of this to God's people is hard to dispute. So Jesus declared that no one would eat fruit from it again; and in verses 20-21, His disciples saw that it withered to its roots. Verses 23-25 do not mean that everything we want will be given to us if we pray with enough faith. We must remember what the scripture says about motives in prayer ([James 4:3](#)), and about praying according to God's will ([1 John 5:14](#)).

The chief priests, scribes and the elders all come to challenge Jesus, demanding to know what gives him the authority to do the things he is doing. He cleansed the Temple of what was going on right under their noses. But more than that, the question also seems to be of a general nature, in order to strengthen their case against Him. His refusal to answer unless they told Him by what authority John the Baptist had baptized was calculated, as He knew they would not answer (verses 29-33). By saying that the baptism was of man, they would anger the crowds who believed John to be a prophet. But if they said it was of God, they would be admitting that John spoke the truth when he said that he was the one preparing the way for the Messiah ([John 1:23](#) and [Mark 1:7-8](#)).

[Luke 20](#) - In the parable of the wicked tenants in verses 9-16, the word for owner in the "owner of the vineyard" is the same as "lord." The three servants he sent to the tenants represent the prophets. The fruit of the vineyards they are seeking represents Israel's obedience to God. Then, sending his "beloved son" reminds us of what God said ("This is my beloved Son...") at Jesus' baptism in [Matthew 3:17](#). The tenants killing the owner's son alludes to His coming death. When Jesus says that the vineyard owner would come and destroy those tenants, it seems likely to be referring first to the destruction of Jerusalem that will come in A.D. 70. But in a larger sense, it speaks to the final judgment. Those hearing the parable say "Surely not!" as they perceive that the parable applies to the people of Israel. Would God take away the land and give it to other people? But He looks directly at them and says "'What then is this that is written: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?'"

This is from [Psalm 118:22](#), referred to as well in [Isaiah 28:16](#), and is quoted by Peter in [Acts 4:11](#) and [1 Peter 2:7](#).

In verse 19, the scribes and chief priests were predictably angry, as they knew the parable was directed at them. So they sent people to try and trap him with sedition against the Roman government. Jesus' answer in verse 25 was "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." This can be read in different ways, given that He had asked whose image was on the coin. One interpretation is that we are made in God's image, and thus we must render ourselves to God's service.

The Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection, so they try to test him in verses 27-33 with a scenario revolving around the teaching of Moses. But in verse 37 (and in [Matthew 22:31-32](#))

Jesus quotes Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush in [Exodus 3:6](#), explaining that God is the God of the living.