

SECTIONS AND READINGS FOR TRAIL X  
[Following the order of A. T. Robertson's A Harmony of the Gospels]

Section X.1	Jn 7:11-53; Jn 7:53-8:11
Section X.2	Jn 8:12-20; Jn 8:21-59; Jn 9:1-41
Section X.3	Jn 10:1-21; Lk 10:1-24; Lk 10:25-37
Section X.4	Lk 10:38-42; Lk 11:1-13; Lk 11:14-36; Lk 11:36-54
Section X.5	Lk 12:1-59; Lk 13:1-9; Lk 13:10-21
Section X.6	Jn 10:22-39; Jn 10:40-42; Lk 13:22-35; Lk 14:1-24; Lk 14:25-35
Section X.7	Lk 15:1-32; Lk 6:1-17:10
Section X.8	Jn 11:1-44; in 11:45-54; Lk 17:11-37
Section X.9	Lk 18:1-14; Mk 10:1-12    Mt 19:1-12; Mk 10:13-16    Mt 19:13-15    Lk 18:15-17
Section X.10	Mk 10:17-31    Mt 19:16-20:16    Lk 18:18-30
Section X.11	Mk 10:32-45    Mt 20:17-28    Lk 18:31-34; Mk 10:46-52    Mt 20:29-34    Lk 18:35-43
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Section X.14	Mk 11:12-18    Mt 21:18f, 12f    Lk 19:45-48; Jn 12:20-50; Mk 11:19-25    Mt 21:19-22    Lk 21:37f
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Section X.22	Mt 25:31-46; Mk 14:1f    Mt 26:1-5    Lk 22:1f; Mk 14:3-9    Mt 26:6-13    Jn 12:2-8
Section X.23	Mt 14:10f    Mt 26:14-16    Lk 22:3-6; Mk 2 :12-16    Mt 26:17-19    Lk 22:7-13; Mk 14:17    Mt 26:20    Lk 22:14-16, 24-30
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Section X.25	Jn 13:31-35    Mk 14:27-31    Mt 26:31-35    Lk22:31-38    Jn 14:36-38; Mk 14:22-35    Mt 26:26-29    Lk 22:17-20    1 Co 11:23-26
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Section X.30	Jn 18:12-14, 19-23; Mk 14:53, 55-65    Mt 26:57, 59-68    Lk 22:53, 63-65    Jn 18:24; Mk 14:54, 66-72    Mt 26:58, 69-75    Lk 22:54-62    Jn 18:15-18, 25-27
Section X.31	Mk 15:1    Mt 27:1    Lk 22:66-71; Mt 27:3-10    AC 1:18f; Mk 15:1-5    Mt27:2, 11-14    Lk 23:1-3    Jn 18:28-38
Section X.32	Lk 23:6-12; Mk 15:6-15    Mt 27:15-26    Lk 23:13-25    Jn 18:39-19:16
Section X.33	Mk 15:16-19    Mt 27:27-30; Mk 15:20-23    Mt 27:31-34   Lk 24:26-33    Jn 19:16f; Mk 15:24-32    Mt 27:35-44    Lk 23:33-43    Jn 19:18-27
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Section X.35	Mk 15:42-46    Mt 27:57-60    Lk 23:50-54    Jn 19:31-42; Mk 15:47    Mt 27: 61-66    Lk 23:55f
Section X.36	Mk 16:1    Mt 28:1-4; Mk 16:2-8    Mt 28:5-8    Lk 24:1-8    Jn 20:1
Section X.37	Lk 24:9-12    Jn 20:2-10; [Mk 16:9-11]    Jn20:11-18; Mt 28:9-15
Section X.38	[Mk 16:12f]    Lk 24:13-32; Lk 24:33-35    1 Co 15:5
Section X.39	[Mk 16:14]    Lk 24:36-43    Jn 20:19-25; Jn 20:26-31; 1 Co 15:5
Section X.40	Jn 21:1-25
Section X.41	[Mk 16:15-18]    Mt 28:16-20    1 Co 15:6; 1 Co 15:7
Section X.42	Lk 24:44-49    Ac 1:3-8; [Mk 16:19f]    Lk 24:50-53    Ac 1:9-12

HTB X.1-7

THE LIFE OF JESUS: PART TWO OF TWO.  
MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE. JOHN, ACTS 1 CORINTHIANS

COMPREHENSIVE QUESTION:

What does Jesus' teachings and actions as discussed in the Gospels reveal about his God and Father, his relationship with him at that time, and the possibilities of his followers having a similar relationship with God then and now?

## HTB X. LIFE OF JESUS, GOD'S MESSIAH (6 B.C. -30 A.D.): PART TWO OF TWO

### HTB X.1-7

[For introductions to the canonical gospels collectively and individually see HTB IX.I]

#### TRAIL X -- SECTION 1: RS ## 96-98:: Jn 7:11-52 Jn 7:53-8:11.

1. Why do you think Jesus came secretly to the feast in Jerusalem (Jn 7:10), but waited until the middle of the week's celebrations before appearing publicly in the temple's courts to teach?
2. Why did some people trust in Jesus, and some people not believe that he was God's Messiah / Christ / Anointed One? How would you summarize his Jewish listeners' reasons for uncertainty at this point? By what words and actions did Jesus respond to their doubts? Why didn't he refute their mistaken view about where he was born? What does Jesus' messiahship mean to you?
3. How did Jesus account for the apparent discrepancy between the evident wisdom of his teaching and the apparent limits of his formal education? Must he really have attended the best contemporary rabbinic schools, as some 20<sup>th</sup> century Jewish authors maintain? What, then, about his earliest disciples after Pentecost (Ac 4:13)? How can anyone discern the truth of his teaching? What seemed to be the point of Jesus' argument about Moses, circumcision, the Sabbath, and righteous judgement?
4. What does it mean to you that Jesus claims to be (a) the source of living water (Is 58:11; Jn 4:10-14; 6:35; 7:37f), (b) the light of the world (Is 9:2; 42:6; 49:6; 51:9; 60:1, 3; Jn 1:4f; 8:12f; 9:5), and (c) the true judge of humanity (Is 9:7; 11:4; 42:3f; Jn 5:30)? How can you express this meaning in language non-Christians today might be able to understand? How can you help mediate Jesus' water, light, and judgement language to the needy world you live in (Mt 5:14-16; Jn 12:35f, 46; Ep 5:1-10; 1 Jn 1:5-2:2, 8-11; 1 P 3:13-17)?
5. How does the story told Jn 7:53-8:11 seem to fit or interrupt the narrative and dialogue in 7 and 8? What might be indicated by the facts that all the earliest Greek manuscripts of John's Gospel omit this particular section, and that when found in later manuscripts it is sometimes located elsewhere in either John's or Luke's gospel? Why, however, do you think many contemporary biblical textual scholars might think that this story has all the marks of being an authentic piece of ancient Christian tradition that circulated orally in the western church for centuries before it was incorporated into later New Testament manuscripts, even if it meant interrupting the flow of those texts? What do you think this incident teaches about (a) Jesus, (b) adultery (Lv 20:10; Dt 22:22-24), (c) sinning, (d) forgiveness, and even (e) about gender inequality in 1<sup>st</sup> century Judaism? What can you and your Christian congregation learn from it?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 2: RS ## 98-100:: Jn 8:12-20; Jn 8:21-59; Jn 9:1-41.

1. In the complex discourse in ch. 8, how does Jesus answer the Pharisees' challenge to the validity of the claim he makes in 8:12? Why does Jesus focus on his Father's witness this time (Jn 5:31-36; 9:32f; 10:25, 35f)? What might their question, "Where is your father?" (8:19) imply (6:42; 8:41)? How does the confusion between genetic and spiritual concepts of fatherhood impact their understanding of one's relationship to Abraham or to God? Why would Jesus understand their real spiritual father to be quite other than either Abraham or God (8:38, 41, 44)? According to Jesus, what demonstrates a true father-son relationship (8:19, 29, 39-41, 44)? How relevant is that to your own claim as a Christian that God is your father (Mt 6:9)? What is the central issue here for the Pharisees (8:25, 53)? How would you describe in your own words, the connection with Yahweh God that Jesus is claiming here? Why would Jesus' particular way of repeatedly claiming who he really is (8:24, 28, & 58) motivate the Pharisees to try to stone him (Ex 3:14f; Dt 18:20)? Yet, why do you think many people came to trust in Jesus while he was speaking these things (8:29)?
2. What do the promises that Jesus, therefore, made to them (8:31f) mean to you? How significant are Jesus' two conditions (8:31, 36) for the fulfillment of these promises to you? Should we count on the educational implications of the last clause of 8:31, if it is taken as universally true irrespective of these conditions (Ac 26:24)? What connections does Jesus make here between his teaching, truth, freedom, bondage, and sinning? Is human evildoing, then, really just the result of ignorance and cured by better education, as Socrates is reputed to have taught? How so (Ro 7:14-24)? How does this fit with your experience?
3. How important for you is Jesus' teaching in ch. 8 about the evil one? Why can't some people even today hear God's word even through Jesus' own words (Jn 8:41-47; Mt 13:19; 2 Co 4:3f)? What is the evil one's essential nature (8:44)? Do you take the devil as seriously as Jesus seems to have done? Why?
4. What is the significance of Jesus restoring the sight of the man born blind both for the man himself and for all the witnesses (ch. 9)? How would you describe the stages of the development of the healed man's understanding of what had happened to him when he interacts with his neighbours, his family, the authorities and Jesus? How does this miracle illumine the nature of Jesus' conflict with the religious authorities? What point is Jesus trying to get across to the Pharisees at the end (9:39-41)?
5. By what common presupposition did Jesus' disciples and the Pharisees call the disabled man a sinner (9:2, 34)? How true does Jesus say that view is? Why do many Christians, then, still tend to believe it? Why did some of the Pharisees call Jesus a sinner in spite of his amazing deeds (9:16f, 24)? On what basis should Christian congregations include or exclude seekers from their fellowship?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 3: RS ## 101-103:: Jn 10:1-21; Lk 10:1-24; Lk 10:25-37.

1. How should Jesus' auditors understand Jesus' allegory of the sheepfold (10:1-21) in light of the prophets' graphic critiques of Judah's shepherd-leaders of their day (Jr 23:1-12; Ek 34:1-31)? How much had Judah's leadership improved by Jesus' time? What characterizes the "good shepherd"? Who is that good shepherd? Why, then, did they not seem to understand his parable (10:6)? In his subsequent interpretation, what is Jesus claiming by applying that title to himself? How does his explicit self-involvement in his teaching here force his auditors to view him as not simply an amazing teacher (10:19-21)? Is he a liar, a lunatic, the Lord of all [à la C.S. Lewis], or what? How meaningful is each of the many specified characteristics and benefits of Jesus' good shepherding to you as a member of his flock? What do you still seem to be missing in his shepherding? Why?
2. How does the mission of the seventy disciples (Lk 10:1-24) compare with the earlier mission of Jesus' twelve closest disciples (Mk 6:6-13 // Mt 9:35-11:1 // Lk 9:1-6)? What is the most significant difference between the two missions? How is this made even more explicit in Jesus' later commissioning of his disciples to their future mission (Mt 28:19f; Ac 1:8)? Why should even people who had rejected the missionaries' message be reminded once more of the basic message before they move on to other audiences (10:11)? What might Jesus' connecting Satan's cosmic fall with his disciples' successful ministry (10:18) indicate about the importance of Christian lay ministry in God's cosmic economy?
3. Why were the missionaries so joyful about upon their return? How well can you identify with them? However, according to Jesus what should be their major source of joy? In light of Ex 32:32f; Is 4:3f; Dn 12:1f; and Ps 69:28, what might that have meant to them? What might it mean to you as a Christian (Ph 4:3; He 12:23; Rv 3:5; 13:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27)? What do you think this record has to do with Christian congregations' membership roles? Why?
4. How does the above fit with what Jesus himself was rejoicing in right then (Lk 10:21-24)? Whom did Jesus refer to as "babes" (10:21; Mt 11:25f)? Yet what makes them wiser than humanly wise people, even great prophets and kings? Who is being thanked for this astounding approach to true wisdom? Why? Who are his agents? Can you see a reference to the co-operative work of the Trinity here? What about a divine-human partnership as well?
5. How do you imagine the roles of each of the characters in the story of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37)? With which ones can you most easily identify? How does this parable and your identifications illuminate for you Jesus' answer to the lawyer's second question (10:29)? What question does Jesus pose as even more important to answer (10:36)? Would going and doing likewise today be loving your neighbour as yourself (Lv 19:18)? Can you really do this in your own power (Jn 15:4f; 1 Jn 4:19)? How might proud Jews respond to a despised Samaritan's showing them up as faithful keepers of Moses' law code (10:27)? How embarrassed are Christians sometimes by non-Christians' acts of compassion and mercy (Ro 2:14f)? When have you experienced this? Does that mean God is at work in and through them too (1 Jn 2:3, 29; 4:7; Ro 2:14ff; Ph 1:16-18; Mk 9:38-40)? What are the implications of that for you and your Christian congregation?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 4: RS ## 104-107:: Lk 11:1-11 Lk 11:14-36: Lk 11:37-54.

1. Have you ever felt as Martha did here? Would you ever complain to Jesus or God about it? Would Jesus' reply to Martha have helped you? Have you ever followed Mary's example? How would you feel and respond if others seemed to feel and respond as Martha did? How might overhearing Jesus' words to Martha have helped you then? Whom might you help with similar words?
2. How does the model prayer given in response to the disciples' request for instruction in praying (Lk 11:3f), differ in details from the model in the prayer section of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 6:9-13)? How are their themes substantially the same? How wide of a range of the Christian life do these themes cover? Are these prayers meant to be used liturgically? How are they models for your prayers? How much should they be? How would you use them? What other biblical prayer models do you find useful? How so?
3. What have you still to learn about putting into practice the instructions on praying given here by Jesus to his disciples? What is the point of his illustration in Lk 11:5-10? Why do you think his further comments in 11:11-13 were necessary? Why are such basic things so difficult to learn? Where and how could you make a new beginning in your prayer-life? How could your Father's Holy Spirit help you pray better (Ro 8:14-16, 26f)?
4. How does Lk 11:14-36 indicate that certain common themes kept coming up over and over in Jesus' encounters with those who were unimpressed by his healings (Mk 3:19-30; Mt 12:22-45; 16:1-4; Jn 7:20; 8:48, 52; 10:20)? What more does Jesus add to his rebuttal of their criticisms here? What would you feel going over and over the same issues? What do you think Jesus felt about this? How is the repetition of his parable in Lk 11:33-36 (Mt 5:15; 6:22f) a fit illustration of his interaction with his critics? Whose eye does he suggest is evil / bad? What are the consequences of such a condition?
5. When Jesus offers the sign of Jonah on this occasion, what aspect of Jonah's experience does he focus upon? How is this underlined by bringing in the illustration of the "queen of the south"? What coming event / development was Jesus thereby pointing to as a sign to the unbelieving Jewish people he was addressing (Mt 28:19f; Ac 1:8; 9:15; 10:44-11:26; etc.)? Is this aspect of the sign of Jonah the one always in focus in every context and to every audience?
6. Why do you think that, in spite of his full knowledge the Pharisees' scruples about ritual washing before meals, Jesus didn't wash his hands appropriately when he accepted the invitation to breakfast in a Pharisee's home (Lk 11:37f)? How would you have responded to your host's critical astonishment? Might Jesus have just been setting the stage for his subsequent teaching? How does Jesus' positive recommendation (Lk 11:41) follow from his teaching? What relevance has that for you? How many of the subsequent woes to the Pharisees and legal experts are applicable (a) to Christian leaders and biblical experts today or (b) even to you as a layperson? What positive connotations might these woes express, if the word "woe" were to be translated differently, say as "alas" (NEB, REB) or "how terrible" (TEV, CEB)? According to Jesus' practice, which is more loving, to inform your neighbours of the personal and communal consequences of their pernicious attitudes, priorities, and behaviours, or just to leave them to continue unaware of the tragedy? How can you "speak the truth in love" (Ep 4:15)?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 5: RS ## 108-110:: Lk 12:1-59· Lk 13:1-9· Lk 13:10-21

1. How much does the complex teaching session of Lk 12:1-59 remind you of the knotty interactive discourses of Jesus recorded in the middle section of John's gospel (5:19-47; 6:26-71; 7:14-52; 8:12-50; 9:39-10:21; 10:22-39)? How much of Jesus teaching of his disciples must have occurred in the presence of pressing and listening crowds, with interrupting questions from both members of the crowd (12:13) and his disciples (12:14) and asides to teach the crowd (vv. 54-59)? What elements from Jesus' earlier teaching of his disciples were important enough to be repeated yet again -- though in slightly different words -- near the end of his ministry, both for his disciples and those listening in? What from all this teaching seems most important for you to remember for your own Christian walk with God?
2. What theme's seem to keep recurring and, thus, unify this tangled discourse? How do the three new parables (12:16-21 & 37-40; 42-48) fit into the discourse's general and sub-contexts? What was Jesus' main point in each parable? How important is it for you as a disciple of Jesus to bear each of these points constantly in mind, especially in light of the unifying theme(s) relevance to you and your times? In particular, what do you make of what Jesus says about the lord's response to his faithfully watching wise servants (vv. 38, 42-44) in comparison to his unfaithful and unwatching servants (vv. 45-53)? What does this say about (a) God's character and values and (b) the ramifications of his Messiah / the Son of man's unheralded return? How might what Jesus finally says to the crowd in vv. 54-59, connect with the main theme(s)?
3. How startling are Jesus' sharp words in 12:51-53 for those who think of him only as the "Prince of Peace" (Is 9:6; 53:5; Lk 2:14; Ep 2:14f; Cl 3:15)? Have you experienced or observed such familial divisions that a person's encountering Jesus can bring (vv. 52f)?
4. According to Jesus in Lk 13:1-9, what are the connections between sinning, unusual suffering, and God's judgement? How does this accord with what he says in 9:2-4? What does the parable of the barren fig tree add to this? How does all this help you understand and deal with the types of suffering that you encounter personally or socially? What questions about suffering still remain for you?
5. Why do you think Jesus seems to go out of his way to infuriate the ruler of the synagogue, both in his actions and his interpretation of the purpose of the Sabbath in Lk 13:10-21? What other motivation might Jesus have had? What does Jesus' teaching here about the Sabbath mean for your observance of the Christian's Sabbath, the Lord's Day (Ac 20:7; 1 Co 16:2; Rv 1:10)? Why might Jesus repeat several of his similes of the Kingdom of God in this context?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 6:

RS ## 111-115:: Jn 10:22-39; Jn 10:40-42; Lk 13:22-35;  
Lk 14:1-24. Lk 14:25-35.

1. How plainly did Jesus answer the Jews' clear question about his messianic identity (in 10:22-39)? Why? What relationships to God does he claim here? What about this made the Jews angry enough to try to kill him immediately? How did he attempt to defuse their anger from Scripture (Ps 82:6)? How much did that help? Would it have helped you? Why didn't they believe him? Do you believe him? Why?
2. What light does Jn 10:41f throw upon the evidential value of miraculous signs in comparison to that of fulfilled prophecy for prompting belief/ trust in Jesus as God's Messiah? How true is that today in your experience? How relevant is it to contemporary evangelism? Can miraculous signs and prophetic fulfillment combine? Does this section suggest they did for trusting in Jesus? How so?
3. In your own words, how does Jesus answer the question about how many are to be saved (Lk 13:23)? Who really decides who will be saved and when that is possible (Lk 13:24-30, 34; Is 49:8; 2 Co 6:1f)? What further light is thrown on this question by Jesus' later parable in response to the outburst one of the Pharisee's guest in Lk 14:15? What possible implications are there for you and your acquaintances?
4. What aspects of Jesus' multi-faceted relationship to Pharisees are revealed in 13:31-14:24? Are your relationships to other religious factions and groups also multi-faceted? Should they be? How so?
5. How hospitable was it of the Pharisaic ruler to plant an obviously sick man in front of Jesus at his Sabbath meal (Lk 14:1-6)? Was Jesus' subsequent parable just offering good hospitable advice to his fellow guests (14:7-11)? How does his further advice to his host (14:12-14) show how God views hospitality as an opportunity for gracious ministry in God's name rather than a participation in human social reciprocity? How much does God's graciousness subvert human reciprocal norms (Ep 2:8f; Ac 2:4f; 4:33-35) and *vice versa* (Is55:8f)? How might your Christian approach to hospitality have to be adjusted if you took seriously everything that Jesus said at that Pharisee's Sabbath meal, including his concluding parable (Lk 14:15-24)? What countercultural hospitality ministries are opened to you and your Christian congregation by the prevailing and widening economic disparities in your community and country?
6. How well do you respond to the high cost of Christian discipleship (Lk 14:25-35) that Jesus spells out for the masses of people seeking to follow him on his dangerous journey to Jerusalem (Mt 8:34-37; 10:37-40; 16:24-26; Lk 9:23-25)? How do his two parables clarify the matter for you? Should Christian evangelists specify out more clearly the high costs of becoming Christian disciples? How do these costs impact your own Christian living? What discipleship point is Jesus illustrating and stressing with his common salt metaphor (Mt 5:13; Mk 9:50) in this particular context (Lk 14:34f)? How well do you really hear Jesus here?

1. How do the three parables in Lk 15 answer the religious leaders' objections to Jesus' close associations with tax collectors and other "sinners"? What motivates the search for the lost things in the first two parables? How does that reveal Jesus' motives in associating with social and spiritual outcasts? Which approach to sinners, Jesus' or the religious leaders', comes closest to characterizing that of your Christian congregation? Which group do you yourself most closely identify with in these parables: those who are lost, those who aren't lost any more, or those who feel that they have never been lost? What might be the appropriate dynamic of a Christian congregation composed of all three of these groups? How relevant might Jesus' parables in Mt 13:24-30; 36-43 and 47-50 be to this complex dynamic?
2. In what extent ways does the father in the third parable (15:11-32) represent the character of God, the Father? Could Yahweh really be that patient, caring, forgiving, humble, joyful, begging, etc.? Why, then, do you think so many Christian theologians see this figure as expressing the essence of the good news / gospel about God according to Jesus (Ep 2:8f)? Which of the two sons in the story did the father love more? Which one offended him more? Could the prodigal's plan to become one of his father's hired servants have reckoned with the full force of his father's love? Why would that status have been adequate for either the father or the son? Would it have been too humbling for the son to ask for more? Might the elder son be just as lost in his own way as his younger brother, even without apparently ever having left either his father or his home? What would have to change for him really to come home as his father invited him to do? How important is it to enter into your heavenly father's joy? Do you? Can you appreciate how your heavenly father's love is being expressed to you? What further expressions of his love would you prefer? Are both types of loved sons to be found in your congregation? Could Jesus himself be viewed as in some ways like each of the sons? Which type of child of God are you? Why should Christians emulate such a father-God (Mt 5:43-48)? How applicable is this parable also to the new relationship between Jews and Christians as God's elder and younger sons (Ro 9-11; Eph 2:11-22)?
3. In Lk 16, what generally is taught positively and negatively about Christian stewardship of riches? Do you find the first parable difficult to understand if taken without any note of irony? Does Jesus really suggest in Lk 16:9 anyone can achieve an eternal goal by material means however clever they may be by worldly standards? How so (Mt 19:21; Mk 10:21; Lk 18:22; 12:33f; Mt 25:34-40; 2 Co 8:14; Ac 4:34f)? How does this fit with Lk 16:11-14 (Mt 6:24)? How pertinent is the necessity of choosing between serving God or mammon / possessions in (a) your culture, (b) your congregation, (c) your life? Yet how can Christians use material riches to gain spiritual profit in God's economy (Ro 12:8; 1 Ti 6:9f, 17-19)? How did According to Jesus' second parable (Lk 16:19-31), what eternal consequences might follow if money is your master? How do you think the Pharisees "who were lovers of money" who scoffed at Jesus' God or money dichotomy, responded to this second parable?
4. If the story of Lazarus and the rich man (Lk 16:19-31) is only a parable, what might its main point be? Are there any indications that it also is, or is based upon, a true story? If it were a true story, what might it teach about (a) the nature of life after death, (b) the relationships between people there, (c) how riches and poverty influence one's eternal destiny, and (d) the revelatory resources available in life the influence one's eternal destiny (vv. 29-31)?
5. Why might the strong statements of Jesus in Lk 17:1-4, prompt his disciples to exclaim, "Lord, increase our faith" (17:5)? How does Jesus try to refocus their concern about the low quantity of their faith, to the quality of faith: first by repeating his metaphor about amazing power of even a very little faith (v. 6; Mt 17:20), and then with a parable trading on their view of the attitudes and behaviours of a typical human master- servant relationship (vv. 7-10)? However, if his disciples remembered Jesus' earlier parable about faithfully waiting servants who happily were served by their late-returning master (Lk 12:35-37), should / would they have heard the grammatically ambiguous Greek verb form in v.10b as "You say" [an indicative / statement] rather than as "Say" [an imperative / command (as it is usually translated)]? Is it really fully appropriate for faithfully obedient servants of the God and Father that Jesus spoke about, to respond in faith to God's graciousness as if he were exactly like a typically heartless human master, namely, not only in appropriate humility and gratitude, but also in abject self-degradation, as 'unprofitable servants ... [who] have [only] done that which it was our duty to do" (Jb 25:6)?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 8: RS ## 118-120:: Jn 11:1-44 Jn 11:45-54: Lk 17:11-37.

1. Why had Jesus been avoiding not only Herod Antipas' Galilean territory but also the environs of Jerusalem for quite some time (Jn 10:22, 30-40; Lk 13:22, 31-34)? What can be learned from this about how to work within the limits of our circumstances? Nevertheless, why did he venture within 3 km of Jerusalem now? What do you make of Jesus' answers to his disciples questions (Jn 11:7-16)? Would you have felt like Thomas and his fellow disciples? When does Christian ministry have to reckon with such serious risks? Is that part of what Jesus was referring to in Mk 8:34; Mt 10:38; 16:24; Lk 14:27?
2. How could Lazarus' sickness not be "unto death, but for the glory of God" (Jn 11:4), if he was really going to die (Jn 11:14; 9:2f)? Did Jesus think there was always a divine purpose for sickness (Jn 9:3) and even death? Why does this particular healing ministry seem to have been so hard on Jesus personally? What range of feelings and concerns seemed to have motivated Jesus' series of responses to Lazarus' fatal illness? How did others' responses, feelings, expectations, faiths, and behaviors seem to influence Jesus' feelings, actions, and words? How do similar matters influence your own attempts to minister to those who are ill, dying or bereaved? Would your ministry in such circumstances be easier if you too had the power to raise the dead? How similar was Lazarus' resurrection here to that expected by some 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews in the end times? How does Jesus link the two types of resurrection together and to himself? How hopeful are Jesus' words to you personally?
3. How has Martha grown since Jesus had gently rebuked her (Lk 10:38-42)? What still shows her practical self? How similar and different are the two sisters in the face of bereavement? Who are you most like then?
4. How are the popular and official Jewish responses to Jesus' dramatic and well-attested miracle on the very outskirts of Jerusalem quite understandable (Jn 11:45-54)? How did these responses alter the pattern and location of his ministry? What implications might be drawn from this for our Christian ministries today? What do you make of John's editorial explanation and interpretation of Caiaphas' prophetic insight (v. 52)? How much of this do you think Caiaphas himself understood? What might he himself have meant and had in mind (1 S 17:4-11; 2 S 20:20-22; Jo 1:12-15 [another aspect of the sign of Jonah?]; Is 53:4-6,8, 10-12)?
5. Why do you think that Jesus emphasized that it was only a stranger / foreigner, even a Samaritan, who glorified God for his healing (Lk 17:18)? Does this happen even today? What could God's people learn from this anomaly?
6. What do you think the Pharisees had in mind in asking when the kingdom / reign of God would come (Lk 17:22)? How thoroughly did Jesus' answer redirect them [Greek = "among" / "in the midst of"]? How does it orient you? However, when he teaches his disciples about looking for the coming of the Son of man, what points does Jesus make? What should each point mean for you as a Christian expectantly looking for Jesus' return (It 2:11-14; 1 P 4:7f; 2 P 3:3f, 10-14)? Does Lk 17:34f (Lk 17:33; Mt 24:36-43) clearly teach that Jesus will come to "rapture" his true followers so they will escape the time of God's judgement?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 9: RS ## 121-123:: Lk 18:1-14; Mk 10:1-12 // Mt 19:1-12; Mk 10:13-16// Mt 19:13-15 // Lk 18:15-17.

1. In what ways do your prayers express your view of God and the things you think he values? How do they also reveal what you think of yourself, especially in comparison to others? Why do you think God should accept your prayers? What could you learn from Jesus' two parables about prayer plus his interpretative comments (Lk 18:1-14), that might help transform your prayer life?
2. What do you think Jesus' comment in Lk 18:8b mean in light of its wider context (Lk 17:20-37)? What difference would it make, if Jesus were referring to "the faith" [as in the Greek] rather than to "faith" [as in many translations] (Ac 6:7; Ro 12:6; Jd 3)? What might this mean for you and your Christian congregation?
3. What motivated the Pharisees' question about divorce (Mk 10:2; Mt 19:3)? How important was Gn 1:27 and 2:24 to Jesus' teaching about marriage, divorce and adultery here and in Mt 5:31f and Lk 16:18? How did his interpretation of the purpose of Moses' provision for divorce (Dt 24:1-4) differ from that of the Pharisees? How strict, even tough, do you think Jesus' teaching on this is for Christians today in a much more sexually permissive society? How might Paul's teaching on divorce Christians help you (1 Co 7:10-16)? Is it, therefore, preferable not to marry at all (Mt 19:11f; 1 Co 7:8f, 32-35, 39f; He 13:4; 1 P 3:7)? How well are Jesus' teachings about marriage reflected in the wedding services and marriages that you have witnessed?
4. How do the three accounts of Jesus and the children (Mk 10:13-16; Mt 19:13-15; Lk 18:15-17) compare? What did the people want from Jesus? What did his blessing entail? Why do you think his disciples reacted as they did? Why was Jesus so indignant about this (Mk 19:14)? How did he, therefore, treat the children? What lessons should Christian congregations and families learn from this? To what extent does Jesus' welcoming and blessing of little children warrant the Christian's baptizing and / or dedicating children of believers?
5. What do you think Jesus meant about only being able to enter the kingdom of God as a little child (Mk 10:15; Mt 18:3f; Lk 18:17)? How significant is this to you as an adult Christian (1 Co 14:20; Jn 3:1 P 1:3, 23; 2:2; 1 Jn 2:12)? Does that mean you should remain a spiritual child (Ep 4:13-15; 5:1; He 5:11-6:3; 1 P 2:2; 1 Jn 2:13f)? Why?

TRAIL X -- Section 10: RS # 124:: Mk 10:17-31 // Mt 19:16-20:16 // Lk 18:18-30.

1. Why do you think Jesus questioned the rich young ruler's appeal to him as the standard of goodness? What could Christians learn from Jesus about this? Why does Jesus keep referring people to God, the Father? What does this imply about the relationships within the Trinity?
2. What was so astonishing for Jesus' disciples about his teaching about how difficult it was for rich people to enter God's kingdom or to be saved? Would Christians you know be equally astonished? What makes this so hard for the rich? Is it just as true today as it was then? Who makes salvation possible, even for rich people? In what does your society really trust for its security? In what do you trust for the present and hereafter?
3. What did Jesus love about the rich young ruler? How did this man show the seriousness of his request? How is his desire to do the right thing in order to obtain eternal life compatible with Jesus' immediately-preceding teaching about the necessity of entering the kingdom of God as a little child (Mk 10:15, 17)? In talking about keeping the commandments, why doesn't Jesus mention the first four of Moses' ten commandments (Ex 20:3-17; Dt 5:7-21)? Which of the last six commandments is omitted in all three accounts here? How is this law reinterpreted in Matthew's and Mark's accounts? What do you make of that apparent omission and reinterpretation? What two things more did Jesus say the man should do to become perfect / mature / complete (Mt 19:21)? How are they connected? How are either or both of them related to the "omitted" commandment and its reinterpretations? Do you think that that man eventually came around to following Jesus? How so?
4. Does Jesus really teach here that people can earn eternal life by perfectly keeping the ten commandments? What is lacking in your life that keeps you from being complete according to God's standards? How closely might that be involved in following Jesus appropriately? What promises does Jesus give to those who sacrificially follow him and his good news (Mt 19:21, 28f; Mk 20:21, 28f; Lk 18:22, 29f)? What rewards have you seen so far in your life following Jesus and his way?
5. How does the parable of the day-labourers (Mt 20:1-16) help you to understand and apply Jesus' repeated maxim, "The last shall be first, and the first last" (Mk 10:31; Mt 19:30; 20:16; Lk 13:30)? Are you, like some of the workers, offended by the landowner's payment system? Why? Do you also question the owner's fairness? How so? What is revealed here in the owner's actions and reply, about God's character and his sense of economic justice? How is grace related to matters of justice and merit: (a) for your society, (b) for you, and (c) for God (Rv 20:11-15)? What might be the implications of this for Christian justice ministries today (1 Co 13:6)?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 11: RS ## 125-126:: Mk 10:32-45 // Mt 20:17-28/I Lk 18:31-34; Mk 10:46-52 // Mt 20:29-34/I Lk 18:35-43.

1. How do you account for the disciples' responses to Jesus' determination to go up to Jerusalem for the Passover festival (Mk 10:32)? How clear does Jesus' final description of what would happen to him in Jerusalem seem to you? Yet what might have been involved in his disciples not understanding anything of what he meant (Lk 18:34)? How does the incident with James and John on the way there, illustrate how little they comprehended Jesus words and mission? How important for his disciples was it for Jesus himself to be leading their way to Jerusalem? What might Jesus' example here teach his followers about some of the basic characteristics of Christ-like leadership? How much was this example needed in the earliest history of the church (Mt 16:24; Jn 13:14f, 34f, 1 Co 1:23-26; Ga 2:20; Ep 5:1; Ph 2:1-8; He 12:1-3; 1P 2:20-23; 3:16-18a; 4:1f, 13-19, 1Jn 4:10f, 19)? How is it still very relevant today?
2. How often do Christians seek preferment in God's economy through family connections, as did Jesus' aunt here for his two cousins (Mt 27:5; Mk 15:40; Jn 19:25)? What do Jesus and his Father think about this strategy for gaining authority? Why? Does your Christian congregation pay much attention to this?
3. What is wrong with the leadership request of James, John and their mother? Might they have been pondering the implications of Jesus' recent promise in Mt 19:28f? How much did the issue of their future leadership roles preoccupy the disciples during this whole period (Mt 18:1,4; Mk 9:33-35; Lk 22:24,28)? How much of their attitude comes from a sense of entitlement (Mt 17:19f; 19:13, 27-28; Mk 9:38f; 10:28-30; Lk18:28-30)? For whom would Jesus' subsequent teaching about the service / ministry character of Christian leadership seem totally paradoxical? But from whose point of view would it be normative? How well does Jesus himself model this servant-leadership in his own life, ministry and relationships (Mk 10:45; Mt 20:28; Jn 13:2-17; Ph 2:1-11; Ep 5:2)? Is Jesus indicating that God's own sovereignty/leadership is also service-oriented (in 3:16; Ep 5:1f)? How does all this reflect the proper relationship between authority and responsibility in any divinely-approved leadership? What about your own?
4. How does Jesus connect his dangerous journey to Jerusalem and his discussion of the style and costs of his type of leadership to his basic purpose for coming to planet earth (Mk 10:45; Mt 20:28)? How does his basic redemptive purpose relate to you (Lk 22:19f; Mt 26:27; 1 P 1:19, 3)? How have you responded to it (Ep 2:8-10)? What other purposes did Jesus, God's Messiah have had for coming into the world (e.g., Jn 1:9-14, 16-18, 29, 33; 3:13-21; 5:24, 36; 6:27, 33, 35, 38-40; 7:37-39; 8:26; 10:10, 19:46-50, etc.)? How do you respond to them?
5. Why would Jesus ask the obviously blind person(s) what he / they wanted? What would you answer if Jesus asked you that question today? How might your faith / trust also make you well (Mk 10:52; Lk 18:42)? Would that motivate you to follow Jesus more faithfully? Do you know any people who are following Jesus because he has healed them? Who else might see what happened to you or them and, therefore, be prompted to join you in praising and glorifying God (Lk 18:43)? Why should we glorify God rather than Jesus for healings (Jn 5:19-21; Mt 5:16)? Why do you think Bartimaeus and his father are specifically named by Mark (10:46), when so many others remain nameless?

1. Has your own spiritual, mental, physical, social or economic state ever seemed to handicap your attempt to investigate who Jesus really is? How so? Did you, like Zacchaeus, find a way to overcome that barrier? Did you feel that Jesus noticed your initiative and responded with a special interest in you personally (Mt 7:7f; Lk 11:9f)? How did that make you feel?
2. Would you feel as Zacchaeus did, if Jesus were to announce that he, and probably some of his disciples, would be visiting your house this evening? What life-changes might be in order for you, if you invited Jesus further into your life (Rv 3:20)? Why? How do you think Jesus' visit might have affected Zacchaeus' family? How might Jesus' further involvement in your life impact other people close to you? How relevant are these possible consequences to your decision as to whether you will become further involved with Jesus (Lk 14:25-33)? What other considerations would concern you?
3. How might the parable that Jesus told in Lk 19:11-28, be designed to dissuade the multitudes from soon attempting to acclaim him as king in Jerusalem? Did it succeed? Would it have dissuaded people that you know today from embracing Jesus' lordship /sovereignty? Does it dissuade you? Why?
4. What does the parable really teach? Do you like it? How true was the third servant's / slave's preconception of his royal/ noble master? Would that be a correct view of God himself? How does your own conception of God influence your Christian life and service? What do you expect when God's Messiah will evaluate your life (Mt 16:27; Ro 14:10, 12; 2 Co 5:10; Rv 20:12f)?
5. How do the people's and the religious leaders' attitudes, deliberations, and actions with respect to Jesus as he returns to Bethany, very near to Jerusalem, compare? What might happen if Jesus came to your community today? Why is Lazarus also caught up in this? How are the people you love or serve sometimes affected by what people think of you? What can be done about this?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 13: RS # 128b:: Mk 11:1-11 // Mt 21:1-11 14-17 // Lk 19:29-44 // Jn 12:12-19.

1. How would you imagine being one of the two disciples sent out to fetch Jesus' special transport into Jerusalem? How would this have tested your faith? How might you have benefited from this experience? Would you have lent Jesus your animal(s) under those conditions? Might Jesus have prearranged the loan? How? What would it have been like to return the animal(s) after being involved in that great procession? What challenges in your life could teach you similar things?
2. If Jesus really didn't want to be acclaimed as a political Messiah, why did he ride into Jerusalem at Passover festival time on the Jewish royal mount (Mt 21:5; Zc 9:9)? What might be symbolized by Jesus' riding on a colt that had never been backed? Why would it have been wise to have the colt's dam alongside him during his first experience of being mounted, even by Jesus (Mt 21:2)?
3. Why would the people greet Jesus with the words of Ps 118:25f that were usually sung at the conclusion of the Passover meal to welcome the coming of God's messianic king? What might the recent resurrection of Lazarus have had to do with it? Why didn't Jesus' disciples understand what was happening until after his ascension (Jn 12:16)? What really motivated the people at that time? What motivates you to praise Jesus and to welcome him as king of your life? What would that lordship involve?
4. How much do you think Jesus shared the feelings and joyful praises of his disciples and the growing crowd? What really moved him to tears as he approached Jerusalem (Lk 19:41)? What was the peace that he had hoped to bring to Jerusalem [the City of Peace] (Lk 19:38, 42; Jn 14:27; 16:33)? What were the feelings of the religious leaders then (Lk 19:39f; Jn 12:19)? Have your feelings ever been so discontinuous with those sharing the same event with you? What accounted for this for Jesus? For you? How did God help Jesus cope with this? How does he also help you in such circumstances?
5. How did Jesus throw down the gauntlet and escalate the tension between himself and the religious authorities by his highly visible, symbolic entrance into the capital and his subsequent public mass healings in the temple? How did Jesus respond to the authorities' criticisms? How well did Jesus use scripture in each case (Hb 2:11; Ps 8:2 [LXX])? How good a model is this for your own use of the Old Testament? Why?

TRAIL X: -- SECTION 14: RS ## 129-131 Mk 11:12-18 // Mt 21:18f, 12f // Lk 19:45-48; Jn 12:20-50 Mk 11:19-25/I Mt 21:19-22// Lk 21: 37f.

1. What might the "cursing" of the barren fig tree mean as an enacted parable about the Jewish nation's (Ho 9:10; Jl 1:7; Mi 7:1-6) judgement (Jr 8:13; 29:17; Ho 2:12; Is 34:4; Lk 13:6-9)? Might knowing the biology of the fig tree help clarify why Jesus expected first fruits even out of season? What reasons can you give for Jesus' judgement, especially in light of Lk 13:6-9, his disciplinary actions in the temple (Mk 11:12-18; Mt 21:12f; Lk 19:45-46), and his teaching in the temple (Lk 19:48; 21:37) about judgement (Jn 12:47-49)? What further lessons does Jesus draw from this incident for his disciples? How meaningful to you are Jesus' promise about Christian's prayer and its conditions? How do both inform your own prayer life?
2. Should your congregation's building be a house of prayer? Does it need to be cleansed too? Why? How? In what way could your building become a more effective house of prayer for all the nations / peoples? How would your congregation feel about such an inclusive role?
3. Why would the Greeks [either God-fearing Gentiles or Greek-speaking Jews in Jerusalem for the festival] through the disciple named Philip [Greek = lover of horses] from Bethsaida in Galilee of the Gentiles (Jn 1:44; 12:20f; Mt 4:15; Is 9:1)? How well does Jesus' summary (Jn 12:23-26) of some of the points his teachings answer the Greeks (In 10:16)? What relevance do Jesus' teachings also have for Gentile Christians today?
4. How does Jesus' revelation of his present troubled state of mind, his prayer, and the voice responding from heaven (Jn 12:27-29) all fit into Jesus' immediate public interaction with the Greeks and the crowd (Jn 12:23f, 31-33)? How long do you think Jesus was in anguish about his coming death? How does his prayer now compare with his one later in the week in Gethsemane (Mk 14:35f)? How long did it take for Jesus to resolve this issue? How much did the heavenly answer help him? What can we learn from this for our anguished praying (He 2:18; 4:15f; 5:8)? Whom was that voice meant to help? Why, then, would it be so inarticulate for the crowd that Jesus himself had to interpret its meaning for them (Jn 12:31-34)? How was that meaning connected with what Jesus had just been saying to the Greeks? How well did the crowd understand Jesus' interpretation? What, therefore, puzzled them (Jn 12:34)? What do you think they were meant to make of Jesus' response to their question (Jn 12:35f)?
5. Why do you think most of the people who heard his teachings and witnessed his miracles did not believe in him, at least at this time (Jn 12:37-41; Is 53:1; 6:1, 10)? Yet, why did many of the Jewish rulers believe, even if only secretly (Jn 12:42f; 3:1; 7:48-52; 19:38-40)? Why are there many secret believers today in many countries? Where do you think they might live? Does their secrecy make their faith insincere, inferior, inadequate or unsaving (Ro 10:9-13)? What are the consequences both of believing and not believing (Jn 12:35f, 46-48)?
6. In closing this discourse (Jn 12:44-50), how much do the ultimate salvation and judgement of people depend upon their responses to what Jesus had just said was soon to happen to him as the Son of man and to his general teaching (Jn 12:47f)? Who was the real source of Jesus' actions and teaching? What is the actual standard that people will be judged by? Whose standard is it really? Who, then, will be judging people? Why, then, did Jesus come (Jn 12:46-50; 1:4, 11-13; 3:16-21; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35f; 14:6)? How are you reckoning with these facts?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 15: RS # 132a:: Mk 11:27-12:12 // Mt 21:23-46 // Lk 20:1-19.

1. What had happened the day before to provoke a broad spectrum of religious leaders to join forces to challenge Jesus' authority publicly while he was teaching the people in the temple's outer courts? What was different about Jesus' response to those in Jerusalem who challenged his authority for his actions now in comparison to his responses to similar challenges on earlier visits to Jerusalem (in ch. 5 & 7-10)? What does Jesus' reply to the leaders' claim of ignorance about John's source of authority, indicate about what he knew that they really trying to do? How does his conditional question turn the table on them? What could Christian leaders today learn from Jesus here about how to respond to challenges to their authority in various contexts?
2. How applicable is Jesus' first parable here (Mt 21:28-31) (a) to the leaders and the people he was addressing in the temple and (b) to Christian leaders and people today? How does Jesus' subsequent reminder of the diverse responses to John the Baptist's ministry (Mt 21:31-33), both clarify the main point of his parable and cleverly apply their answer to his question (v. 31) to themselves? Whom might be the modern equivalents of the publicans and harlots for your Christian congregation?
3. At the end of Jesus' second parable here, is there really a discrepancy between the synoptic accounts about who answers Jesus closing question about the vineyard owner's appropriate response to the maltreatment of his agents': Jesus (Mk 12:9 & Lk 20:16) or the leaders Jesus' was addressing (Mt 21:41) [Remember, there are no quotation marks in the original text!]? Who, then, are the "they" who said, "God forbid!" when they heard about the owner's appropriate response (Lk 20:16)? To whom does Jesus then cite two Old Testament references (Ps 118:22f & Is 8:14f)? Without the addition of Jesus' pointed interpretation (Mt 21:43f), how relevant to authorizing and applying of Jesus' point would these references seem? When the Jewish authorities realized that the parable was about them, was it really the threat of the consequences in the Isaiah reference that motivated them to postpone behaving just like the vineyard's husbandmen against chosen God's agent whose authority they were questioning? How significant might it have been that Jesus quoted and interpret for them the few verses from Ps 118 which immediately precede the celebratory cries of the people (Ps 118:24f) during Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem just two days earlier?
4. Whom might Jesus' second parable plus the scriptures and his interpretation apply to today? How so? Would they also respond to Jesus as the Jewish leaders did then? How might they respond? To what in particular about Jesus' words and manner could they react? What might their responses be to Jesus' criticisms today? How well do the Christian leaders that you know best take essential criticism today? Would they respond differently even to pertinent criticisms of their professed Lord / Master, Jesus, God's Messiah? How would you respond? Why?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 16: RS ## 132b-133:: Mt 22:1-14; Mk 12:13-17 // Mt 22:15-22 // Lk 20:20-26.

1. How does the parable of Mt 22:1-14 develop what Jesus had just said to the Jewish leaders (Mt 21:43), yet go well beyond it? How does this parable differ from the similar one in Lk 14:16-24? What does this particular parable teach about (a) God's character and (b) how people enter his kingdom? What do you make of the person without the wedding garment? Does his treatment imply excommunication by God?
2. Should the last sentence of the parable (Mt 22:14) be taken as a general principle about God's dealing with humanity? If so, what would it mean? What other biblical evidence is there to support such an interpretation (Jn 1:11-13; 1 Th 1:2-7; Ro 8:29f; 9:10-16; 11:29; Ph 1:6; 2 P 1:10; Rv 17:14)? How would such an interpretation fit with the context of this parable in Matthew? What other interpretations that fit this context, are also possible? Which should be preferred?
3. How might the way some Pharisees and supporters of Herod Antipas approached Jesus, have warned him about their true intent in publicly questioning him? How true were their introductory statements about Jesus? How well can truth be spun to hide ones' nefarious motives? How is a person of such sterling character always open to similar challenges? Are similar attempts made today? For example? Even in Christian circles? What can be learned from Jesus' response about how to handle them constructively?
4. How does Jesus' wise answer about paying taxes to Caesar apply to Christians of any time and political jurisdiction (Ro 13:1-7; 1 P 3:13-17)? How do you apply it? Should Christians be equally scrupulous in rendering to their government what is its due as they are in rendering to God what is his due? What is each authority due? Is there a clear distinction between them? What is that?
5. How does Jesus in these temple encounters demonstrate the wisdom which he advised his own disciples to practice earlier during their extension of his ministry (Mt 10:16-20; Ro 16:17)? What would that involve for you in your own Christian life and ministry (Ja 1:5; 3:17; Ro 12:9, 17-21; Ep 4:16, 25)?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 17: RS ## 134-135:: Mk 12:18-27 // Mt 22:23-33 // Lk 20:27-40; Mk 12:28-34 // Mt 22:34-40.

1. Could the Sadducees' stock conundrum convince anyone, like their theological rivals, the Pharisees, that they were wrong to believe in any resurrection of the dead (Ac 23:6-10)? In the Old Testament, how clear is the teaching on the resurrection of individuals, rather than just the nation of Israel, from death (Ho 13:14; Is 25:8; 26:19; Ek 37:1-14; Dn 12:1f; Ps 16:10f; 49:15; 86:13; Jb 19:25-27)? How damaging are Jesus' two criticisms of the Sadducees and their argument in Mark and Matthew? To whom might the same criticisms also apply today? What are the implications for Christians that you know?
2. How did Jesus prove that the resurrection of the dead was taught in the Old Testament to the Sadducees who considered only the five writings of Moses to be authoritative? What can Christians learn from this strategy for presenting the good news about the Messiah to people who trust only a few parts of the Bible? Do you yourself consider every part of the Bible equally authoritative? For what (Ro 15:4-6; 2 Ti 3:15f)?
3. How much can we learn about the nature of human life and relationships after the general resurrection from what Jesus says here to the Sadducees? Is Jesus really teaching that all or some resurrected people become angels? What exactly does he say in his comparison of resurrected people with angels? How might all this relate to the church being the Bride of God's Messiah (Is 62:5; Ep 5:28-32; Rv 19:7-9; 21:2, 9f)?
4. Which religious party's scribes probably cheered Jesus' clever proof of the resurrection of the dead from Exodus (Lk 20:39)? Might Sadduceean scribes have been convinced by Jesus' argument, or could they have meant something quite different by such a verbal response? Like what? What might the multitudes' response (Mt 22:33) have had to do with silencing the Sadducees (Lk 20:40; Mt 22:34)? However, what about Jesus' answer only encouraged a representative of the Pharisees to test him further (Mt 22:34f)? How important is it to expect and interpret different groups' diverse responses to your answer to any particular question?
5. In light of the cognitive connotation of the Hebrew word for "heart", why did both Jesus and the Pharisaic scribes of his day have commonly added the words, "with all your mind/ understanding" when they quoted the greatest commandment from Dt 6:5 (Lk 10:27)? How important is it to you that this commandment is tied to the basic Jewish creed of Dt 6:4, which Jesus also quoted here according to Mk 12:29? Why do you think Jesus went on to add the second greatest commandment from Lv 19:18? Was it just the customary thing to do (Lk 10:27)? What do Jesus' two comments about these commandments mean to you (Mk 12:31 & Mt 22:40)? How relevant is this succinct summary of the Old Testament law for Christians (Ro 13:8-10)? What was the significance of the Pharisaic scribe's addition from 1 S 15:22 to Jesus' answer (Mk 12:33)? How might that have been a discrete jibe at the Sadducees who focused their piety on the sacrificial system's efficacy? However, how did Jesus charitably interpret the value of his addition (Mk 12:34)? Nevertheless, what more did the scribe need to actually enter God's kingdom (Jn 3:5-7)? And might the Pharisees' exclusive focus on keeping the law, even in its succinct love-form, also tend to cause them to miss the gracious significance of the immanent sacrifice of God's Suffering Servant Messiah (Is 53 1Jn 4:7-11, 19)? How relevant are such lacks to you in focusing on these two primary commandments (Ep 2:8-10)?

TRAIL X: -- SECTION 18 RS ## 136-137:: Mk 12:35-37 // Mt 22:41-46/I Lk 20:41-44; Mk 12:38-40// Mt 23:1-39/I Lk 20:45-47.

1. How could Jesus' apparently simple question about the Messiah / Christ turn the table on the Pharisees? Why do you think the common people were so pleased? What does Jesus' use of Ps 110:1 reveal about his view of the Old Testament scriptures' authority, authorship, and interpretation? How normative are our Lord's views for Christians? What does that mean for you?
2. How well are Christians able to answer the question, "How can the Messiah be both David's son and his Lord"? How important is it to you personally that as Jesus of Nazareth, God's Son has come, lived, died, and risen in human flesh (Lk 1:31-35; 24:36-43; Jn 1:1-4, 9-14; Ro 1:3f; Ga 4:4-7; Cl 1:15-22; 1 Ti 3:16; He 1,1-3; 2:9-11, 14-18; 4:14-16; 5:7-9; 1 Jn 1:1-4; 4:2f; 2 Jn 7)? Why?
3. In calling the scribes and Pharisees names (e.g., Mt 23:17, 23, 33), was Jesus going against his own teaching (Mt 5:33)? What could account for his apparent lack of self-control, or anger, in publicly denouncing them, probably right in the crowded temple courts? Is this part of a deliberate strategy to provoke the whole range of Jewish authorities to unite in action against him during that Passover festival in spite of his popularity with the people? How much does Jesus' diatribe resemble those of classical Old Testament prophets such as Isaiah (3:11; 5:7, 18f, 20f, 23), Jeremiah (23:1f, 11), and Ezekiel (34:2-10)? According to Jesus, what was the true relationship between prophets and religious and political leaders, both in the past (Mt 23:29-32, 35) and in the future (Mt 23:34)? Where is the peacemaking, meek and mild Jesus here? What good might such scathing public criticism have accomplished? Are such public denunciations of public and religious leaders in order for Christians today? How so?
4. In your own words, what were Jesus' specific criticisms of the Pharisees' and scribes' attitudes and behaviours? What overall sins are expressed in their actions? Which of these criticisms may be also applicable to some Christian leaders today? Why might those leaders, nevertheless, still be worthy of some respect (Ga 2:14; 1 Ti 5:17, 19f; 1 P 5:5f)? Which of Jesus warnings should you consider personally?
5. What very different note is sounded in Jesus' closing words to Jerusalem, in spite of their perennial treatment of God's prophets (Mt 23:37-39)? How is he following in Jeremiah's footsteps (Mt 23:38)? What might Jesus mean by his last sentence to Jerusalem, just a few days after his triumphal entry into the city was heralded by the people with the same words from Ps 118:26 (Mt 21:9-11)?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 19: RS ## 138-139a:: Mk 12:41-44// Lk 21:1-4; Mk 13:1-13 // Mt 24:1-13 // Lk 21:5-19.

1. If Jesus were watching what you contribute financially to the ministry of God's house, what might his evaluation of your giving be? Is Jesus here recommending giving sacrificially even what one needs to live on? Do you give only out of your surplus? What relationship do you see between God's house and God's work? How do you view your financial responsibilities for God's work (Ro 12:6, 8; 2 Co 8:3, 12)? In what ways, other than through finances, can you also contribute to God's work (Ac 3:6; 1 Co 12:7; Ep 4:16; 1 P 4:10f)?
2. Why was Jesus not nearly as impressed with the temple's magnificence as were his disciples and the many tourists at Passover? When did Jesus' predictions about the destruction of the temple come true? What lessons might Christians draw about how to view our own congregation's buildings?
3. What warning does Jesus give his disciples concerning those making future messianic and prophetic claims? Who might be making such claims in Jesus' name? Does this happen today? Why?
4. Why shouldn't Jesus' followers be alarmed by all the rumours and dire predictions of an imminent doomsday, such as we have in plenty today? What perennial dramatic events are not true signs that God's final judgement is almost upon us? What two things does Jesus say have to happen before that time fully comes (Mk 13:9f; Mt 24:9, 14; Lk 21:12f)? How might they involve you and your Christian congregation? What differences do you see between biblical forecasts of humanity's future and secular ones today?
5. How were Jesus' disciples to understand and respond to the coming times of their public persecution for his name's sake (1 P 4:12-16, 19)? Who, does Jesus say, might well hate them enough to betray them? Why? How should Christians prepare for their interrogation (1 P 3:14-17)? How relevant is this to you? What words of encouragement does Jesus have for them? How could God use this suffering of Christians to accomplish his good purposes before the end comes? What Christians are suffering today? Why? How can you support them?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 20: RS # 139B:: Mk 13:14-27 // Mt 24:15-31 // Lk 21:20-28.

1. Does there seem to be a natural break between Mk 13:13 / 14; Mt 24:14 / 15 and Lk 21:19 / 20? How different are the events described thereafter from what went before? What does Jesus mean by the "abomination of desolation" (Dn 9:27: 11:31; 12:11) referred to at this point? What would the Jews consider to be an abomination and a desolation? Did Jesus seem to consider that Daniel's prophecy (Dn 9:27; 11:31 & 12:11) had been completely fulfilled on Dec 16, 167 B.C. when the Greek Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes' plundered Jerusalem and defiled its temple by sacrificing to Zeus Olympus on a Greek altar erected on the old altar of burnt offering in the temple's court, thereby provoking the Maccabean revolt against Syrian domination? What element in Daniel's prophecy was absent then, and even subsequently when the temple was again defiled by the Romans in 63 B.C. (Pompey) and in 54 B.C. (Crassus) and even slightly damaged by Herod the Great in 37 B.C.? Do you think both Daniel's and Jesus' predictions were completely fulfilled when the Roman general, Titus, besieged and razed Jerusalem, and burned and destroyed Herod's magnificently restored temple in 70 A.D.? How often do biblical prophecies seem to have multiple fulfillments? Might this prophesy have an even greater fulfillment in the future (Mk 13:19; Mt 24:21:2 Th 2:1-12)? How would that be possible without another temple building?
2. How concrete and compassionate was Jesus' prediction of the tragic end of the Jewish War with Rome (66-70 A.D.) for people still living in Jerusalem? What impact might it have had even on the majority Jews and Christians who were already dispersed throughout the entire Roman Empire, but who had continued to view Jerusalem as their religious home? What evidence can you discern in the balance of the New Testament literature of Christians looking back at that momentous event?
3. Do the "then"s in Mk 13:21, 26f, Mt 24:23, 30 and Lk 21:27, the "after"s in Mk 13:24 and Mt 24:29 and the "begin" in Lk 21:28 indicate a temporal series of events? Which events? Would they follow after the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem and its temple or after the fulfillment of the time of the Gentiles (Lk 21:24)? How long has been the "times of the Gentiles" for Jerusalem and the expelled Jews (Lk 21:24)?
4. Why do you think Jesus repeated and expanded his warning to his disciples (Mk 13:1-5; Mt 24:1-4; Lk 17:22f; 21:7) about the coming of false Christs / Messiahs and prophets (Mt 7:15; 24:4f, 11; Mk 13:54; Lk 21:8)? How could even God's chosen people be deceived by them (2 Th 2:3f, 9f)? How important is it for Christians today to remember this? How might we avoid being so deceived (1 Th 5:1-4; 2 Th 2:1-4; 2 Th 2:5)? Are some Christians today, nevertheless, still being deceived by such false claims? How so?
5. What will make the coming of the son of Man (Dn 7:13; Mt 16:27; Mk 8:38) quite unmistakable (Lk 17:23)? To whom? Why would some people mourn (Mt 24:30ft 3:12; 13:30, 39-43) but others lift up their heads (Lk 21:28; Mt 13:30, 38, 43)? How do you expect this coming will affect you personally (1 Th 4:13-17; 5:10f; 2 Th 2:1-4)? Why should Christian hope and pray for this day to come quickly (1 Co 16:22b; Rv 22:20)? Do you?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 21: RS # 139c:: Mk 13:28-37 // Mt 24:32-42// Lk 21:29-36;  
Mt 24:43-25:30.

1. What is the parable of the fig tree about? What does it signify about the Son of man's coming with great power and glory to gather his elect (Mk 13:26, 30; Mt 24:30, 33) and bring the kingdom of God near (Lk 21:31)? What fig tree did Jesus have in mind (Mi 4:4; Zc 3:10)? Who alone knows exactly when this will happen (Mk 13:32; Mt 24:36; Ac 1:6)? Nevertheless, how certain is Jesus' general prediction (Gn 8:22; Jr 33:20f, 25f; Mt 5:18)? Which generation [or "race" (NASVM)] of people will witness all this? How relevant is this to you now almost two millennia later (2 P 3:2-10)?
2. What might Mk 13:31, Mt 24:35 and Lk 21:33 mean if taken generally and out of their contexts? What other biblical texts might warrant preferring that general meaning (Mt 5:18; Lk 16:17) What does it mean in its present contexts? How similar are the two meanings? How are they related?
3. How might recalling the circumstances of the times of Noah (Mt 24:37-39), Lot (Lk 17:22-37), and even Jeremiah (Jr 6:14f; 8:8-12), help warn Jesus' disciples in his day and ours to be prepared for what it will be like when the Son of man returns? How does the focus of Jesus' parables in Mk 13:33-37 and Mt 24:43-45 illustrate his warning in Lk 21:34-36? Who seems to be sleeping today? How does the second parable in Matthew's account (24:46-51) reinforce this theme for you? Which sort of servant are you? Are you watching and ready to meet your returning Master? What would a wise approach to the Lord's coming involve for you (Tt 2:11-15; 1 P 4:7-11; 2 P 3:11-15, 17f)?
4. What do you think is meant by being "taken" and "left" (Mt 24:40f) in light of the contextual reference to the time of Noah (Mt 24:37-39; Lk 17:26f, 34f)? Who in Noah's [or Lot's (Lk 17:28-35)] time were "left" and who were "taken"? Does "taken" in the two parables, then, likely mean rescued! raptured / abandoned / killed? Do you see clear evidence here that Jesus' faithful followers will be raptured to heaven to escape all or part of the coming time of judgement on earth when the Lord returns (Mk 13:20, 28; 24:22, 31; 1 Th 1:10; 2:19; 4:13-18; 2 Th 2:6-10; Rv 19:11-21)?
5. What further lessons on the same theme might be drawn from the parable of the contrasted groups of young women/ virgins awaiting the bridegroom's coming (Mt 25:1-13)? Why do you think Jesus repeats the same warning so many times (Mt 24:42; 44,25:13; Lk 12:40; 21:36) and with so many illustrations? What relevance might this have for Christians today? How well do you know when the Lord will come for you personally (Lk 12:20)?
6. How does the parable of the talents in Mt 25:14-30 compare with a similar parable told just a few days earlier (Lk 19:11-28)? Do the two versions make exactly the same points? How do the changes suit the new context? What does the parable here add to what Jesus had been saying in this present context? What can we learn from this about Jesus' teaching techniques? Can Christian preachers and teachers also reuse and revamp their stories for new contexts? In what contexts might you want to tell this parable? Would a few changes in detail make it more appropriate to those circumstances? Would you be making exactly the same points Jesus made with the story? How much would that matter? Could you, then, truly claim Jesus' authority for the points you might be making? How so?

1. In Mt 25:31, is Jesus quoting Zc 14:5-9? Who is the one coming? For whom will he be acting? What will his coming inaugurate? What does all this mean to you?
2. How does the king of the story in Mt 25 function as a good shepherd? For him, what distinguishes between the sheep and the goats among all the gathered nations [peoples] of the earth? Are the sheep and goats groups or individuals? Who do you think the king's brothers (Mt 25:40) are? Why would you say that (Mt 12:49f; 19:29; 23:8; 28:10; Jn 1:11-13; 20:17; He 2:10-18)? How important are they to the king? What difference will it make to peoples or individuals as to how his brothers are treated (2 Co 5:10; Ja 2:12f; Rv 20: 11-15)? How might this reorient your behaviours and priorities now? Why?
3. In the two juxtaposed discussions about Jesus' immanent fate during that Passover feast time (Mt 26:1-5), who correctly reads the signs of what will happen? Who is really in charge of what will soon happen? How true is this for your life (Ro 8:28; Ja 4:13-17)? How do you feel about this? How should it motivate your behaviour now (1 Co 10:31; 15:58; Cl 3:15, 17; 1 P 3:7-11)?
4. What similarities and differences can you find between the earlier anointing of Jesus in Lk 7:36-50 and the anointing described in the other three gospels now in Jesus' last week? Why would you conclude that there was one anointing or two? What does the disciples' response reveal about their attitude to the woman and her dramatic act? What factors did they disregard or misinterpret? How often have you misinterpreted others' intentions and understandings in making a snap judgement? Why? With what consequences? Why do you think only Mary of Bethany amongst his closest disciples, seemed to take seriously Jesus' very recent prediction of his immanent death in Jerusalem (Mt 26:2)? Was she again choosing "the better part" (Lk 10:41f; Jn 12:2)? How so? Did Jesus' response to the other disciples downplay the importance of caring for the poor (Mt 25:35-40; 26:11)? What does the fact that there will always be poor people needing help mean to you? What sorts of waste make you feel indignant as a Christian? What that is costly to you and your culture are you willing to waste on Jesus and his values? Why would you be willing to do so?
5. Are treasurers of organizations those most likely to be or become thieves, even among Christians (Jn 12:6)? Why? Do such people today tend to mask their motives and actions with the sort of charitable spin that Judas did here? Do you think they are really conscious of what they are doing? What contemporary secular or Christian examples can you think of? How can Christians guard against all this for ourselves, our congregations, and our society's institutions?

TRAILX -- SECTION 23: RS ## 142-144:: Mk 14:10f // Mt 26:14-16 // Lk 22:3-6; Mk 14:12-16// Mt 26:17-19 // Lk 22:7-13; Mk 14:17 // Mt 26:20// Lk 22:14-16 24-30.

1. During the feast in Bethany, what about the confrontation between the disciples' and Jesus' words and values might have become for Judas the tipping point between temptation (Jn 11:57) and his subsequent act of betrayal (Jn 12:4-8; Mk 14:10f)? Why might Judas have felt that Jesus' rebuke was targeted at him personally? Does the author's aside in Jn 12:6 suggest one of Judas' motives? What do the facts (a) of Judas' modest compensation noted only by Matthew (Mt 26:15; 27:3; Ex 21:32; Zc 11:12) and (b) that Judas knew the exact value of the expensive perfume (Jn 12:5; Mk 14:5), reveal about these two disciples? Why do you think Judas rather than Matthew was chosen to be the group's treasurer? What other motives can you imagine that Judas Iscariot might have had for his actions (Mt 26:11-13; Mk 14:9)? Do you have any empathy for Judas? Why? Can God use bad as well as good human motives to accomplish his good purposes, (Hb 1; Jn 18:13f 19:11; Ph 1:14-17)? Did God need someone's betrayal to accomplish his purposes in arranging for Jesus' crucifixion (Lk 22:21f; Mt 26:24)? Why?
2. How did Judas' unexpected offer change the chief priest's plans about apprehending Jesus during the very crowded Passover time (Mt 26:3-5)? How, however, did that further God's own agenda for Jesus (Mt 26:2) In retrospect, can you discern some of the ways God has changed your own preferred timing to fit his agenda for your life? How do you feel about this (Ro 8:28)? Does this interfere with your free will? How?
3. Why do you think that Judas didn't choose Jesus' private celebration of the Passover meal with his closest disciples (Mk 14:12; Mt 26:17) as the most suitable occasion to apprehend Jesus? Why was Jesus' customary (Lk 22:39) night meeting with his closest disciples in the garden of Gethsemane outside Jerusalem at the foot of the Mount of Olives quite opportune? How were God's purposes best fulfilled this way? How did that also fit with the better way that Caiaphas had advocated (Jn 11:49f 18:14)?
4. In Jesus' instructions to Peter and John about how to locate the place for their paschal meal, is there any indication whether this had been prearranged or rather was miraculously foreseen by Jesus? Would it matter to you which one it actually was? Why might a particular man carrying a pitcher of water stand out in a street of Jerusalem? Was he himself likely the owner of the house? Why might the owner of the place immediately respond positively to the disciples' message from "the Master"? Might the householder have been a disciple of Jesus? Might it have been the house of John Mark's mother (Ac 1:13; 12:12; Mk 14:51f)?
5. According to Lk 22:24, what was the setting for the disciples' last recorded quarrel over who is the greatest among them? Who were likely preparing and serving there (Jn 12:2; Lk 8:1-3; 22:8, 13; 23:49; Mk 15:40f; Mt 27:55)? How does Jesus use this setting to help settle the dispute and also teach his disciples about God's view of leadership? What are leadership's privileges and responsibilities? How are they related (Mk 10:42-45)? Does this view of leadership apply to God, to Jesus, to his disciples, and to you? How have you experienced it among Christians? How do you practice it? What more is needed today among Christians and in your society? What more about who Jesus' disciples are, is added in Lk 22:28-30? How does this fit with what Jesus is teaching about Christian leadership?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 24: RS ## 145-146:: Jn 13:1-20 Mk 14:18-21 // Mt 26:21-25 // Lk 22:21-23 //Jn 13:21-30.

1. How might the dispute between the disciples that happened just before this (Lk 22:24-30), have motivated Jesus' enacted parable just before sharing the Passover meal (Jn 13:1-20)? What do the several things Jesus knew and expressed here also have to do with his action? How were Jesus' actions an expression of his being their Lord and Master? What implications does he draw for his disciples? What does this mean for you own Christian life and ministry? Would it be appropriate for Christians to have an "Order of the Towel" for all our leaders? How might that be arranged?
2. How does what Jesus said to Peter (Jn 13:10) relate to your congregation's regular weekly prayers of confession? Should foot washing be (re-)instituted as a regular Christian practice today? Who should do the washing? Why? How and where might this fit into your congregation's worship patterns? What might it mean to visitors, to members, to you, and to clergy?
3. Would you, like Jesus, have been able to wash the feet of someone whom you knew was already in the process of betraying you (Jn 13:2, 10f, 18, 21)? Are Christians ever called by God to do this, whether knowingly or unknowingly (Ps 35:14-16; 41:9; Mt 5:43-48; Lk 23:34; Ac 7:60)?
4. Why did Jesus warn his disciples of various things that were going to happen to them and to him, even if it was clear that he knew they wouldn't and didn't understand what he was saying at the time (Jn 13:19; 14:28f 16:4)? Why did he even do things with them that they would only later understand? Could this be a precedent for some Christians' practice of baptizing infants of Christian families long before they can personally understand what is happening, let alone have "saving" faith?
5. How shocked would you have been as one of the disciples, when Jesus disclosed that one of their company would soon betray him? Why would each of them ask, "Is it I"? If you had been thee, would you too have asked that question? Is it a question each Christian should ask? How might Jesus answer you? Why did Jesus hide who would betray him from everyone but Judas himself and his closest disciple? What motivated each of them to keep silent at the time? In how many ways was it truly "night" for each of them (Jn 13:30)? Would it have been so for you too?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 25: RS #147-148:: Jn 13:31-38; Mk 14:27-31 // Mt 26:31-35 // Lk 22:31-38 // Jn 14:36-38; Mk 14:22-25 // Mt 26:26-29/I Lk 22:17-20 // 1 Co 11:23-26.

1. Why do you think Jesus waited to say, "Now is the Son of Man glorified (Jn 13:31f) until immediately after Judas had departed to make further arrangements for his betrayal? Do you think that before that point there was still a possibility that Judas might chose to abandon his plan to betray Jesus? Could God's saving purpose for Jesus been accomplished without Judas' complicity? Was he "necessary" / "indispensable" to God (1 Co 12:22)?
2. How new is Jesus' "new commandment" (Jn 13:34f; 15:12, 17; 1 Jn 2:7f; 3:11,23; 2 Jn 5f; 1 Th 4:9)? What elements make it even more stringent than the second most important commandment of the Mosaic law (Mt 22:37-40; Lv 19:18; Jn 15:12; Ep 5:1f)? Do the wordings "one another" and "my disciples" justify some Christians limiting such loving to their fellow Christians? How would such a limitation demonstrate to others that Christians were indeed the disciples / followers of Jesus, God's Son, in light of what Jesus had taught about the indiscriminate and extravagant love of God (Jn 4:16; Mt 5:43-48)? How is it possible for us humans to keep this new commandment (1 Jn 4:11f, 19; Ro 5:5-8; Ga 5:22)?
3. When have you ever made a passionate boast similar to Peter's here? What was the outcome for you? How was Jesus' prayer for Peter very relevant? What do Jesus' final instructions to Peter indicate about Jesus' view of the consequences of Peter's impending failure? What might this teach us about Christians' spiritual failures? How relevant is this to you? How, however, does ministry to others often flow out of one's experience of repentance after a failure? How many other disciples broke their promise never to deny Jesus? Could that be why they needed Peter's subsequent ministry? Why would he in particular be the person best suited to mediate the assurance of God's forgiveness to them (2 Co 1:3f)? If you'd been there, would you have abandoned Jesus? Why? Would he have forgiven you? Could you have accepted Jesus' forgiveness? Why?
4. Why would Jesus' instruction to his disciples be so different now (Lk 22:31-38), compared to those he gave them when they were sent out two-by-two to share in his ministries (Lk 9:1-5 & 10:1-12)? How literally did Jesus mean to be taken (Lk 22:50f; Mt 26:51-56)?
5. What evidence is there in Matthew's (Mt 26:20-29) and Mark's (Mk 14:17-25) accounts, as to whether Judas was still present at the institution of the Lord's Supper, as Luke clearly states (Lk 22:17-23)? How much light does John's account throw on this (Jn 13:8-11, 18, 21-30)? In light of Lk 1:3f, how seriously should we take Luke's chronology here, even if he, unlike John and Matthew and possibly Mark (Mk 14:51), was not present at the Passover meal? Are there any theological implications involved in Judas' sharing fully in that meal and sacramental institution (1 Co 11:27-32)? What might be the implications of Luke's also placing both the disciples' quarreling and Jesus' warning of their coming denial of him after the supper (Lk 22:24-34)?
6. What do you make of the differences in detail in the four accounts of Jesus' institution of the sacramental supper? What is said about the sacrament's meaning and purpose? What light is thrown upon how it should be administered? In the way your Christian congregation celebrates this meal, is there any indication that there is a significant hierarchy among Jesus' disciples? To what extent do the verbs "took", "blessed", "broke", and "gave" here, as in the feeding of both the 5000 and 4000 people (Mk 6:41; 8:6), indicate the general stages of Christian spiritual development? How true has this been for you?

1. How do the contexts of vv. 2 and 23 help you in each case to translate and understand the ambiguous noun mene [occurring only these two times in the New Testament, but derived from the verb mene = "to abide", which is frequently used by Jesus (e.g., Jn 14:10, 17; 15:4-10)]? In what ways does v.2 comfort you? Who do you expect to meet "there"? How does one get "there"? Do you view this as your final 'e resting place or as a welcome renewal station on your continuing journey with Jesus and his Father (Rv 21:1-7, 24-26; 22:3-5)? When does the "abode" of v.23 apply? To whom? What comfort is that to you?
2. Who is the Father that Jesus is speaking about here? How does vv. 7-11 clarify what Jesus had said in v. 6 about coming to the Father only by / through him? What special relationship with the Father substantiates Jesus' claim to be "the way, the truth and the life" for everyone wanting to relate to this Father? Does this imply that for everyone that the one and only route to God, the Father is through his Son, Jesus? Are there other true paths to God ds Father? To what other types or aspects of God might such routes lead (Rv 20:11-13)? Are all relationships with God the same? What implications might this have for Christians trying to relate to the diversity of this world's religions and philosophies?
3. How would you distinguish between believing / trusting in Jesus and believing him and believing about him? How are these connected? Why should anyone trust in Jesus? What results does Jesus promise for those who do really trust in him? How are loving, obeying, believing! trusting, and praying connected according to Jesus (14:8-15)? How could they become better connected in your Christian life?
4. In your own words, what does Jesus teach in Jn 14 about the nature and activities of the Holy Spirit? Whom does the Spirit work among and within (1 Co 3:16; 6:19; Ac 16:6f; Ro 8:9-11)? Whom does the Spirit manifest, reveal and make present? From whom does the Holy Spirit proceed (Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; Lk 24:49; Ac 2:33)?
5. What was puzzling the disciples in Jn 14:16-22? What do you think Jesus was taking about? How well did his disciples grasp this then? Why?
6. How important are Jesus' similar promises to his disciples in Jn 14:26; 15:26 and 16:13f for later Christian to have confidence in the reliability of the records of Jesus' words and deeds in the four canonical gospels, which seem to have been written between 30 to 60 years after Jesus' resurrection?
7. What is the peace that Jesus is talking about in Jn 14:27? How can he leave it to his disciples (Jn 16:33; Co 3:15; Ph 4:17)? What do you think he meant by saying that the Father was "greater" than he himself (14:29; 10:29; Ph 2:6)? Why does Jesus need to affirm for his disciples at that particular point, that the prince/ ruler of this world "has nothing in/ on" him (14:30; He 4:15)? How does v. 31 clarify what he meant?

1. How meaningful to you is Jesus' analogy of the grape vine (Jn 15:1-8)? How would you summarize its main teaching? Who is the gardener? How does he cultivate the vine? To what purpose? If you were that branch how would you feel about that? How does one become a branch and remain in the vine? What happens to the severed branches? Whose reputation is at stake in the vine's thriving? What does this mean for your spiritual growth and relationship to God?
2. What does Jesus teach in Jn 15:9-17 about the connections between God's love, Jesus' love and his disciples' love for one another (Jn 13:34f; 1 Jn 4:19f)? How does Jn 15:12f clarify what Jesus means by loving one another? How much does that stretch the second greatest commandment of Lv 19:18 for you? How is loving Jesus himself related to obedience, joy, friendship, and prayer?
3. What will be the attitudes both of secular and of religious people towards those who follow Jesus' way of representing the Father by being "in the world" but not "of it" (Jn 15:19; 17:11, 15)? Why? What resources are Jesus' disciples given to cope with this? How does all this fit with your Christian experience so far? What could still lie ahead? Are you prepared for this?
4. What further light is thrown in Jn 15 & 16 upon the nature, relationships, character, and activities of the Holy Spirit? How do they intersect with your Christian life and ministry? How important is this to you? Can you, therefore, truly say with Jesus, "I am not alone, because the Father is with me" (16:32)? How so (Ro 8:9. 14-16)?
5. How does Jesus' explanation of his puzzling words in Jn 16:16 seem finally to help his disciples understand what he meant by those words (16:18, 25, 28-31)? But why does Jesus think that they don't fully understand him even yet (16:32)? Why would his disciples first be sorrowful then joyful (16:20-22; 17:13)? When is "that day" (Jn 14:29f; 16:22f; 20:20)? What is the peace that Jesus promises them (Jn 14:27; 16:33)?
6. What do you think Jesus meant (a) by the prince of this world having been "judged" (16:11) and (b) by he himself having "overcome the world" (16:33)? What do they imply for your Christian living in the world now (1P 5:8; Ja 4:5)?

TRAIL X: -

SECTION 28:

RS#151:: Jn 17:1-26.

1. How would you outline Jesus' prayer here? Should this prayer be the one we Christians call "The Lord's Prayer"? Why?
2. What are Jesus' major requests for himself, for his disciples, and for others? How are these requests interconnected by Jesus? How are your prayer requests for yourself and for others connected?
3. Which one of the several interconnected themes in Jesus' prayer is the most important to you now? How had Jesus already been developing that theme throughout his long final discourse with his disciples (Jn 13-16)? What are the implications of that theme for you personally, for your understanding of God and Jesus, and for your life in your Christian congregation?
4. For you, what does it mean for Christians to be "in the world" but "not of it" (17:11-15, 15:19)? How does Jesus himself model this for us? How is this possible for Christians on a day-to-day basis (Ro 6:3-14; 8:5-14; 12:1-13; 2 Co 5:14-17; Ga 2:20; Cl 3:1-17; Ph 2:1-13)?
5. In this prayer, what is revealed about Jesus' special relations with God, the Father? How far does Jesus want to share this special relationship with his disciples? How much do you want to be involved in the privileges and responsibilities of sharing in this relationship? What has this sharing to do with Christian unity? What sorts of unity are involved? What will this indicate to the world? How so? How important is this in your community today?
6. Try to imagine Jesus' disciples listening to the long discourse and prayer of Jn 15-17 as they walk from the upper room (Jn 14:3) out of Jerusalem towards the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26:36)? Does that help you appreciate the interwoven flow of this peripatetic discourse? Or did Jesus stop and pause (Jn 17:1) for the final prayer? Was it meant also to be overheard by his disciples as a teaching prayer, revealing to them how his teaching was in harmony with his inner life with the Father into which they were being invited? Could the public prayers of Christian worship have a similar function? Would you appreciate that?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 29: RS#152-153:: Mk 14:26, 32-42 // Mt 26:30, 36-46//  
Lk 22:39-46 // Jn 18:1-Mk 14:43-52 // Mt 26:47-56// Lk 22:47-53// Jn 18:2-12.

1. What, in your own words, was involved in each stage of Jesus' agony in the garden of Gethsemane? What sustained Jesus in his hour of great need? What available resources let him down, and probably increased his agony? How generally true is this of God's work through human beings? What was unique about Jesus' experience here? In what ways can you identify with Jesus even here in your hour of great temptation? What resources sustain you then? Which ones let you down? How does that make you feel? Are you any more surprised than Jesus appears to have been then? Why? Would you still trust in them? Why?
2. When have you found that God's will for you didn't seem to be the same as your own will? Were you able, like Jesus here, to pray through the impasse with your Abba [Daddy], Father? With what result? In retrospect, how have you viewed these decisions and their consequences?
3. Why do you think Jesus asked his three closest disciples to share his time of testing? How might they have been able to help him in the agony of his personal struggle? How can we really help each other in times of distress and agonizing decisions (Ga 6:1-5; 2 Co 1:3-7; Ro 15:14; Ep 4:25, 29; Ph 2:3f; Jn 2:15f; 1 Jn 3:17f )? Why are such apparently non-strenuous tasks so difficult to accomplish (Mk 14:38; Mt 26:41; 1 P 5:8)? How might you have behaved, if you had been there? Have you ever been in a similar situation? What excuses did you make afterwards? Why do you think John's account says so little about this event? How was Jesus able to cope with his great temptation, while his closest disciples succumbed to a much lesser one? What paintings of this incident can you recall? Which of them really capture what you think took place? How so?
4. What are the same and different details about Jesus' betrayal and arrest as recorded by each of the four evangelists? Why might each of them have recorded the details that he did? Could the obscure reference in Mk 14:51f be an oblique personal one for the author as an eyewitness who was embarrassed in more ways than one? Is Jn 18:9 a reference by the evangelist to the prayer of Jesus that he had personally overheard earlier that very evening (Jn 17:12)?
5. How do Judas' and Peter's attitudes, actions and words during the betrayal and arrest compare? How might you have behaved if you had been involved Jesus' arrest? Would you too have fled? Why? How did Jesus facilitate their escape (Jn 18:8)? Was it important for Jesus to be alone for what would happen next? Why?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 30:

RS #154-156::Jn 18:12-14, 19-23; Mk 14:53, 55-65 // Mt 26:57, 59-68 // Lk 22:54, 63-65 // Jn 18:24; Mk 14:54, 66-72 // Mt 26:58, 69-75 // Lk 22:54-62 // Jn 18:15-18, 25-27.

1. What took place over night in the preliminary and informal stages of Jesus' Jewish trial, first with Annas, the ex-high priest and then with his son-in-law, Caiaphas, the current high priest? Where did they take place? Who were involved? What did the Jewish leaders seem to be trying to accomplish at each stage of these proceedings? How did Jesus adjust his way of responding to his interrogators stage by stage? Why might he have done that? How do you behave when accused by others? How does God help you too (Lk 12:11f)?
2. Why did the Jewish authorities need two credible witnesses against Jesus for capital punishment to be warranted (Dt 17:6)? Why did they have so much trouble finding even two agreeing witnesses of Jesus' alleged public statement about his destroying and rebuilding the temple? According to the gospels, how long ago had any such public statement been made by Jesus (in 2:12-15; 3:22-24, 4:1-3)? In what context? Do the two facts (a) that they couldn't find even two witnesses to agree on hearing this inflammatory statement and (b) that everyone would have remembered Jesus actions and words in dramatically cleansing the temple less than a week before (Mk 11:15-18; Mt 21:12f; Lk 19:45f), seem to imply that there were two widely separate cleansings of the temple?
3. For what crime was Jesus condemned to death by the Jewish authorities (Lv 24:16)? Why was it so serious (Ex 20:7; Dt 5:11)? How significant was Jesus' own confession (Mk 14:61-64; Mt 26:63-66) as evidence for his conviction? Why did they construe that he had just committed that particular crime? Why might some modern scholars not draw that same conclusion from Jesus' statements? Why did conviction of that particular crime prompt the defamation he received immediately?
4. Why do you think that John reminds his readers here of Caiaphas' earlier counsel "that it was expedient that one man should die for the people" (Jn 11:49f; 18:14)? What does the apostle Paul later make of this principle in Ro 5:12-21? What, therefore, is its significance for you as a human being and as Christian (Jn 3:16-18; 4:42; 1Jn 2:2; 4:14)?
5. How do you reconstruct what Peter did and said while Jesus was being interrogated nearby? Why do you think the accounts differ so much in detail about this (Jn 18:15f)? How many distinct verbal denials by Peter can you discern? How definite were they? How can silence or even changing the subject be a denial? Do the significant differences of details indicate to you that the accounts are independent and authentic, or that they are hopelessly contradictory? How common is this with eyewitnesses' accounts of the same event in courts today? Of what are they corroboratory evidence? Do you find it easier to identify with Jesus or with Peter here? Why? How do we become conscious of our own explicit and implicit denials? What should we do as Christians when we become aware of what we have done or said by commission or omission (1 Jn 1:9)?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 31: RS ## 157-159:: Mk 15:1 // Mt 27:1 // Lk 22:66-71; Mt 27:3-10 // Ac 1:18f Mk 15:1-5 // Mt 27:2, 11-14 // Lk 23:1-5 // Jn 18:28-38.

1. What do you think the authorities wanted to get Jesus to admit clearly and publicly at the formal Jewish trial by the Sanhedrin just after dawn? Why do you think Jesus' response then was somewhat more evasive and ambiguous (Lk 22:70) than it had been to the same question in his earlier informal examination (Mk 14:62; Mt 26:64)? Why, however, is Jesus' answer interpreted by the authorities as just as obvious a claim of his special relationship with God (Ps 110:1; Dn 7:13f)?
2. Why do you think Judas responded as he did to the trial's sentencing of Jesus? Was Judas' repentance adequate? Why? In his view, what little good did his great sin and remorseful suicide accomplish? Why do you think Mt 27:9f claims that Jeremiah's prophecy (Jr 18:2; 19:1f; 32:6-15; Zc 11 :11-13) is fulfilled in Judas' action and its aftermath? Why would it again be only Matthew who would remind us of the exact amount of money involved in the betrayal (Mt 26:15)?
3. What hope is there for Judas ultimately being forgiven (Mt 5:43-48; 26:23f; Jn 16:70f; 17:12; Ro 8:21; Ep 1:10; Cl 1:20; He 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 12:17; 1 P 3:18; 2 P 3:9)? How unique is Judas (in 6:70; 13:10f; 17:12; 18:9; Lk 22:22)? What hope is there for those we might call "Judases", if they truly repent (1 Jn 1:9-2:2; Jr 18:11; Ek 18:21-32)?
4. Why did there have to be a Roman trial as well as a formal stage of the Jewish trial? How were the charges brought and the procedures in the first, informal stage of the Roman trial quite different from those in the formal Jewish one? Which charge does Pilate pursue? Why? What impression does Jesus' ways of responding to the political charge, make on Pilate? What can we learn from Jesus' example here (1 P 2:21-23)? Why is this so hard to do?
5. How would you answer Pilate's question in Jn 18:38? To what truth did Jesus come into the world to bear witness (in 1:14, 17; 3:5-21, 32f; 8:14; 14:6; 17:17; Ex 34:6)? Does Jesus' frequent usage of the emphatic phrase, "Verily, verily" ("truly, truly" (NASB, ESV), "very truly" (NRSV), "in very truth" (NEB, REB), "I tell you the truth" (NIV), "I tell you for certain" (CEV), "I assure you" (CEB) help you answer this question (Jn 1:51; 3:3,5, 11; 5:19,24f; 6:26, 32,47, 53; 8:34,51, 58; 10:1,7; 12:24; 13:16, 20f, 38; 14:12; 16:20,23; 21:18)? Is Jesus' truth absolute or relative? How important should truth be to Christians? How important is it to you?

1. What might have been Herod Antipas' expectations and concerns about meeting the famous prophet from Nazareth (Lk 9:7-9; 13:31f)? How were they thwarted when he finally met Jesus a year or so later (Lk 23:8f)? How did he and his soldiers, therefore, respond to Jesus (Lk 23:11)? How might people today be disappointed, if they were able to meet the actual historical Jesus? What are your expectations about encountering the risen and glorified Jesus when he returns to earth (Jn 17:24; 1 Jn 3:2; Rv 1:12-20; 19:11-16)? How might your expectations have to be revised in light of actual experience? How difficult would that be for you? What about this encounter led to Herod and Pilate becoming friends?
2. What maneuvers does Pilate make in trying to implement his judgement that Jesus is innocent (Lk 23:4; Jn 18:38)? In order to apply their own court's death sentence, how do the Jewish leaders counter Pilate's persistent maneuvers? How are both religion and politics dragged into this legal dance? Which of the Jew's arguments register most with Pilate? What seems to motivate his ultimate decision? What crime, then, was Jesus crucified for? How typical is this scenario of legal and political decision making in your own society today? What human procedures can ensure that innocent people don't suffer injustice? How so?
3. How much responsibility must Pilate ultimately bear for Jesus' punishment and death, in spite of his public symbolic declaration of his judicial innocence? Why do you think that Pilate felt that such a public demonstration of his innocence was necessary? Did it really cover up, or draw attention to the fact that Roman justice was being compromised? Does he seem to have achieved his aim according to Mt 27:24f? Have you ever been party to compromises of justice or truth? Were they successful? For how long? What contemporary examples can you think of? What should Christians do when becoming aware of such compromises? Why?
4. How seriously were dreams taken by (a) Pilate's wife and (b) Pilate himself? How seriously do you take dreams? Do you believe that God can communicate with you in dreams? How would you recognize that he was doing so? Would you act upon such a message? With what expectations? What has been your experience here?
5. To what extent should the Jewish people themselves be held responsible for Jesus' unjust suffering and death (Mt 27:25; Ac 2:23,36; 3:13-19)? How does Jesus' first word from the cross apply to them (Lk 23:34)? How should we Christians treat everyone whom Jesus voluntarily forgave? To what extent are we all as humans responsible for Jesus' sacrificial death (Is 3:6; Ro 4:25; 5:6, 8; 8:32; 1 Co 15:3; Ga 1:4)? What does that mean to you (2 Co 5:15; 1 P 2:24)? How can everyone responsible for Jesus' death be forgiven (Ac 2:38f; 3:19)?

TRAIL X — SECTION 33: RS ##162-164.: Mk 15:16-19 // Mt 27:27-30; Mk 15:20-23 // Mt 27:31-34 // Lk 23:26-33 // Jn 19:161; Mk 15:24-32 // Mt 27:35-44 // Lk 23:33-43 // Jn 19:18-27.

1. To what indignities and punishments was Jesus subjected from his arrest to his crucifixion (Mk 14:65; 15; 15-20, 27,29-32; Mt 26:67f; 27:26-31, 38-44; Lk 22:63,65; 23:11f, 16, 25, 33, 35-39; Jn 19:1-5, 14, 17)? Why (Ph 2:8)? Why did God permit this (Is 53:5f, 10f; 1 P 2:24f)?
2. How many of the traditional "stations" on the way to the cross seem to have clear New Testament warrant? What is the meaning of each of them for you and for your following the way of the cross after Jesus? What might the extra personal details in Mt 15:21 indicate about Simon of Cyrene's relationship to the early church? To what event might Jesus be referring in his response to the lamenting women of Jerusalem (Lk 23;27-31)? What significance do you see in the literal meaning [skull] of name of the crucifixion cite both in Aramaic [Golgotha] and in Latin [Calvary]?
3. Why do you think Jesus declined the traditional offer of a drink of drugged wine before his crucifixion? Was the offer a merciful one? Can you think of a similar situation where you might have refused the drugs too? Why?
4. What significance do you see in the soldiers gambling for Jesus' clothing? What do you think Jn 19:24 meant by saying that this was done "that the scripture might be fulfilled" (Ps 22:18)? How well did the trilingual sign on the cross articulate the Roman view of Jesus' crime better than the preferred official Jewish view of it? What superscription might have expressed the Jewish authorities' view of Jesus real mortal crime? How true were the taunts of each mocking group at the cross? What accusations and taunts might be made today by the groups in your society who would want to have Jesus publicly executed? Which group might settle for a penalty less than death? What? Why?
5. What are the first three sayings / "words" of Jesus from the cross (Lk 23:34, 43; Jn 19:26f)? How valid and comprehensive was Jesus' forgiveness of whole angry crowd of Jews (Mt 27:1f, 25), and the reason he gave for it? What made the penitent thief's last-minute repentance acceptable to Jesus? How would you justify Jesus' forgiveness to the thief's victims? Or to those relations who felt like the elder brother in Jesus' parable in Lk 15:1-32? What is your reaction to contemporary news stories about dramatic repentances of culpable public figures? However, what do Jesus' first two sayings remind us about God's forgiveness (Ex 34:6f; Jr 18:7f, Ek 18:27-32; Ro 5:8; Ep 2:8f; 1 Ti 2:4; 2 P 3:9; 1 Jn 1:9-2:2)? How might Jesus' forgiveness of the penitent thief validate the ministries of death-row chaplains and ambulance-chasing clergy? Why did Jesus make his arrangement with his mother and John [probably his maternal first cousin (Mt 27:56; Mk 15:40; Jn 19:25)]? How significant to you is the fact that here Jesus speaks about others before he speaks about himself? What can you learn from this about preparing for your own death?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 34: RS ## 165-166:: Mk 15:33-37 // Mt 27:45-50// Lk 23:44-46//  
Jn 19:28-30 Mk 15:38-41 // Mt 27:51-56// Lk 23:45, 47-49.

1. How might the whole of Ps 22 have been a comfort to Jesus throughout his last hours? How would Ps 31:1-5 and Is 53:4-12 also have helped him? What scriptures come to you in times of suffering and crisis? What does this suggest about the value of the Jewish and Christian discipline of memorizing scripture? What has been your experience with this discipline? Which translation would you choose to memorize? Why?
2. What are the last four "words" [utterances] Jesus made from the cross (Mk 15:34; Mt 27:46; Jn 19:28,30; Lk 23:46)? Why are they treasured by Christians? Of whom and to whom is he speaking in each one? In the first one, what causes his deepest anguish (Js 1:5 [Hebrew "Joshua" = Greek "Jesus"]; Ps 27:7-9; Jn 10:30; 16:32; Mk 10:45; 2 Co 5:21)? What medical condition might have caused Jesus' great thirst at this point? Did he need a drink just in order to be able to continue speaking? What does his loud, third saying mean to his followers (He 7:27; 9:12; 10:10)? To you? What does Jesus' final statement express about (a) his view of his Father, in spite of his earlier cry of anguish, and (b) his view of death? How applicable might the last two sayings be to when you're facing immanent death? Have you ever had a very close brush with death? What did you feel and say then? What might that reveal about your view of your life and your current relationship to God? What can you learn from all this about preparing to meet your God and Father?
3. What unusual phenomena accompanied Jesus' death and resurrection? Which could be viewed as "natural" occurrences? What might have been the impact of the three-hour darkness on the Jewish observers in Jerusalem and throughout the land (Ex 10:21; Is 13:10; 50:3; 59:9f; 60:2)? How did the earthquake affect even the supervising Roman centurion (Mt 27:51, 54)? With what two great days were these two phenomena associated in the Jewish scriptures (Ex 19:16-18; 20:18, 21; Is 24:18-23; Jl 2:31; Hg 2:6f)? What do you make of the occurrences recorded in Mt 27:52f? Could the earthquake have caused both the torn veil and all of this? Which veil was torn, and what was its purpose? For whom would its being torn from the top to the bottom, therefore, be a telling sign (He 9:6f; Ac 6:7)? What was its significance (He 6:1-7f; 9:8-12)? What should this mean for you (He 10:19-22). Does it?
4. What were the indications that Jesus was really dead? How important was it for Jews and Romans to be certain he really was dead? Why is Jesus' real death important for Christians then and now (Ac 2:23f 36 1 Co 2:2; 11:26; 15:3f; Ro 6:4-14; Ph 2:8; Cl 1:19-23; lie 2:9, 14f; 9:15-17; 1 P 3:18)?
5. What were the different reactions of the diverse witnesses of Jesus death and the events associated with it? How do they compare? Why did they differ? How would you have responded if you'd been there?
6. Why do you think so many women are mentioned by name as witnesses of Jesus' crucifixion? Comparing the parallels lists of Mk 15:40 and Mt 27:56 here and the one in 19:25, can you discern an identity of Jesus' mother's sister, Salome, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee (James and John)? What relationship, then, would the two brothers have to Jesus? Does this help explain Jesus' entrusting John and Mary to each other for the future (Jn 19:26f)?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 35: RS ## 167-168:: Mk 15:42-46 // Mt 27:57-60 //  
Lk 23:50-54 // Jn 19:31-42 Mk:47 // Mt 27:61-66 // Lk 23:55f.

1. What further signs are there that Jesus was completely dead? What are the details about Jesus' death and burial that the gospel writers see as prophetically predicted in the Old Testament (Ex 12:46; Nu 9:12; Ps 34:20; Zc 12:10; Dt 21:22f; Ex 34:24)? What significance might early Christian have seen in these particular fulfillments of scripture? Why was it so important that the Old Testament prophecies be fulfilled in such detail by Jesus' death and burial? What does the detailed fulfillment of scripture mean to you? What does it indicate about the relationship between the two biblical testaments/ covenants?
2. What made Joseph of Arimathea such an appropriate person to claim and bury Jesus' corpse? How could his actions be described as both bold (Mk 15:43) and secret (Jn 19:38)? What significance do you see in Nicodemus' also being still involved with Jesus (Jn 3:1-15; 7:50-52)? What does their participation in Jesus' burial indicate about the depth of the impact of Jesus' ministry on some of the Jewish leaders? How did this influence continue in the earliest church (Ac 6:7; 15:5)?
3. What do we learn here about 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish burial customs? How do you imagine the scene when Jesus was taken down from the cross, which many artists over the centuries have depicted? Why would two men be necessary (Jn 19:39f)? Why did they hurriedly inter Jesus' body so close to an infamous public crucifixion site (Jn 19:31, 41f; Mt 27:60)? What was the usual role of women in preparing a Jewish corpse for burial (Jn 12:3,7; Lk 23:55f)? Why weren't they able to perform it properly this time (Mk 14:42)? But who were able to improvise quickly enough (Mk 14:42-46; Mt 27:60; Jn 19:39-54)? Could the women still be involved both then (Mk 15:47; Mt 27:61; Lk 23:55) and later (Lk 23:56-24:1), thus continuing their vital support of Jesus even after his unexpected death (Lk 8:1-3; 23:49, 55f)? How would you compare Jesus' makeshift burial with the type of funeral and burial you would want to have? How much is revealed about a person by the sort of funeral they have? What sort do you want? Why?
4. What was happening at Jesus' tomb while he was in the grave? What were the motives and attitudes of each group involved? Why was his death so special to each group? How did their particular actions express their special concerns? How are your own attitudes, motives and concerns revealed by your actions at funerals and soon thereafter?
5. What do you think Jesus' disciples were thinking and feeling at this point? Is there any hint in the accounts that we have, that they were planning what the Jewish authorities feared most? According to the canonical gospels, how well did the disciples even remember the many predictions by Jesus about his death and subsequent resurrection (Mk 8:31; 9:31; Mt 12:40; 16:21; 17:9; 20:18f; Lk 18:32-34; 24:5-11, 19-27, 45f; Jn 2:19-22; 14:26; 20:9)? Might the multiplicity of such predictions indicate a later orchestrated apostolic cover-up of the disciples' secret nocturnal theft and disposal of Jesus' corpse (Mt 27:62-66; 28:24, 11-15), as some modern critics of the resurrection have proposed? What other conspiracy theories have you heard? Are they any more credible than this one? How so?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 36: RS ## 169- 171:: Mk 16:1 // Mt 28:1-4; Mk 16:2-8 //  
Mt 28:5-8 // Lk 24:1-8 // Jn 20:1.

1. How do you imagine the tombs' guards' experience of Jesus' resurrection in the dark before dawn on Sunday morning? What might an honest guard have said to an investigative journalist before reporting back to the authorities? If you were writing a screenplay for a documentary film or video, how would you portray their experience of the resurrection? How have films and videos that you have seen handled the resurrection event and experience? Were you satisfied with their presentations? How so?
2. How did the women know where the tomb was located (Mk 15:47; Mt 27:61; Lk 23:55)? What was the first thing they did as soon as the Sabbath ended about 6 p.m. on Saturday (Mk 16:1; Lk 23:56)? What made them so eager to get to the tomb as early as possible (Jn 11:39; 12:2f, 7)? As they travelled there in the dim pre-dawn light (Lk 24:1; Mk 16:2), what might they have been wondering about, besides how to get past the great stone blocking the tomb's entrance (Mk 16:3)? If they had known about the guards (Mt 27:62-66), how might they have been planning to persuade the guards to move the stone temporarily and permit them to anoint Jesus' corpse? Could their venture be classed as a true case of walking by faith, rather than by sight (2 Co 5:7; Ja 1:6f)? Have you also been involved in a God-inspired endeavour without completely working out how to solve all the obvious difficulties you expected to encounter? How did it work out?
3. How connected were the pre-sunrise earthquake and the involvement of the angel (Mt 28:2-4)? Who witnessed this? How did they respond? How different were the women's responses to the angel(s) (Mk 16:5, 8; Lk 24:4f)? How different again was Mary Magdalene's experience (Jn 20:11-13)? Why? How difficult is it to reconcile all the details of the woman's Sunday morning visit to the tomb? Does that make their eyewitness accounts more or less reliable?
4. Why do you think God arranged for women to play the primary witness roles in the earliest post-resurrection appearances of Jesus? How reminiscent is this of the important roles women played in Jesus' incarnation (Lk 1:26-28; 2:7, 16-19), public ministry (Lk 8:1-3), and passion (Jn 12:1-3, 7f; Mk 15:40f, 47; Mt 27:55f, 61; Lk 23:49, 55)? What roles do the risen Messiah want women to play in continuing his work today (1 Co 12:6, 11,22; Ep 4:7, 16; 1 P 4:10; Ro 16:1-4; Ac 18:26; 21:9)? Why (Gn 1:26f; 2:20,22-24; 1 P 3:7; Ga 3:28)?
5. How immediately did the women report what they had witnessed upon entering the empty tomb first (Mk 16:5; Lk 24:3) to the absent male disciples (Mk 16:8; Mt 28:8; Lk 24:9; Jn 20:2)? What range of feelings did the women have? How much can you identify with them?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 37: RS ## 172-175:: Lk 24:9-12 // Jn 20:2-10;  
[Mk 16:9-11\*] //Jn 20:11-18; Mt 28:9-15.

[\* Omitted in the 2 oldest manuscripts. A variety of endings in other manuscripts.]

1. What do you think the women told the other disciples later on Easter Sunday morning? How did the men respond? How do you think the women felt about this reception? Why did God send the women as witnesses instead of angels? With whom can you identify with more easily, the women or the other disciples? Do similar dynamics occur in your Christian congregation today? What can you do about it?
2. Why did Peter and another disciple run to the tomb? What about the evidence convinced them that the women were correct? However, did they yet believe that Jesus had risen from the dead (Lk 24:12; Jn 20:8f)? Of what would the evidence they found have convinced you? Why did the two disciples, therefore, go home afterwards? Would you have done the same thing? Why?
3. How do the first post-resurrection appearances of Jesus to various women compare? What significant difference was there between their responses to Jesus and to the angel(s) (Lk 24:5; Mt 28:9; Rv 22:8f)? Which of the several appearances would have meant the most to you? How so? Have you personally experienced the risen Jesus (1 Co 15:8)? How so? What impact has it made on you and your life?
4. What significance do you see in the fact that Jesus called their God and Father, Yahweh, not only his Father but also his God (Jn 20:17)? Could this have warranted both Paul's and Peter's later speaking of Jesus, the Messiah, as having this same two-fold relationship to Yahweh (2 Co 1:3; Ep 1:3, 17; 1 P 1:3)? Does this suggest something about the internal relationships within the Trinity or about Jesus' humanity? Do all Christians have this same double relationship to Yahweh (Jn 20:17; Mt 6:9; Lk 11:2; Ro 8:1 ; Ga 4:6; A.1 P1:17)? What does that mean to you?
5. Why did the Jewish authorities opt for quite a different explanation of the empty tomb (Lk 16:30; Mt 27:62-66)? Was their explanation really more credible than believing that Jesus had indeed arisen from the dead? Why? Why did it continue to be believed among the Jews at least until Matthew wrote his gospel up to 40 years later? What works of God in your day are often given alternative explanations? Why might even some Christians do so?
6. Why do you think that Matthew who meticulously specified the relatively small amounts of money involved in Mt 16:15 and 27:3, might now be quite vague about the large sum of money paid to the guards of Jesus' tomb (Mt 28:12)?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 38: RS ## 176-177:: [Mk16:12f\*] // Lk 24:13-32; Lk 24:33-35//1 Co 15:5.  
[\*Omitted in the 2 oldest manuscripts. A variety of endings in other manuscripts.]

1. What insights are given here (Lk 24:13-24) and in Mk 16:10f into (a) the disciples' earlier hopes about Jesus, (b) their state of mind after his arrest and crucifixion, and (c) the initial impact of the women's testimony on them? How does all this help undermine the credibility of ancient and modern theories that the disciples had either stolen Jesus' corpse or retrieved and revived his ravaged body (Mt 28:11-15; Jn 20:15)?
2. In the appearance to Cleopas and companion, what light is thrown here upon the nature of Jesus' resurrection body and thus on Christians' future resurrection body (Ph 3:20f)?
3. Why do you think the risen Jesus explicitly left it up to Cleopas and his companion to take the initiative in inviting him to come in and stay over with them? When has he ever done that with you? Even when he takes the initiative in knocking on the door of your life, who decides whether to invite him in and to offer him hospitality (Rv 3:20)? What has that to say about the dynamics of grace and faith (Jr 31:3; Ho 11:4; Jn 1:12; 6:44, 65; 12:32; AC 2:39; Eph 2:8-10; Ph 2:12f He 13:21)?
4. Why might later generations of Christians connect the two disciples' recognition of who their guest really was to the celebration of the Lord's Supper [Eucharist, Holy Communion] (Lk 24:35)? Do you discern the presence of the risen Messiah in your celebration of that sacrament / ordinance?
5. Why is it so important for us Christians to know that Jesus helped his disciples at least twice after his resurrection to discover and interpret the wide range of Old Testament references to him (Lk 24:27 and 44-48; Ac 1:3)? What does this indicate about the source of the distinctive messianic pattern of interpreting the Old Testament that permeates the New Testament (Jn 16:13f)? Should this pattern of interpreting the Old Testament be normative for Christians even when it differs from (a) the plain contextual meaning of the Hebrew text and/or (b) the interpretation of 1<sup>st</sup> century or subsequent Judaism? Why? Does it invalidate such other interpretations of the same passages? How so?
6. Why do you think we know so little about what took place in Jesus' very early, private, post-resurrection encounter with Simon Peter [Cephas] (1 Co 15:5; Mk 16:7; Lk 24:34)? Why, however, do these private personal encounters seem to be the turning point of faith for many of the disciples (Mk 16:13; Lk 22:32; 24:23f, 34f)? How is that strategy often still used by Jesus to begin to renew a Christian congregation today? Might he even do so through you?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 39: RS #ft 178-179:: [Mk 16:14\*] // Lk 24:36-43// Jn 20:19-25;  
Jn 20:26-31 // 1 Co 15:5.  
[\* Omitted in the 2 oldest manuscripts. A variety of endings in other manuscripts.]

1. How does the way that in 20:19 specifies the time of the risen Jesus' first appearance to the group of disciples, indicate that here, and probably throughout (e.g., Jn 19:14), John's gospel follows the Roman custom of reckoning days from midnight, as we do today, rather than the Jewish custom from sunset (Mk 16:1; Mt 28:1)?
2. Why, even after the eyewitness testimonies of the women, Peter, and the two disciples from Emmaus (Lk 24:11f, 33-35; Mk 16:13), did the rest of the disciples still respond as they did when the risen Jesus first appeared to them together (Lk 24:36-38; Jn 20:19)? What evidence did Jesus give them he was indeed more than a disembodied spirit or an apparition? Why was physical evidence very important to them at this point, if, as some Christians and others maintain that true faith must be in spite of reason (Jn 20:29)? How convincing would the evidence that Jesus presented have been for you? How unmistakable should we expect Jesus' second coming to be, in spite of false prophets and messiahs/ christs (Mt 24:23f, 27, 30f)? Convincing whom? What further insights do we get here into the nature of Jesus' resurrection body?
3. What do you think is the significance of Jesus' sending his disciples into the world in the same way as his Father had sent him into the world (Jn 20:21; 17:18)? What enables them, and all Christian since then, to be able to fulfill this commission of ,k continuing Jesus' worldly mission (in 20:22; Ac 1:8; Ro 8:9-17, 26-29)? How central to that mission is their forgiving sins (Jn 20:23)? How does this relate to what Jesus said in Mt 16:18f and 18:18-20 about the forgiving of sin?
4. Why might a 20<sup>th</sup> century playwright have cast Thomas as a skeptical truck driver in his radio drama about the historical resurrection of Jesus? Why does Jesus take Thomas' doubt so seriously? If true faith should be counter-evidential, why does Jesus offer him physical evidence for trusting that he is really alive again? Is uncritical faith really the best kind (Jn 20:29; 1 P 1:8f; Mk 10:15; Mt 19:14; Lk 18:17)? Why did Jesus keep offering evidence to people for trusting in him, both during his ministry (Ac 2:22f; Jn 2:23; 5:36; 10:25, 37f; 14:11; 15:24; Mt 11:2-6) and after his resurrection (Jn 20:30; Ac 1:3)? How does God treat your doubts about him?
5. What is the special purpose of John's gospel (Jn 20:31)? Might that also be the primary purpose of all the other canonical gospels as well (Mk 1:1; Lk 1:1-4)? How is this purpose achieved in the confirmation of Thomas' trust in Jesus (Jn 20:28)? Has this purpose also been achieved in your own case? How so? What further evidence might "strengthen" your faith? Where could you find it?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 40: RS # 180:: Jn 21:1-25.

1. Do you see any significance in the fact that the appearances of the risen Jesus now move to Galilee, as both Jesus (Mt 26:32; 28:10, 16; Mk 14:28) the angel(s) had promised (Mt 28:7; Mk 16:7)?
2. How did the seven disciples on the Sea of Tiberius [Lake of Galilee] know that the person on the nearby shore was Jesus? Why do you think that the beloved disciple was the first to discern who it was? Who is the first among you to recognize Jesus' presence in the midst of your regular activities? How can they tell this? Who is the first to notice Jesus' absence? How is this evident?
3. Why do you think Peter immediately rushed ashore, despite his earlier private meeting with the risen Jesus (Lk 24:34; 1 Co 15:5)? How do you imagine the disciples felt as they ate the breakfast that Jesus had prepared? What might have been the significance of Jesus inviting the disciples to add some of the fish that he had help them catch to the bread and fish he had already prepared for them all? What was Jesus indicating by addressing Peter formally as "Simon, son of John" (Jn 1:42)? By employing the phrase "more than these", of what was Jesus reminding Peter (Mk 10:28-30; 14:29,31; Mt 26:33, 35; Lk 22:13; Jn 13:37)? As you follow the interaction between Jesus and Peter in vv. 15-17, what is the significance of two different Greek verbs for loving being used by Jesus [*agapao* from *agape* = personal feeling esteem and good will, used in the LXX and the New Testament generally for Yahweh's love] and Peter [*phileo* from *philos* = the natural feeling of friendship]? Why, then, do you think Peter was disturbed that in his third question Jesus shifted from *agapao* to Peter's word *phileo*? Can you identify with Peter here? How so?
4. How is Jesus' commission for Peter here similar to the one given before Peter's denials in Lk 22:32? Is this a commission that Jesus gives to all those who claim to love him? What further can we learn from this incident about the pattern of growth in Christian discipleship (2 Co 1:3f)?
5. What do the diverse scenarios that Jesus offers for the futures of Peter and the beloved disciple (vv. 18-23) indicate about how many authentic ways there may be for following Jesus and glorifying God? How helpful is this to you?
6. Does Jn 21:24 in the context of this chapter give a strong indication of who was the alleged writer of this gospel? Why does he close his gospel this way? Does it indicate that he was aware of different gospels that preceded his? Could it have been an invitation for other witnesses to write their own accounts to supplement his? Might writers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> centuries have used this verse to justify their new gospels? How could the authenticity of these new gospels be tested then and now? Which of the four canonical gospels in the New Testament do you prefer? Why?

TRAIL X -- SECTION 41: RS ## 181-182:: [Mk 16:15-18\*1 //  
Mt 28:16-20 // 1 Co 15:6: 1 Co 15:7.  
[\* Omitted in the 2 oldest manuscripts. A variety of endings in other manuscripts.]

1. Why do you think that, even after several post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, some of his disciples still doubted the reality of his resurrection (Mt 28:17)? Would you have too? Why do some professing Christians today doubt his bodily resurrection? Would the apostle Paul have considered them true Christians (Ro 10:9f)? Why (1 Co 15:12-21)? How important is this issue (1 Co 15:17)? Why (1 Co 15:32)?
2. How does the great commission of Mt 28:19f, relate to the earlier commission of Jn 20:21-23 issued late on Easter day? If the first part of v. 19 is translated correctly from the Greek's present participle and "While / as you are going", what is left as the only explicit command in the great commission? How do the following two present participles specify parts of what's involved in carrying out Jesus' command? In what sense, then, is Jesus' command about world evangelism (Mk 16:15f; 13:10; Mt 24:14)? How are Christians disciplined in your Christian congregation? How well are all ethnic groups [nations] included equally? What about Jesus' great initial claim (Mt 28:18; Jn 16:33) and final promise (Mt 28:20) make it possible for Christians to fulfill his commission? How important to you and your Christian congregation are Jesus' claim, commission, and promise?
3. Why do you think Jesus made a special post-resurrection visit to James, his "brother" (Mt 13:55; Mk 3:21, 30-35; 6:3; Jn 7:3-5)? With what result (Ac 1:13f)? What role did he play later in the earliest church (Ac 12:17; 15:13-29; 21:18-21; Ga 1:19; 2:9,21; Ja 1:1; Jd 1), so that some of the early church fathers viewed him as the first bishop of Jerusalem? How does his letter to the dispersed "twelve tribes" continue the Old Testament wisdom tradition (Ja 1:5; 3:13-18) and Jesus' themes and teaching style? Might this help explain why 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews highly respected him, and later Jews even called him "James the Just"? Why, however, was he martyred by the Jews at the instigation of the high priest during a brief gap between Roman governors (61 A.D.), according to the 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish historian Josephus?
4. How important as evidence of the reality of Jesus' bodily resurrection do you think his appearance to an assembled group of more than 500 believers was, especially during the next several decades when many of those witnesses were still alive (1 Co 15:6) and could be interviewed, and perhaps were consulted by Luke as part of his research for his gospel (Lk 1:2)? What value do these incidents have in addressing the skepticism of our age?

[\* Omitted in the 2 oldest manuscripts. A variety of endings in other manuscripts.]

1. On what issues did Jesus spend time teaching his disciples after his resurrection? Why is it so important for the continuation of his mission by his disciples that Jesus did this? How central to the content of the gospels are these themes? How much of what happened in the early church and the content of the rest of the New Testament writings flow from this teaching? Do such similarities give credence to the modern critics' claim that most of the gospels' accounts of Jesus' life and teaching are probably not true historical records, but later inventions by the evangelists to help their local congregations address contemporary issues? How could we tell the difference today? What difference would it make to you?
2. Why was it so important that the disciples return to Jerusalem and wait there? What do they still need in order to make their Christian witness to Jesus as God's Messiah possible (Lk 24:49)? How might this apply to your Christian ministry? Where should individual Christians begin their witness and ministries (Mk 5:18-20; Ac 9:30; 11:25; 21:39)? However, where might they eventually be led to serve in God's mission? How willing are you (a) to start where God wants, (b) to follow anywhere he calls you, and to (c) wait where you are until he invites you to move on?
3. What should Christians today learn from Jesus' answer to his disciples' last question (Ac 1:6)? Why, however, have so many Christians ignored Jesus answer and its implications? What about you and your Christian congregation? What would Jesus have you focused upon instead?
4. What connections are there between Luke's two accounts of Jesus' ascension? What details about it strike you as important? What more would you have liked to know? Why aren't all your questions answered (Jn 16:12-15)? Do the details that are given, imply that heaven is located somewhere up above the clouds, somewhere that human astronauts might visit? How different are Jesus' post-ascension appearances (Ac 7:56; 9:3f; 18:9; 22:6f, 17f; 26:13f; Rv 1:12-20) from his pre-ascension ones? How is the ascension of Jesus connected to the themes of Mt 28:18, 20 and Jn 16:7f? How does it fit with Jesus' many references to his subsequent glorification (Jn 3:13; 6:62; 7:33; 8:14; 12:23; 13:31-33; 14:2, 4, 12, 28; 16:5,7, 10, 28; 17:1, 5; 20:17)? How was Jesus' final visit to Jerusalem linked in his mind to his return to his father (Lk 9:51)? According to the rest of the New Testament, why is Jesus' ascension and following ministry so important for Christians today (Ac 2:33-36; 7:56; Ro 8:34; Ep 1:20-23; Ph 2:9-11; 1 Ti 3:16; He 1:3f; 2:8, 18; 4:14f; 6:19f; 7:25f; 8:1f; 9:11f, 24; 10:12, 19,22; 12:1f; 1 P 3:21f)? Why, then, do so many Christians pay so little attention to Jesus' Ascension? To which Jesus do you pray?
5. What do you make of the angels' predictions about Jesus return (Ac 1:11)? What implications can safely be drawn from it? Does this mean that Christians now are without Jesus' presence (Mt 28:20; Jn 14:23; 16:16, 19, 22; Ro 8:9-11; 2 Co 13:5; Ga 2:20; Ep 3:17; Cl 1:27)? How appropriate would it be for you to respond to Jesus' ascension in all the ways that his disciples did in the 1<sup>st</sup> century? What might equivalent responses by Christians today look like?

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**Remember to write up your answer to the comprehensive question based upon your notes**