

## 2 Week Tour of the Life of Christ

### Day 1 (Luke 1) – A Savior is Coming

The entire chapter can really be summed up in the song of Zechariah, vv. 67–79. The God of Israel has been faithful to his covenant—the promised Messiah is on his way. Furthermore, a prophet has been sent to “prepare the way,” proclaiming the message of salvation from sin.

### Day 2 (Luke 2) – The Messiah is Born

This chapter reveals the most exciting and important event in all of human history. The Messiah, God incarnate, had come to save the peoples from their sin. Amazingly, the second person of the trinity grows up as a human, with normal childhood circumstances and events. However, he clearly had the marks of something special, and he was certainly aware of his mission on this earth. The earthly and the heavenly natures and missions of Jesus are thereby closely tied together.

### Day 3 (Mark 1) – The Messiah’s Ministry Begins

One is almost startled by the quick, headlong movement with which Mark begins his gospel. He rapidly and succinctly spells out how Christ’s ministry began. Yet there is no doubt that this *is* the Christ (cf. vv. 10–11) as he received the commission and blessing of his father. Furthermore, his message was *the good news of the kingdom*, which he proclaimed boldly and authoritatively. Moreover, he had the power of God backing him as he ministered, and he was sensitive to the needs of the people. What a Messiah—divine power and mission perfectly blended with compassionate tenderness.

### Day 4 (Mark 9) – The Glorious Son of Man Ministers in Galilee

Christ gives outward expression of the majestic glory of the essence of His deity, that glory shining right through His human body and nature, that expression proceeding from and being truly representative of the intrinsic deity which He possessed. There was a fact and a power in that vision which mere radiance and the appearance of the dead patriarchs could not wholly convey: a revelation of Deity breaking out in that glorified face and form, which appealed to something deeper than sense, and confirmed the words from heaven: *This is my beloved Son*. Everything that follows in the chapter (and in his life) must be understood in the context of this revelation—the kingdom of God coming with divine power. In the teachings that follow, Jesus reminds the disciples where true power resides. This transforms the disciples’ previous understanding of the kingdom and the Messiah.

### Day 5 (Matt 5) – The “Kingdom Life” Teaching (Sermon on the Mount)

The great Teacher expands upon his central message, the idea of the coming kingdom. His teaching cuts against the grain and is almost illogical for it seems at the very least unable to be observed perfectly. For instance, the teachings concerning the beatitudes<sup>1</sup> are paradoxical for why would anyone want to be meek, merciful, mourners, etc., yet Jesus teaches that these are the ones that inherit the kingdom. Moreover, you should look favorably at persecution when it comes, and it is revealed that it is not enough to have strong outward conformity, you must conform inwardly as well. These are “astonishing,” counter-cultural teachings (see 7:28) and, frankly, unattainable humanly speaking (see 5:48). And that is the beauty of the kingdom—it can only be attained through Christ. And this message could only come from the divine One who could reveal such “odd” doctrine, with authority.

### Day 6 (Matt 6) – The “Kingdom Life” Teaching (continued)

The message of the kingdom is continued as we see the nature of attitudes that are acceptable in God’s sight. The follower of Christ is expected to act for God’s glory, not for self-glory. Jesus, however, does not expect that godly actions would be discontinued; rather he expects that the acts continue *out of the proper motivation*. Obey God “in secret”; to do otherwise is to gain the reward here and show where your true treasure lies. This section highlights proper attitudes via two observations: <sup>1</sup>those who serve money vs. those who serve God, and <sup>2</sup>those who worry about providing their own needs vs. those who trust in God’s provision. Jesus thus contrasts religious

masquerades and genuine spirituality. The genuinely spiritual are the ones who will partake of the kingdom.

### Day 7 (Luke 15) – The Lost, Found

We must understand our Lord’s pointed message in the context of his immediate audience. The Pharisees who heard these parables would have clearly understood that Christ considered them to be morally rich (and arrogantly so; cf. v. 7) but spiritually bankrupt. We must “hear” Christ’s message with the same ears. Understand that Christ came to save the lost, and until one understands he is lost he cannot be found. We are nothing without Christ; we must never feel spiritually superior because of our standing in Christ. Furthermore, my righteousness/moral acts have no foundation in and of themselves; they only find merit as they are rooted in Christ. Only those who have “been found” will partake of the kingdom.

### Day 8 (John 3) – You Must be Born Again

Jesus here elucidates the mechanics, or means, of entering the kingdom (v. 3, 5). Only those who have “been found,” or given spiritual *life* (birth), by the Spirit may enter into the kingdom. And that birth comes about via belief on the Christ who will “be lifted up” (vv. 14b–16). However, to reject this message of Jesus is to *reject God* (v. 33) and to be destined for his eternal wrath (v. 36).

### Day 9 (John 14) – Don’t Be Troubled

Jesus must leave this world soon so that the world realize his vital connection with the Father. He, therefore, comforts his disciples with the promise that he will return one day, but in the mean time the Holy Spirit will be present with them. They were confused; he encouraged them to trust. But they needed to anchor that trust in Jesus who was their eternal companion and the representation of the Father. The chapter not only gives Christ’s followers comfort, but it also causes us to draw close to him and give us compelling reasons to invite others into that fellowship with our Savior.

### Day 10 (John 17) – An Open Prayer

We further understand the unique relationship between Jesus and the Father via an open prayer to the Father. Jesus prays that this unique relationship would be the grounds upon which the Father guards, secures, and cares for Christ’s followers. It is truly amazing that Jesus asked the Father to grant believers the *same kind of unity* that he and the Father enjoyed from eternity. This may be “the real” Lord’s Prayer.

### Day 11 (Matt 26) – Precursor to an Execution

In the face of the imminent execution we are gently reminded of how precious and beautiful Christ is, so undeserving of the wretched treatment to come. Matthew then focused on Jesus’ completion of the work that he had come to do, emphasizing <sup>1</sup>God’s sovereign control of the events leading up to Jesus’ death; and <sup>2</sup>the voluntary nature of Jesus’ sacrifice. He was not an unfortunate victim; he went boldly and willingly to death in obedience to God the Father and in fulfillment of the OT prophecies.

### Day 12 (Matt 27) – It is Finished

In this account of Jesus’ sentencing and crucifixion we find that he *sacrifices* his life, which is the central fact of the gospel message. Because of his love for us and his obedience to the Father, he dies upon the *altar* of the cross to take away sin’s guilt and shame for those who believe. It is far more than a historical event; it is an act of eternal significance. It was a *transaction* between the Father and the Son. The act complete; the debt paid; the atonement provided.

### Day 13 (John 20) – He Arose!

What overwhelming joy should arise in our hearts when we read this resurrection account. This reality is crucial. It is the very heart-blood of the Christian faith, and our faith depends upon it. For everything else recorded in the gospels is meaningless without this: *our Savior lives!*

### Day 14 (Luke 24) – Believe Me, It’s True

Jesus Christ’s awful death on the cross was not the end of the story. In this neat perspective of the resurrection we see the two men who are downcast and dejected—they thought their supposed “Savior” was dead. But Jesus showed them living proof. *He was alive in fulfillment of the Holy Scriptures*. He made appearances to his followers then ascended to the Father. It is true—he is alive.

<sup>1</sup>The term is derived from Latin *beatitudo*; it is not used in the English Bible. It means “blessedness.”