



History or Myth? Luke

Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament



“Once upon a time there was a poor widow who had an only son, named Jack, and a cow, named Milky-white. All they had to live on was the milk the cow gave every day...[After slaying a giant who lived in the sky above the clouds,] Jack and his mother became very rich with a [talking, golden harp and a hen who laid golden eggs that Jack had stolen from the giant.] Jack married a Princess, and they all lived happily ever after.”

—English Fairy Tale

“Jack and his beanstalk was just as suitable for the nucleus of a religious system as Christ and his cross; but the one has been taken, and the other left. Christ and his cross is the more blood-stained and crude legend of the two, and would, therefore, receive the readier acceptance by the barbarous mental and moral instincts of priest-manipulated ignorance.”— Promoter of atheism, W. S. Ross (“Saladin”) in *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?*

List the characteristics of fable-type legends?

1. *Generalization of* _____
2. *Ambiguity of* _____
3. *Designed for* _____
4. *Drawn-out* _____
5. *Entertaining* _____
6. *Pointed* _____
7. *Romantic* _____

Read Luke 1.1-5; 2.1-4 and 3.1-3. How does Luke signal us that he intends his narrative to be taken as history?

1. *Parallel* _____ *designations*
2. *Detailed* _____ *designations*
3. *Verifiable descriptions of* _____

J. P. Moreland tells of meeting a Jewish graduate student who had become a “committed follower of Jesus.” When Moreland asked the student how he became a Christian, the Jewish man replied, “Dr. Moreland, I have studied myth most of my education. I know the earmarks of myth; that’s all I study. My undergraduate training was in mythology; my graduate training has been in mythology. And I was practicing Koine Greek reading the Gospel of Luke, and I got halfway through it, and as a Jew, I said, ‘My God, this man really did these things. What am I going to do? This is history. It reads like history. It doesn’t read like myth. I know what myth tastes like because all I do is read it, and that is not myth.’” (Source: Moreland, J. P. & Nielsen, Kai; *Does God Exist?*)



ANCHOR TRUTHS

The Gospels cannot be dismissed as myth. They were written as history and as such must be weighed for truth by *historical evidence*.



FOR DISCUSSION

How does a person's worldview prompt them to accept or reject the Gospels?

The stories of Abraham and Odysseus both bear marks of historical-style narrative. Contrast the two stories in regard to:

- 1. Theology: *Holy Monotheism vs.* _____
- 2. Plausibility: *Divine Purpose vs.* _____
- 3. Hero: _____
- 4. Reward: *Fellowship With God vs.* _____

Analyze the argument of W. S. Ross at left. Why doesn't he believe in the resurrection of Jesus?

The amount of the evidence must be proportionate to the improbability of the event for which the evidence is adduced, and if every pen in the Roman empire in the reign of Tiberias had left it on uniform record that Christ rose from the dead, the fact would not be established. It would be more probable that every living historian should be mistaken, or even that every living historian should wilfully have lied, than that an event so utterly improbable, so subversive of all experience, should have taken place.—W. S. Ross ("Saladin") in *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?*

Vocabulary

- Agnostic
- Atheist
- Deist
- Deus Ex Machina*
- Ee Basileia Tou Theou*
- Genre
- Monotheism
- Myth
- Ossuary
- Pantheist
- Polytheism
- Qumran
- Rabbinical
- Synoptic
- Theist
- Worldview



Historical Markers In Luke

Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament

What are the Gospels' *historical markers* (i.e., verifiable people, places and things associated with the life of Jesus of Nazareth)?

1. _____
2. _____ *Phenomena*
3. _____ *Features*
4. _____, *Misc. Objects*
5. *Personal* _____
6. _____ *Figures*
7. _____ *Figures*
8. _____ *& Cities*

The Current State of Luke's Towns and Cities

Ruin	Modern	Unknown
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Arimathea	Luk 23.51	✓		
Bethany	Luk 19.29		✓	
Bethlehem	Luk 02.04		✓	
Bethphage	Luk 19.29		✓	
Bethsaida	Luk 09.10			✓
Capernaum	Luk 04.31	✓		
Korazin	Luk 10.13	✓		
Emmaus	Luk 24.13	✓		
Jericho	Luk 18.35	✓	✓	
Jerusalem	Luk 19.41	✓*	✓	
Magdala	Luk 08.02		✓	
Nain	Luk 07.11		✓	
Nazareth	Luk 04.16		✓	
Sidon	Luk 06.17		✓	
Tyre	Luk 06.17	✓		

Why are the Gospels' historical markers important?

They allow us to judge whether or not the Gospel narratives reflect the real world of their time, and thereby whether or not their claim of historicity is plausible.



Ossuary found in 1990



ANCHOR TRUTHS

While not written specifically as *histories*, the Gospels contain the elements of *historical* biographies, written to provide the historical foundation for faith in Jesus Christ.



FOR DISCUSSION

What can we learn about the issue of believing or not believing in the Gospels from Luke 24.13-35?

Who left this extensive signature?

Jerusalem

- Temple
- Palace
- Theater
- Amphitheater
- Three Towers
- Antonia Fortress

Machaerus Fortress

Masada Fortress

Jericho Palace & Gardens

Herodium Fortress

Caesarea

- Artificial Harbor
- Aqueduct

Shrine of Patriarchs in Hebron

Damascus Monument

Antioch Monument
Byblos Monument

Corroboration of Luke's Named Characters

Document
Artifact
None

Annas	Luk 03.02	J		
Augustus Caesar	Luk 02.01	J	C+	
Caiaphas	Luk 03.02	J	O+	
Herod the Great	Luk 01.05	J	✓	
Herodias	Luk 03.19	J		
Herod Tetrarch	Luk 03.01	J		
Jesus Christ	Luk 03.23	JT+	O	
John Baptist	Luk 07.20	J		
Lysanias Tetrarch	Luk 03.01	J		
Philip Tetrarch	Luk 03.01	J		
Pontius Pilate	Luk 03.01	JT	C+	
Quirinius*	Luk 02.02	J	✓	
Simon Peter	Luk 05.08		✓	
Tiberias Caesar	Luk 03.01	J	C	

* Publius Sulpicius Quirinius (Cyrenius), Jos. 18.2.1.

Key: J = Josephus
T = Tacitus
C = Coin(s)
O = Ossuary



Roman Denarius
Augustus Caesar



The Household of God

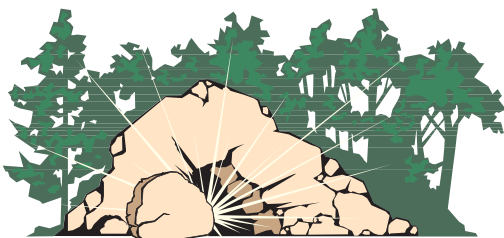
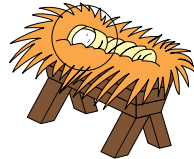
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Evidence & The Life of Jesus

Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament

What Do the Bible, History & Archaeology Really Teach About the Life of Jesus?

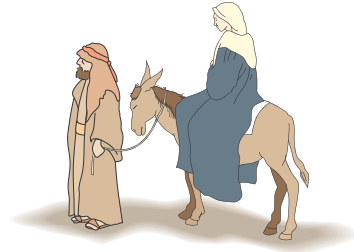
- The expectant virgin Mary rode a donkey to Bethlehem (Luke 2.4,5).
- Jesus was born in winter, about the time we now designate as December 25.
- Kings from the Orient visited the infant Jesus (Matthew 2.1).
- Three Magi visited Jesus (Matthew 2.1,2).
- The star of the wise men stood directly over the stable where Jesus was born (Matthew 2.9-11).
- Mary placed the newborn Jesus in a wooden feeding trough (Luke 2.16; 13.15).
- Jesus worked in a carpentry shop (Mark 6.3).
- Jesus and his disciples were from the poor, lower class of Jewish society (Mark 1.20).
- Jesus was nailed to the cross through the palms of His hands (John 20.25).
- Jesus remained in the tomb for 72 hours (Matthew 12.40).



True
False
Maybe

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Additional Notes





ANCHOR TRUTHS

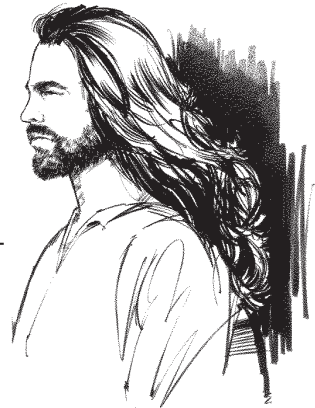
The Gospels so firmly anchor the life of Jesus to first-century Palestine that we can continue to learn about His life by studying the history and culture of His people.

Biblical
Historical
Archaeological

Categories of Evidence

Put a check by the categories of evidence that support the following conclusions:

- Family members were required to return to their ancestral homes for Roman censuses.
- Jesus existed as a real person in time and space.
- The precise birthplace of Jesus is marked by the present-day Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.
- Jesus spoke Greek as well as Aramaic.
- Jesus wore his hair long, about shoulder length.
- Peter, fisherman-apostle, lived in the seaside town of Capernaum.
- Jesus was acquainted with stage actors (Matthew 6.5,6).
- As a “carpenter,” Jesus may have worked on anything from limestone buildings to false teeth.
- Jesus was well versed in the history and politics of His nation.
- Jesus performed miracles.
- The High Priest, Caiaphas, existed as a real person in time and space.
- Pontius Pilate existed as a real person in time and space.
- Jesus was nailed to the cross through the wrists.
- A rolling stone closed the entrance to Christ’s tomb.
- Jesus was buried in the Garden Tomb by Gordon’s Calvary.
- Jesus was buried at the site enclosed by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
- Jesus rose bodily from the dead.
- The first Christians congregated regularly in an upper room in Jerusalem.





The *Ego Eimis* In John

Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament

Jesus Said, I AM the:

Vocabulary	
Autograph	
Artifact	
Christ	
Christology	
Corroborate	
<i>Ego Eimi</i>	
Gospel	
Manuscript (MS)	
Messiah	
Pneumatology	
Synagogue	
Titulus	
YHWH	

1. _____ *(4.26)*

2. _____ *(6.33-51)*

3. _____ *(8.12)*

4. _____ *(8.18)*

5. _____ *(6.20; 8.24,28, 58; 13.19; 18.5-8)*

6. _____ *(10.7,9)*

7. _____ *(10.11,14)*

8. _____ *(11.25)*

9. _____ *(14.6)*

10. _____ *(15.1-5)*





ANCHOR TRUTHS

What Jesus was, whether *man, God, truth, life, shepherd, etc.*, He always presently is.



FOR DISCUSSION

When Jesus lived out His ministry in Israel, why didn't he just say, "I'm God" in so many words?

Three Greek Tenses

Translating *ἔγω εἰμί*

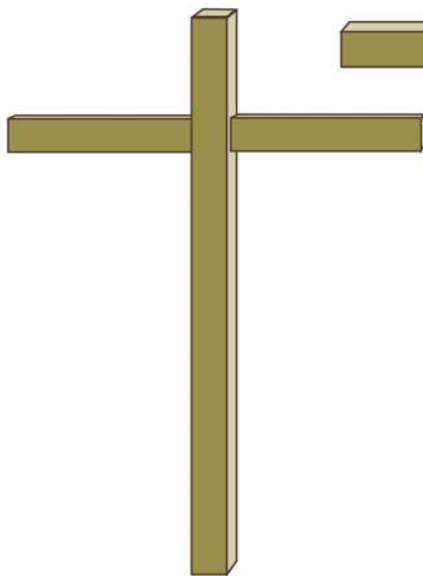
Aorist

Present

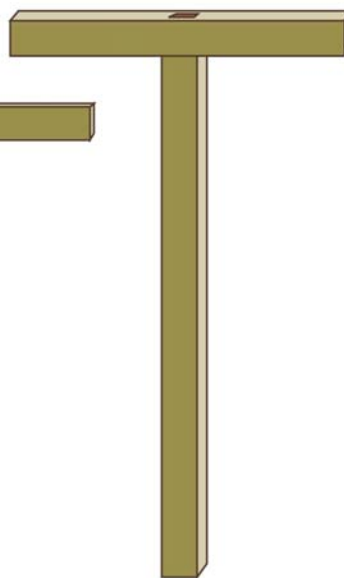
Perfect



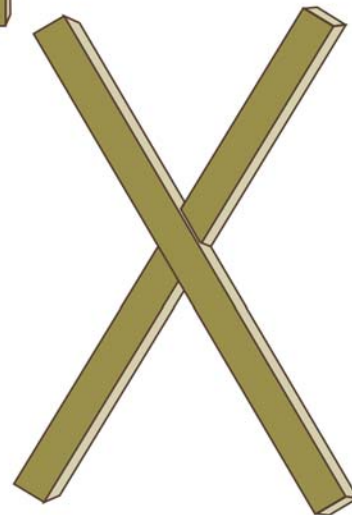
crux simplex



*crux immissa or
crux capitata*



crux commissa



*crux decussata
(St. Andrew's cross)*



Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament

The Holy Spirit

1. _____ : 3.5-7
(cf. Titus 3.4-6)

2. _____ : 6.63
(cf. 2 Corinthians 3.6)

3. _____ : 7.37-39
(cf. John 4.14; Acts 1.8; 1 Cor. 14.26)

4. _____ : 14.16
(cf. Acts 9.31; 1 Cor. 14.3; 2 Cor. 1.3-7)

5. _____ : 14.26; 16.13
(cf. 1 Cor. 2.6-16; 1 John 2.20,27)

6. _____ : 15.26,27
(cf. Hebrews 10.12-17; 2 Timothy 1.8)

7. _____ : 16.7-11
(cf. 1 Cor. 14.24,25)





ANCHOR TRUTHS

Every Christian has *all* of the Spirit (Acts 2.38,39; Rom. 8.9). The question is whether the Spirit has *all* of every Christian (Eph. 4.29-32; 1 Thes. 5.19; James 4.1-10).

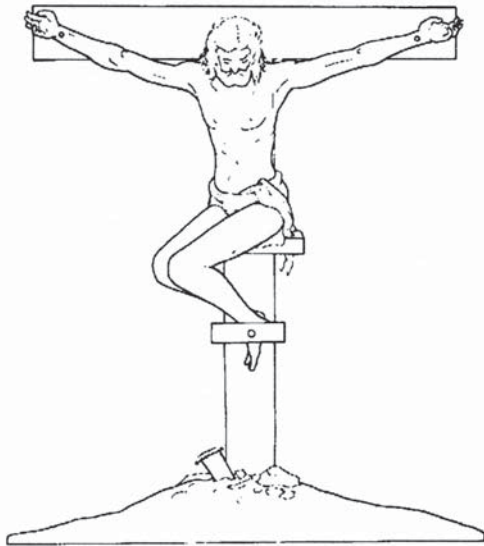


FOR DISCUSSION

What is different about the Holy Spirit's ministry in the NT era? What are we commanded to do in the NT regarding the Holy Spirit?

ישוע נצרי מלך היהודים
 IECXC INAZAPENC BACIVEXC IXΔEPCN
 IESVS NAZARENVS REX IVDÆORVM

*Reconstruction of the Titulus
 Based on the relic in
 "The Basilica of S. Croce in Gerusalemme."
 The writing on the relic is shown against the light background*



Typical Crucifixion
Based on Recent Archaeology



3rd-century Anti-Christian Graffiti: "Alexamenus worships his god"



Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament



The Most Important Symbol In Early Christian Art

It's called the *orante*. What did it mean?

What do we call a group of persons who:

1. Live together (Acts 1.12-14)
2. Pray and eat together (Acts 2.42)
3. Share the same possessions (Acts 2.44; 4.32)
4. Call one another "their own" (Acts 4.23) (Cf. John 13.1; 1 Cor. 14.35; 1 Tim. 6.1)
5. Instruct one another at home (Acts 5.42; 20.20)
6. Feed one another (Acts 6.1)
7. Refer to one another as brothers, sisters, etc. (Acts 21.17)

The Call To Family in the Gospels, is a call to:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <i>A shared</i> _____ | Mat. 10.25 |
| <i>Do the</i> _____ <i>will</i> | Mat. 12.46-50; Mark 3.31-35; Luke 8.20,21 |
| <i>Gain a bigger</i> _____ | Mat. 19.27-30; Mark 10.29,30; Luke 18.29-30 |
| <i>Get the house</i> _____ | Mat. 16.19 |
| <i>One Father and</i> _____ | Mat. 23.8 |
| <i>The Ultimate</i> _____ | Luke 9.61,62; 12.26,27; 21.16 |
| <i>Repentance &</i> _____ | Luke 15.11-32 |
| <i>A permanent</i> _____ | John 8.34-36 |
| _____ <i>one another</i> | Luke 22.32 |
| <i>Costly</i> _____ | Mat. 28.10; John 20.17 |
| <i>An eternity</i> _____ | John 14.2 |



ANCHOR TRUTHS

By a high adoption price, Jesus has elevated us from servants to friends (John 15.15) and from friends to brothers (John 20.17), thus making us partners and heirs.



FOR DISCUSSION

If the church is called to be a family rather than a "corporation" or a "small business," what are the implications for how we evangelize and make disciples?

According to the family principle in the Epistles, we are:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <i>The household of God</i> | Ephesians 2.19; 1 Tim. 3.15 |
| <i>Ruled by the _____</i> | Hebrews 3.6 |
| <i>Living _____</i> | 1 Cor. 3.19-17; Eph. 2.19-22; 1 Pet. 2.5 |
| <i>Worthy of filial _____</i> | 1Tim. 5.1-3 |
| <i>To _____ in one another</i> | Galatians 6.7-10 |
| <i>Bearers of God's _____</i> | 2Chron. 6.32,33; Acts 15.17; Eph. 3.15 |
| <i>Like a _____ family</i> | 1Tim. 3.4,5 |
| <i>_____ at great cost</i> | Rom. 8.28-32; Heb. 2.9-15 |
| <i>Where _____ begins</i> | 1Pet. 4.17 |

According to the Book of Revelation:

Jesus holds the "key of David" (Rev. 3.7). What does that mean?



The Household of God

A BCtoAD Series By Timothy Ministries

Ministry Principles In Acts

Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament

An analysis of the book of Acts reveals the following ministry principles:

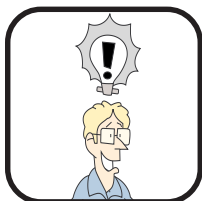
1. Obey God in the face of adversity, recognizing suffering as a normal cost of advancing the kingdom (5.29; 14.22).
2. Fulfill the Great Commission by the Spirit's empowering (1.4,5,8; 2.17,39; 5.32).
3. Preach the gospel message fully, consistently with (and corroborated by) the scriptures, calling all persons to repent and submit to Christ as demanded by the proof of His resurrection (3.22,23; 5.20; 17.30,31; 20.27; 26.22).
4. Proclaim salvation and forgiveness for every kind of sin as available exclusively through Christ by means of faith in Him (4.12; 13.38,39; 16.30,31).
5. Offer the gospel to Jews first, then to all persons regardless of race or culture (2.17,21,39; 10.15,34,35,43; 13.46).
6. Gentile believers must respect the sensibilities of their Jewish brothers, but need not take the Levitical law upon themselves (15.19-21; 24-29).
7. Elders must guard against false teaching, and shepherd all believers without partiality (20.28,31).
8. The able-bodied in the church must minister to the temporal needs of their weaker brothers (6.7; 20.35).

Please see my article entitled: ***The Problem with Patterns and Precedents: Identifying Principles in the Book of Acts*** available at www.tmin.org.



ANCHOR TRUTHS

The book of Acts demonstrates Christ's promise that the Spirit would empower us to accomplish our Commission; we can expect that same empowering today.



FOR DISCUSSION

What does the book of Acts teach us about receiving, or being filled with, or being baptized by the Holy Spirit?

How A Church Can Mutate From Loving Family To Damaging Cult

© 2002, Roderick A. Graciano

<p>SHEPHERDING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacrifices in order to serve • Prioritizes people over agenda • Works for success of others, willing to see others elevated above self • Able to receive warnings and constructive criticism • Works hard to restore strays 	<p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominated by a strong personality who is insensitive to subordinates • Has diminishing tolerance toward dissenters and strays; becomes isolated from followers • Begins to violate family authority structures • Focuses increasingly on material gain • Becomes increasingly secretive 	<p>MANIPULATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlling, accountable to no one • Gets special, self-serving revelations • Completely intolerant of criticism • Assumes absolute authority • Imposes beliefs on followers, exploits them materially & emotionally • Justifies immorality
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<p>GRACE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes serving one another • Patient with the immature • Includes all believers in fellowship • Practices the Priesthood of the Believer, values personal views • Disciplines with brokenness • Emphasizes giving all to Christ <p>The Danger Zone</p>	<p>Church Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizes the organization over individuals • Legalistically emphasizes externals • Adds rites of initiation • Replaces personal discernment and counsel with dependence upon leaders • Testing of “all things” deemed superfluous • Emphasizes giving to the organization 	<p>LEGALISM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loses “one another” love • Becomes completely elitist • Judges actions <i>and attitudes</i> severely • Silences dissent by marginalization • Claims all possessions for the group • Allows leaders to dictate all financial and relational decisions of individuals
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<p>ORTHODOX</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proclaims the deity and atonement of Christ, justification by faith, and the primacy of The Bible • Encourages personal discovery of biblical truth 	<p>Teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposes new rituals as means of grace • Increasingly emphasizes authority of leaders • Discourages independent thinking • Adds other authoritative books • Flirts with novel doctrines 	<p>HERETICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denies Christ’s deity and atonement • Pushes a form of works righteousness • Emphasizes submission to leaders, accuses the rebellious • Suppresses independent thinking • Proclaims revelations superior to Bible • Adopts other heretical doctrines
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Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament

Leadership

1. The church was led by a _____ of overseers (elders) and deacons (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1.5-9; Acts 20. 17).
2. Overseers and deacons had to meet _____ qualifications, including the ability to manage their own families well (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1.5-9).
3. Church overseers (elders) were characterized as _____ (= pastors) because they were responsible to feed and protect God's flock (Acts 20.28,29).
4. Overseers had to be _____ and able to teach (1 Tim. 3.2; 2 Tim. 2.24; Titus 1.8,9).

Teaching

1. The first pastors taught their flock both publicly and in the believers' _____ (Acts 20.20).
2. Pastors taught both by word and _____ (1 Tim. 4.12; Titus 2.7).
3. Pastors prioritized teaching their people how to live with _____ and character (Titus 2).

Meetings

1. The first Christian meetings were held in the Jerusalem temple and in _____ (Acts 2.46).
2. When they could no longer meet in the temple, Christians met in homes (Rom. 16.5; 1 Cor. 16.19).
3. The first Christian meetings were devoted to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread and _____ (Acts 2.32).
4. "Breaking bread" apparently involved eating a _____ together, during which bread and wine were partaken of as an ordinance within the meal (cf. Jude 12).
5. Praying for people, including _____ remained a priority as new churches formed outside of Palestine (1 Tim. 2.1-8).



ANCHOR TRUTHS

Every generation of Christians must creatively express the faith in new ways relevant to their culture, while maintaining the essential principles of the early church.



FOR DISCUSSION

Why did the apostles appoint multiple pastors (overseers) in each church rather than just a single pastor?

Ministry

1. From the beginning, Christians provided for the _____ of one another (Acts 2.44.45).
2. The first Christians prioritized meeting the practical needs of _____ and _____ (Acts 6.1; 1 Tim. 5.3-16; 6.17-19; James 1.27).
3. Ministry also involved the _____ reading of Scripture, preaching the Word and teaching (1 Tim. 4.13; 2 Tim. 4.2).
4. Another ministry responsibility in the early church was the training and appointing of _____ (2 Tim. 2.2; Titus 1.5).
5. The overseer (pastor) also had to patiently _____ and _____ those who opposed biblical teaching by their words or immoral behavior (2 Tim. 4.1-4).
6. Ministry also involved direct _____ (2 Tim. 4. 5).