**The Story of the Church of Christ**

**V. Ministry of Christ**

 After Jesus was baptized by John in the river Jordan, the scriptures say “Jesus was led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.” (Matt. 4:11) Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights. After going so long without food He was very hungry. The devil came to Him and told Him if He was the Son of God, He should command the stones to become bread. Jesus refused to use His power this way. The devil took Jesus to a high mountain and offered to give all the kingdoms of the world to Him if only Jesus would worship him. Jesus refused to do this, saying only the Lord our God should be worshipped. He told the devil (Satan) to leave.

 After the devil left, angels came and ministered to Jesus. He then left that land and went to live in the city of Capernium in Galilee. All of these things had been foretold by the prophets of God long before Jesus was born. After this, Jesus began to preach. He said “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt 4:17)

 Next Jesus began to choose men who would become special helpers. First He chose two brothers, Simon Peter and Andrew, who were fishermen. Jesus told them He would make them “fishers of men”. Then He called two other brothers, James and John. These four men immediately left everything and followed Jesus, who taught and healed all kinds of sickness among the people. Great crowds of people from all parts of the country followed Jesus. Read Matthew, Chapters 5, 6, and 7 to learn the beautiful gospel of Jesus. The word gospel means “good news”, and that is what Jesus brought. The gospel was not only for people living then but everyone who would live later, including us. The people were surprised at the teachings of Jesus and knew He spoke with great power and authority ----not like any other teachers.

 After Jesus selected the first four men, He chose eight others. These twelve men were called Apostles. The names of the Twelve Apostles were Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Phillip, Bartholomew, Matthew, James, son of Alphesus, Simon Zelotes, Judas, brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, who would later turn against Jesus and betray Him.

 The twelve Apostles traveled with Jesus as he preached and taught the people. They witnessed the many miracles He performed. Jesus called the twelve to Him and gave them power to cast out unclean spirits and to heal all kinds of sickness and disease. He sent them among the people to preach and use all the

powers they had been given. He warned them of the dangers they would face

because they were following Him.

Ministry of Christ (cont)

 Later Jesus chose seventy men to go, two by two, before Him into the places where He would come. The seventy returned with joy because even the devils were subject to them when they used the name of Jesus. They were told by Jesus not to rejoice in their power but to rejoice because their names were written in heaven.

 With the choosing of the twelve Apostles and the Seventy Jesus began to form His church which would be on earth after He returned to His heavenly home. In time other offices would be added to the priesthood of His church. When we look today for Christ’s church, it must be like the church that was established in the days of Christ and His Apostles.

 As Christ became more popular with the people, the chief priests and scribes came to fear his influence and plotted to kill Him. Judas, Iscariot, one of the Twelve, betrayed Jesus to His enemies who took Him prisoner. His trial, suffering, and death by crucifixion was a time of deep sadness for those who had loved Him. They had not fully understood when He had told them these things would happen. They had hoped the Messiah would be a political leader who would free them from their enemies. One day they would realize Christ was much more powerful than any earthly leader who had ever lived.

 We can hardly imagine the great joy the friends of Jesus felt when He appeared to them after His resurrection from the dead. Jesus remained on earth for forty days after His resurrection and appeared to various ones at least ten times. He talked to them about the kingdom of God. He told the apostles they should preach in His name in all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem. He told them they should wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father for power after the Holy Ghost should come upon them. Then Jesus disappeared in the clouds as He was taken up into heaven.