

Visit Tyndale's exciting Web site at [www.tyndale.com](http://www.tyndale.com)

*Breakfast with Jesus*

Copyright © 2003 by Greg Laurie. All rights reserved. Written permission must be secured from the publisher to use or reproduce any part of this book, except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles.

Cover photograph copyright © 2003 by Michael Hudson. All rights reserved.

Cover designed by Gloria Chantell

Edited by Linda K. Taylor

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New International Version®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the *Holy Bible*, King James Version.

Scripture quotations marked NASB are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Scripture verses marked Phillips are taken from *The New Testament in Modern English* by J. B. Phillips, copyright © J. B. Phillips, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1972. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked RSV are taken from the *Holy Bible*, Revised Standard Version, copyright © 1946, 1952, 1971 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked TCNT are taken from the *Twentieth Century New Testament*, revised edition, © 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904 by Fleming H. Revell Company. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked AMP are taken from *The Amplified Bible*. Old Testament copyright © 1965, 1987 by The Zondervan Corporation. *The Amplified New Testament* copyright © 1958, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

---

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Laurie, Greg.

Breakfast with Jesus / Greg Laurie.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-8423-5328-3 (sc)

1. Jesus Christ—Biography—Devotional literature. I. Title.

BT306.53 .L38 2003

232.9—dc21

2003003572

---

Printed in the United States of America

09 08 07 06 05 04 03

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

# CONTENTS

Acknowledgments *ix*

Introduction: Walking with the Savior *xi*

## **Part One: The Person of Jesus**

1. He Must Increase *3*
2. How to Resist Temptation *7*
3. Safer with Him *11*
4. No Match for Jesus *15*
5. Satan, Society, and the Savior *19*
6. Bad for Business *22*
7. God's Tests *26*
8. Does God Heal Today? *29*
9. Still Trusting *32*
10. But It's Impossible! *35*
11. Even for the Unworthy *38*
12. We Have to Ask *41*
13. Glorious Sonshine *44*
14. On the Mountaintop with Jesus *47*
15. Waiting in the Valley *50*
16. The Stronger Man *53*
17. Dead Man Walking *56*
18. The Heart of the Problem *59*
19. The Squeaky Wheel *62*
20. Up a Tree *65*
21. The King Weeps *68*
22. When Temples Get Dirty *71*
23. You Are the Reason *74*
24. God on Trial *77*
25. Whose Voice Will You Hear? *80*
26. Are You Carrying the Cross? *84*

- 27. Love Held Him There 88
- 28. The Main Message 91

### **Part Two: The Teaching of Jesus**

- 29. A Model of Forgiveness 97
- 30. Can Christians Defend Themselves? 102
- 31. Everyone's Favorite Verse 106
- 32. Bearing Fruit 109
- 33. Do What He Says 113
- 34. Dealing with Doubt 116
- 35. Deny or Love Ourselves? 119
- 36. Losers Are Keepers 123
- 37. Follow Me 126
- 38. Count the Cost 129
- 39. Playing for Time 133
- 40. Beware the Unseized Moment 136
- 41. A Matter of Balance 139
- 42. The Little Cell Phone That Could 142
- 43. Double Vision 145
- 44. Who Was That Masked Man? 148
- 45. With You All the Way 151
- 46. The Unforgivable Sin 155
- 47. Friends of God 158
- 48. What Does It Take? 161
- 49. If Your Knees Are Shaking 164
- 50. Faithfully Persistent 167
- 51. A Good Way to Unmake a Prayer 170
- 52. How to Come to Jesus 174
- 53. Be Ready 177
- 54. So What Now? 180
- 55. Beware the Pitfalls 184
- 56. The Parable of Equal Opportunity 188

### **Part Three: The Promises of Jesus**

- 57. The Happy Ones 193
- 58. Happy People Are Hungry People 196
- 59. The Joy of Thrown Bricks 200

60. Life Is More Than Food 203
61. The Division That Brings Unity 206
62. How to Quench Your Thirst 209
63. A Real Choice 213
64. The Death of Death 216
65. May the Force Be with You? 219
66. The Worst Sin You Can Commit 222
67. He Teaches Us 225
68. Need Some Help? 228
69. A Sure Thing 231
70. Don't Give Up! 234
71. With God, Nothing Is Impossible 237
72. When Afraid, Dial 9-1-1 240
73. Hearing His Voice 243
74. Full Joy 246
75. What Happens beyond the Grave? 249
76. Born Once, Die Twice 252
77. Finish the Race You've Started 256
78. Bringing Others to Jesus 260
79. Exclusively Yours 264
80. The Fear Factor 268
81. Time to Look Up 271
82. "Let's Roll!" 275
83. Homesick for Heaven 278
84. At Home with Jesus 281

## INTRODUCTION

# *Walking with the Savior*

*A little boy, frightened by a thunderous lightning storm, called out one dark night, “Daddy, come here. I’m scared!”*

“Son,” his father replied, “God loves you and He’ll take care of you.”

“I know God loves me,” the boy answered, “but right now I want somebody who has skin on!”

That’s a perfect description of Jesus. He was “God with skin on.”

Many of us wish we could have walked the dusty streets of Jerusalem with Jesus while He ministered on this earth, or sat at the table with Him when He broke bread and blessed it. But we can’t.

Or can we?

The apostle John, who personally walked and talked with Jesus, says that we *can* know Him. No, we cannot reach out and touch Him right now, but He is here just as powerfully as He was with His disciples some two thousand years ago. He wants to speak to us, guide us, protect us, and develop a close friendship with us.

“That which was from the beginning,” John writes, “which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life . . . that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:1-3). The phrase translated “seen with our eyes” could more literally be rendered “to view attentively, to

contemplate, to gaze upon as a spectacle.” Imagine what it must have been like to *see God* in human form, to be able to *hear* His voice with our own ears!

People often ask, “What did Jesus look like?” John spent several years with Him yet never mentioned His appearance—not once, even in passing. Yes, John spent hours gazing at Jesus, but not because of the Lord’s striking physical appearance. It seems that Jesus was rather ordinary in the way He looked.

The two disciples on the road to Emmaus took the resurrected Christ to be an ordinary man. In the garden, Mary mistook Him for the gardener. Certainly no Bible passage tells us He wore a permanent halo. Judas told the enemies of Jesus that they could identify the Master when he would kiss Him on the cheek. Now, if the Lord looked as striking as we might imagine Him to look, He would have been easily identified—without a kiss from His betrayer. “He’s the guy who looks like a king or a leader,” Judas could have said. But he didn’t.

As a Jew at this time in history, it seems likely that Jesus would have had dark skin and hair. Certainly He was not a fair-skinned Anglo-Saxon with blond hair. Why doesn’t Scripture give us a physical description of Jesus? Because it isn’t important.

Though He looked ordinary in outward appearance, John and the others had never met *anyone* like Him. The disciples spent practically every waking hour in the presence of Jesus, enthralled (and sometimes unnerved). Scripture tells us that John would often lean his head on the chest of Jesus so as not to miss anything (see John 13:23); he could hear even a whisper. All of the disciples watched carefully, hung on Jesus’ every word, and scrutinized His every move.

And John is saying that *this* Jesus can be known today!

We might not be able to walk and talk and eat with Jesus in person as the disciples did, but we can fellowship with Him nonetheless. Jesus Himself said, “If anyone hears My voice

and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20).

This book was created to help you do just that. I’ve designed the devotions in the first part, “The Person of Jesus,” to allow you to come to know Jesus through the eyes of the disciples who lived and ministered with Him. The second part, “The Teaching of Jesus,” introduces you to some of the main spiritual lessons the Savior entrusted to His followers. And the third part, “The Promises of Jesus,” focuses on the delightful (and sometimes sobering!) promises that Jesus gives to everyone who chooses to walk with Him.

Are you ready to walk with the Savior? Are you hungry for the food He has prepared for you? Are you anxious to spend some quality time with Him, listening to His counsel and committing yourself to His plan for you? Then I invite you to join me as together we begin each day in fellowship with Jesus, walking with Him and listening to Him as the disciples did: “As soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. . . . Jesus said to them, ‘Come and eat breakfast’” (John 21:9, 12).

# CHAPTER 1

## *He Must Increase*

*Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. Matthew 3:13*

Before Jesus officially began His public ministry, He had to take a couple of very important steps. The first was to be baptized.

Sometimes that troubles people. *Why should Jesus have to be baptized?* The idea certainly bothered John the Baptist. Matthew tells us that when Jesus came to be baptized, “John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?’” (Matthew 3:14).

In one way, it’s really not so hard to understand why some don’t understand Jesus’ baptism. The Gospel of Luke tells us that John preached “a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Luke 3:3). Since Jesus never committed any sin and therefore never had to repent of anything (see 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15), what purpose would His baptism serve? Why should someone who never sinned undergo a baptism for the repentance of sins? John knew of Jesus’ spotless character (see John 1:29), and so at first he opposed Jesus’ request.

So why *did* Jesus ask John to baptize Him?

Before suggesting an answer, perhaps it would help if we recall something of John’s background and importance.

The Gospel of Luke tells us that Jesus and John were cousins. By his early thirties, John had emerged as a major national figure. It’s worth noting that Josephus, the renowned Jewish

historian, wrote more about John than he did about Jesus. Why? Since the death of the prophet Malachi—a period of some four hundred years—Israel had not heard from a genuine prophet of God.

Until John.

John shook a nation with his bold words and unusual actions, drawing huge crowds eager to hear him preach. He was a radical, a revolutionary who proclaimed an uncompromising message of repentance and faith in the Messiah. John came at a strategic time in human history when the old covenant was about to roll into a new one and when all the law and sacrifices were to be fulfilled in the life and ministry of one man—a man like no other who had ever walked the earth (or will again). That man was Jesus. Yet at this point, John’s notoriety and fame were greater.

But John had no desire to toot his own horn. He clearly knew his role. He was to pave the way and point people to Jesus.

John humbly accepted his role as the forerunner of the Messiah (see John 1:27). His motto in life was, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). He felt content to speak as a herald of the coming King.

When John clearly understood Jesus to be the Messiah, he directed even his own disciples to start following the Lord (see John 1:36-37). Once he did that, he was ready to fade into obscurity. His role was to point people to Jesus and then step aside.

For all these reasons, Jesus proclaimed John to be the greatest prophet who ever lived. “I say to you,” Jesus declared, “among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist” (Luke 7:28).

*None* greater? How can that be? We know of no miracles that John performed. Unlike Moses, he never turned the Nile to blood. Unlike Elijah, he never called fire down from heaven. He never stopped the rain or raised a single person from the dead. He left behind no written record, unlike Isaiah and Jeremiah and even “minor prophets” like Malachi and Micah.

So why would Jesus call him the greatest of prophets?

Only one reason: his nearness and connection to Jesus. As God's appointed herald of the Messiah, John had no peer among the prophets.

How many of us think of greatness in terms like these? Too many of us wonder how God can enrich our lives, make us feel better about ourselves, or help us achieve success in business. We ask what God can do for *us* to make us greater and better.

John had a very different attitude. He constantly asked himself, "What can I do to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah? How can I direct them to Him? How can I decrease and He increase?"

John's godly character and unique mission help us to understand why Jesus came to His cousin to be baptized. For a long time, John had been preparing the people to receive the coming Messiah; at the baptism of Jesus, he would publicly identify the Lord as God's Anointed One.

Jesus also was baptized because He had come into the world to identify with the human race. So it was that He who was without sin submitted to a baptism designed for sinners. "Permit it to be so now," He told John, "for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

When the day finally came for Jesus to make His very public stand, John welcomed Him into the waters of the Jordan River. As Jesus prayed, "the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, 'You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased'" (Luke 3:21-22).

In this way, John found true greatness with God and with all humanity. His life stands as an example to us of what it takes to shake a nation.

May we adopt John's philosophy of life as well!

May Christ increase, and may we decrease.

If we really lived like that, who knows how it would affect others for their good?

Like John, we must prepare men and women to get ready for the kingdom of God. May the Word of God burn in our hearts as we, too, prepare the way for the Lord.

## CHAPTER 2

# *How to Resist Temptation*

*Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil.*

Luke 4:1-2

Have you ever had one of those times when God blessed you in a wonderful way and then right afterwards you were tempted to do something wrong? It might have been after a wonderful worship service at church or a time of personal enrichment through Bible study, when suddenly an evil thought came knocking on the door of your imagination.

Have you ever wondered why that is?

Know this: you are not the first one this has happened to, nor will you be the last. And do not despair; it doesn't indicate that you are failing spiritually.

The fact is, it indicates that you are on the right track. You might be surprised to learn that it even happened to Jesus.

After the dove came the devil.

After the blessing came the trial.

Immediately following His baptism, Jesus marched into the wilderness to be tempted. Yet Jesus, as our champion and representative, met Satan face-to-face—and won. We can both share in His victory and follow His example.

The way that Jesus dealt with waves of spiritual attack gives us a model to follow, a template to apply, in our own times of testing and temptation.

## **FIRST TEMPTATION: MEET YOUR PHYSICAL NEEDS**

Satan first tempted Jesus by suggesting that He turn a stone into bread (see Luke 4:3). It's as if he said, "Jesus, I just happened to be listening around the corner at your baptism. I heard Your Father say that You are His beloved Son. So, seeing as You are who You are, command these stones to become bread. Don't worry about the long-term repercussions. Just enjoy the moment. Satisfy Yourself. Play now, pay later."

Jesus replied, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God'" (Luke 4:4). In essence He told the devil, "I'm not here to deal with you today as God—that day will come when you are cast into the bottomless pit. I'm dealing with you now as a man, on humanity's behalf."

Jesus stood on ground that we can occupy. Our Lord used the Word of God as His primary weapon against temptation. He did not use "executive privilege," but instead gave us a model for winning our own spiritual battles. We are to follow His example.

## **SECOND TEMPTATION: TAKE A SHORTCUT**

Next, the devil tempted Jesus to take a shortcut to His objective: "Taking Him up on a high mountain, [the devil] showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, 'All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours'" (Luke 4:5-7).

Note that Jesus did not refute Satan's claim. The Bible calls Satan "the god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4) and "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). Satan was offering Jesus an opportunity to bypass the cross and rule anyway. How? Just by giving Satan the momentary satisfaction of worshipping him.

That's really all the devil has wanted all along: the top job. He lost his once-exalted place in heaven because he wanted to

be God (see Ezekiel 28). Now he was saying to Jesus, “Just bow once; look at all You’ll gain!”

But Jesus answered, “Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve’” (Luke 4:8). Notice that Satan had said nothing about *servicing*—he wanted only a moment’s *worship*. But Jesus recognized that a moment of worship can mean a lifetime of service.

It always starts with that first time. Just once. You’ll know when to stop. When you get this one thing, this one possession, this one experience, this one win at the gambling table. But “just once” never satisfies. It’s never enough. Give Satan an inch and he’ll take a mile.

To Jesus, Satan offered “all the kingdoms of the world.” Others sell out far cheaper. Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of beans (see Genesis 25). Married men and women sell out their spouses and children for a one-night fling that leads to a lifetime of regret. Judas sold his soul for thirty pieces of silver (see Matthew 26:15). Achan lost his life for a Babylonian garment (see Joshua 7).

The problem with the father of lies is that even when he *does* deliver on his promises, you still lose out. Just a moment at the altar of greed can lead to a lifetime of regret. That “one time” can lead to a ruined marriage, a destroyed reputation, a devastated family. And too late you discover that all that glitters is the point of a dagger.

### **THIRD TEMPTATION: MISUSE GOD’S PROMISES**

Last, Satan set Jesus on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone’” (Luke 4:9-11).

Satan quoted Scripture—yet note that he left out a crucial part. Psalm 91:11-12 actually says, “He shall give His angels

charge over you, to keep you *in all your ways*. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone” (emphasis added).

That Satan omitted “in all your ways” shows us the importance of those words. In the context of Satan speaking to Jesus, “your ways” refers to *God’s* ways, not to whatever path we might choose. Leave that out and we void the promise. We cannot violate God’s Word and yet expect His blessing and protection.

None of us enjoys temptation, yet it is a reality of the Christian life. But temptation can have a positive effect. Martin Luther once quipped, “One Christian who has been tempted is worth a thousand who haven’t.” And it has been said, “Christians are a lot like teabags. You don’t know what they’re made of until you put them in hot water.”

Follow Jesus’ example the next time you’re faced with temptation. Remember what you know of God’s Word, then ask God to help you fight the battle. And guess what? You’re on the winning side!

# CHAPTER 3

## *Safer with Him*

*Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. But He said to them, “Where is your faith?” And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, “Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!” Luke 8:24-25*

Storms are quite common on the Sea of Galilee. Although the lake stretches only five miles wide and thirteen miles long, its perils are infamous. The reason? Its unique geography.

The lake lies at an incredible distance below sea level and stares up at mountains creased with deep ravines. The ravines serve as gigantic funnels that bring winds whirling down upon the lake without notice. A thermal buildup in the extremely low valley sucks cold air violently downward, often strengthening these gales.

One of those very violent storms engulfed the disciples one day after Jesus told them, “Let us cross over to the other side of the lake” (Luke 8:22). Soon after they launched, Jesus fell asleep. A windstorm quickly swept down on the lake and began to swamp their boat. The panicky disciples shook Jesus awake and shouted, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” (verse 24).

It’s interesting to note that although the fury of the storm did not awaken the Lord, the frightened cries of His disciples did. In one sense, Jesus had fallen fast asleep, but in another

sense, He had not. For God does not “sleep on the job.” He is ever vigilant, watching over His beloved children. “Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep,” says the psalmist (Psalm 121:4).

Once awakened, Jesus stood and rebuked the wind and the raging waters. “Peace, be still!” He commanded (Mark 4:39).

That’s a pretty unusual way to deal with a storm, don’t you think?

But the fact is, Jesus recognized that this particular storm came from the devil himself. So Jesus was rebuking the one behind the storm.

A better translation of Jesus’ phrase “Be still!” would be “Be muzzled!”

Like a wild animal, Satan was trying to stop Jesus and the disciples from reaching the other side and continuing His ministry.

So the Lord muzzled him, and he failed.

As the lake’s waters grew calm and placid, Jesus turned to His quaking men and said, “Where is your faith?” Immediately their fear of the storm morphed into fear of *Him*. “Who can this be?” they asked one another, amazed. “For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!” (Luke 8:25).

Can you identify with the disciples’ alarm? Are you being pummeled by a storm right now? You thought you were headed in the right direction, when, without warning, a tempest hit. Your boat began filling with water, and you wondered, *Is Jesus sleeping? I’m going to drown!*

I have the privilege of serving on the board of directors of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. One year during a team retreat, Bible teacher Warren Wiersbe was the featured speaker. He spoke one morning on the “storms of life” and pointed out that there are three types of “storms” that may blow into our lives: correcting storms, protecting storms, and perfecting storms.

## **CORRECTING STORMS**

Jonah faced this kind of storm when he disobeyed God and tried to run from the task God had assigned to him. A great storm overtook his ship. Through that storm the Lord took hold of His reluctant prophet and put him back on course (see the book of Jonah).

A correcting storm is entirely the result of disobedience to God and His call. Maybe you steal something and get caught. Maybe you're caught in a lie or found cheating on a test. When God allows you to reap the consequences of your actions, that is a "correcting storm."

The question is whether you will learn from your mistakes and change your behavior. When Jonah finally admitted his folly and repented, the storm stopped. Sometimes, however, we make the storm worse by our failure to respond properly. Liars and cheats may continue in their course. In that case, they have learned nothing, and the storm will surely grow worse.

## **PROTECTING STORMS**

Some storms are designed to protect us from something far worse.

When God instructed Abraham, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love," and sacrifice him atop Mount Moriah, He sent the patriarch into a howling storm. Why did God command such a thing? The Bible tells us it was a test to see if Abraham would place his love for his son on a higher plane than his love for the Lord (see Genesis 22:1-14). In other words, the great man of faith ran the risk of making his son an idol. When it was all said and done, Abraham passed the test beautifully, and God prevented him from taking his son's life. So the storm ended, and Abraham's faith and love for the Lord grew even stronger. Protecting storms may cause us a great deal of alarm and discomfort, but they shield us from something far worse.

## PERFECTING STORMS

Joseph endured this kind of storm. God used hardship and disappointment to turn a promising young boy into a seasoned man of God. While we never get the sense that Joseph enjoyed the storms, we know he appreciated what they accomplished, for he could say to those who mistreated him, “You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good” (Genesis 50:20).

God used the storm on the Sea of Galilee to both protect and perfect Jesus’ disciples. They really had no reason to panic. After all, Jesus had said to them, “Let us cross over to the other side of the lake.” Had He said, “Let’s go drown together,” they would have had reason to worry. Jesus did not promise a smooth voyage, but He did say they would make it. And He Himself was on board!

When will *we* learn that we are safer with Jesus on a stormy sea than we are without Him even on the most placid lake? Better to be with Jesus, in any circumstance, than to be *anywhere* else without Him.