

robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went off leaving him half dead. And by chance a certain priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him, and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return, I will repay you.' Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?' And he said, 'The one who showed mercy toward him.' And Jesus said to him, 'Go and do the same.'"

This passage finds a lawyer pitting himself against Jesus in a contest over the theoretical question: What does the Law teach that a man must do in order to inherit eternal life?

In Christ's day a "lawyer" was a professional interpreter of the Mosaic Law. By way of background, the three great fathers of Israel were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Jacob's third son was Levi. The Levites were one of the twelve tribes of Israel. One of the families of the Levites—that of Aaron—was appointed to be priests in the house of God. The other families of Levites were appointed to serve God in one of four classes: (1) assistants to priests, (2) judges and lawyers, (3) gatekeepers, and (4) musicians. This lawyer, then, was a Levite who had studied the Law and was viewed as an expert on its interpretation and application.

#### (i) Exposition of the Parable

In this exchange between the lawyer and Jesus is couched a parable, called the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Since there is a classic framework for the study of parables, we will use it. In each parable we look for four things: (1) the occasion of the parable, (2) the story content of the parable, (3) the interpretation of the parable, and (4) the application of the parable.

#### The Occasion of the Parable (verses 25-29)

The lawyer tested Jesus with respect to His attitude toward the Mosaic Law. The lawyer posed a crucial question: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus requested a legal answer: "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" The lawyer stated a legal interpretation: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."