Matthew

The Family History of Jesus
(Lk. 3:23b–38)
1 This is the family history of Jesus Christ. He came from the family of David* and Abraham.*

2 Abraham* was the father of Isaac. Isaac was the father of Jacob. Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.

3 Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah. (Their mother was Tamar.) Perez was the father of Hezron. Hezron was the father of Ram.

4 Ram was the father of Amminadab. Amminadab was the father of Nahshon. Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

5 Salmon was the father of Boaz. (Boaz’ mother was Rahab.) Boaz was the father of Obed. (Obed’s mother was Ruth.) Obed was the father of Jesse.

6 Jesse was the father of King David. David* was the father of Solomon. (Solomon’s mother had been Uriah’s wife.)

7 Solomon was the father of Rehoboam. Rehoboam was the father of Abijah. Abijah was the father of Asa.

8 Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehoram. Jehoram was the father of Uzziah.

9 Uzziah was the father of Jotham. Jotham was the father of Ahaz. Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.

10 Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh. Manasseh was the father of Amon. Amon was the father of Josiah.

11 Josiah was the grandfather of Jehoiachin* and his brothers. (This was during the time that the Jewish people were taken to Babylon to be slaves.)

12 After they were taken to Babylon: Jehoiachin was the father of Shealtiel. Shealtiel was the grandfather of Zerubbabel.

13 Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud. Abiud was the father of Eliakim. Eliakim was the father of Azor.

14 Azor was the father of Zadok. Zadok was the father of Achim. Achim was the father of Eliud.

15 Eliud was the father of Eleazar. Eleazar was the father of Matthan. Matthan was the father of Jacob.

16 Jacob was the father of Joseph. Joseph was the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus. Jesus is called the Christ.*

17 So there were fourteen generations from Abraham* to David.* And there were fourteen generations from David until the time when the people were taken to Babylon. And there were fourteen generations from the time when the people were taken to Babylon until Christ* was born.

The Birth of Jesus Christ
(Lk. 2:1–7)
18 The mother of Jesus Christ was Mary. And this is how the birth of Jesus happened.

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.
Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.
Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
Mary was engaged to marry Joseph. But before they married, Joseph learned that she was expecting a baby. (Mary was pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit.*) 19Mary’s husband, Joseph, was a good man. He did not want to bring shame to Mary before the people. So he planned to divorce her secretly. 20But after Joseph thought about this, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, “Joseph, son of David,* don’t be afraid to accept Mary to be your wife. The baby that is in her is from the Holy Spirit.* 21She will give birth to a son. You will name the son Jesus.* Give him that name because he will save his people from their sins.”

All this happened to make clear the full meaning of the things the Lord said through the prophet*: 23“The virgin* will be pregnant and will give birth to a son. They will name him Immanuel.”* (Immanuel means, “God with us.”) 24When Joseph woke up, he did the thing that the Lord’s angel told him to do. Joseph married Mary. 25But Joseph had no sexual union with Mary until her son was born. And Joseph named the son Jesus.

Wise Men Come to Visit Jesus

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea. He was born during the time when Herod* was king. After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. 2The wise men asked people, “Where is the child that has been born to be the king of the Jews? We saw the star that shows he was born. We saw the star rise in the sky. So we came to worship him.”

3King Herod* heard about this new king of the Jews. Herod was troubled about this. And all the people in Jerusalem were worried too. 4Herod called a meeting of all the leading Jewish priests and teachers of the law. Herod asked them where the Christ* would be born. 5They answered, “In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet* wrote about this in the Scriptures*:

Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are important among
the rulers of Judah.
Yes, a ruler will come from you,
and that ruler will lead Israel,
my people.”

Then Herod* had a private meeting with the wise men from the east. Herod learned from the wise men the exact time they first saw the star. 8Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. Herod said to the wise men, “Go and look carefully for the child. When you find the child, come tell me. Then I can go worship him too.”

9The wise men heard the king, and then they left. The wise men saw the same star they had seen in the east. The wise men followed the star. The star went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was. 10The wise men were happy to see the star. They were very excited. 11The wise men came to the house where the child was. They saw him with his mother Mary. The wise men bowed down and worshiped him. The wise men opened the gifts they brought for the child. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.* 12But God warned the wise men in a dream. God warned them not to go back to Herod.* So the wise men went home to their own country a different way.

Jesus’ Parents Take Him to Egypt

13After the wise men left, an angel from the Lord came to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, “Get up! Take the child with his mother and escape to Egypt. Herod* will start looking for the child. Herod wants to kill him. Stay in Egypt until I tell you to come back.”

14So Joseph got up and left for Egypt with the child and the mother. They left during the
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M A T T H E W 2:15–3:11

The Work of John the Baptizer
(Mk. 1:1–8; Lk. 3:1–9, 15–17; Jn. 1:19–28)

3 At that time John the Baptizer came and began telling people a message from God. This was in the desert area of Judea. 

John said, “Change your hearts and lives, because the kingdom of heaven is coming soon.” 3John the Baptizer is the one that Isaiah the prophet was talking about. Isaiah said:

“There is a person shouting in the desert:
 Prepare the way for the Lord.
 Make his paths straight.”

Isaiah 40:3

4 John’s clothes were made from camel’s hair. John had a leather belt around his waist. For food, John ate locusts* and wild honey.

5 People went to hear John. The people came from Jerusalem and all Judea and all the area around the Jordan River. 6 People told the sins they had done, and John baptized* them in the Jordan River.

7 Many Pharisees* and Sadducees* came to the place where John was baptizing people. When John saw them he said to them: “You are all snakes! Who warned you to run away from God’s anger that is coming? 8 You must do the things that show that you have really changed your hearts and lives. 9 And don’t think that you can boast and say to yourselves, ‘Abraham* is our father.’ I tell you that God could make children for Abraham from these rocks here. 10 The ax is now ready to cut down the trees.* Every tree that does not make good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 “I baptize* you with water to show that you changed your hearts and lives. But there is a person coming later that is greater than I am. I am not good enough to take off his shoes for

**herod** Herod I (the Great), ruler of Judea, 40 B.C. to 4 B.C.

**prophet** A person that spoke for God. Sometimes a prophet told things that would happen in the future.

“A called ... Egypt” Quote from Hos. 11:1.

**prophets** People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

**Nazarene** A person from the city of Nazareth, a name probably meaning “branch.” See Isa. 11:1.

...night. 15Joseph stayed in Egypt until Herod* died. This happened to make clear the full meaning of what the Lord said through the prophet.* The Lord said, “I called my son to come out of Egypt.”

Herod Kills the Baby Boys in Bethlehem

16 Herod* saw that the wise men had fooled him. Herod was very angry. So Herod gave an order to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and the whole area around Bethlehem. Herod had learned from the wise men the time the baby was born. It was now two years from that time. So Herod said to kill all the boys that were two years old and younger. 17 So the thing God said through the prophet* Jeremiah happened:

“...A sound was heard in Ramah—— bitter crying and great sadness. Rachel cries for her children; and she cannot be comforted, because her children are gone.”

Jeremiah 31:15

Joseph and Mary Return from Egypt

19 After Herod* died, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream. This happened while Joseph was in Egypt. 20 The angel said, “Get up! Take the child and his mother and go to Israel. The people that were trying to kill the child are now dead.”

21 So Joseph took the child and the mother and went to Israel. 22 But Joseph heard that Archelaus was now king in Judea. Archelaus became king when his father Herod died. So Joseph was afraid to go there. Joseph was warned in a dream. So Joseph left there and went to the area of Galilee. 23 Joseph went to a town called Nazareth and lived there. And so the thing happened that God said through the prophets.* God said that the Christ* would be called a Nazarene.*

...insects like grasshoppers. The law of Moses said that locusts could be eaten. See Lev. 11:21–22.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don’t live again after death.

Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.

trees The people that don’t obey God. They are like “trees” that will be cut down.
Spirit, Holy Spirit  Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
clean the grain  John means that Jesus will separate the good people from the bad people.
baptize(d)  A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.
Scriptures  Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
temple  The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
prophet  A person that spoke for God. Sometimes a prophet told things that would happen in the future.
Those people live in darkness (sin), but they have seen a great light; the light has come for those people that live in the land that is dark like a grave.”  

From that time Jesus began to tell people what God wanted. This is what he said: “Change your hearts and lives, because the kingdom of heaven is coming soon.”

Jesus Chooses Some Followers  
(Mk. 1:16–20; Lk. 5:1–11)

Jesus was walking by Lake Galilee. He saw two brothers, Simon (called Peter) and Simon’s brother Andrew. The two brothers were fishermen and they were fishing in the lake with a net. Jesus said, “Come follow me. I will make you a different kind of fishermen. You will work to gather people, not fish,” 20 Simon and Andrew left their nets and followed Jesus.

Jesus continued walking by Lake Galilee. He saw two other brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee. They were preparing their nets to catch fish. Jesus told the brothers to come with him. So the brothers left the boat and their father, and they followed Jesus.

Jesus Teaches and Heals People  
(Lk. 6:17–19)

Jesus saw the many people that were there. So Jesus went up on a hill and sat down. His followers came to him. Jesus taught the people. He said:

1. “What great blessings there are for the people that know they have spiritual needs! The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.
2. What great blessings there are for the people that are sad now! God will comfort them.
3. What great blessings there are for the people that are humble! They will have the land God promised.
4. What great blessings there are for the people that want to do right more than anything else! God will fully satisfy them.
5. What great blessings there are for the people that give mercy to other people! Mercy will be given to them.
6. What great blessings there are for the people that are pure in their thinking! They will be with God.
7. What great blessings there are for the people that work to bring peace! God will call them his sons and daughters.
8. What great blessings there are for the people that are treated badly for doing good! The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.
9. People will say bad things against you and hurt you. They will lie and say all kinds of evil things against you because you follow me. But when people do those things to you, know that God will bless you. Be happy and glad. You have a great reward waiting for you in heaven. People did those same bad things to the prophets that lived before you.

Galilee, the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, Judea, and the area across the Jordan River.

Jesus Teaches the People  
(Lk. 6:20–23)

Jesus went everywhere in the country of Galilee. Jesus taught in the synagogues* and told the Good News about the kingdom of heaven. And Jesus healed all the people’s diseases and sicknesses. The news about Jesus spread all over Syria. And people brought all the sick people to Jesus. These sick people were suffering from different kinds of diseases and pain. Some people were suffering with very bad pain, some people had demons inside them, some people were epileptics,* and some people were paralyzed (crippled). Jesus healed all these people. Many, many people followed Jesus. These people were from

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.
demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
epileptics People with a sickness that causes them sometimes to lose control of their bodies.

Ten Towns Greek, “Decapolis,” an area on the east side of Lake Galilee. It once had ten main towns.
land God promised This is the meaning of these words in Ps. 37:11. Here, they probably refer to a spiritual “promised land,” but they can also mean, “The earth will belong to them.”
want ... more than anything else Literally, “hunger and thirst ...”
prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.
You Are like Salt and You Are like Light  
(Mk. 9:50; Lk. 14:34–35)

13 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its taste, then it cannot be made salty again. Salt is good for nothing, if it loses its salty taste. It must be thrown out and people walk on it.

14 “You are the light that gives light to the world. A city that is built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 And people don’t hide a light under a bowl. No. People put the light on a lamp table. Then the light shines for all the people in the house. 16 In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that people will see the good things you do. Live so that people will praise your Father in heaven.

Jesus and the Old Testament Writings

17 “Don’t think that I have come to destroy the law {of Moses} or the {teaching of the} prophetic. * I have not come to destroy their teachings. I came to give full meaning to their teachings. 18 I tell you the truth. Nothing will disappear from the law until heaven and earth are gone. The law will not lose even the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter until all has happened. 19 A person should obey every command, even a command that does not seem important. If a person refuses to obey any command and teaches other people not to obey that command, then that person will be the least important in the kingdom of heaven. But the person that obeys the law and teaches other people to obey the law will be great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 I tell you that you must do better than the teachers of the law and the Pharisees. * If you are not better people, then you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus Teaches About Anger

21 “You have heard that it was said to our people long ago, ‘Don’t kill any person.’ And any person that kills will be judged.’ 22 But I tell you, don’t be angry with another person. Every person is your brother. If you are angry with other people, you will be judged. And if you say bad things to another person, you will be judged by the Jewish council. And if you call another person a fool, you will be in danger of the fire of hell.

23 “So when you offer your gift to God, think about other people. If you are offering your gift before the altar, * and you remember that your brother has something against you, 24 then leave your gift there at the altar. Go and make peace with that person. Then come and offer your gift.

25 If your enemy is taking you to court, then become friends with him quickly. You should do that before you go to court. If you don’t become his friend, then he might give you to the judge. And the judge might give you to a guard to put you in jail. 26 And I tell you that you will not leave that jail until you have paid everything you owe.

Jesus Teaches About Sexual Sin

27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Don’t do the sin of adultery.’ 28 But I tell you that if a person looks at a woman and wants to sin sexually with her, then that person has already done that sin with the woman in his mind. 29 If your right eye makes you sin, then take it out and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than to have your whole body thrown into hell. 30 If your right hand makes you sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Jesus Teaches About Divorce

(Mt. 19:9; Mk. 10:11–12; Lk. 16:18)

31 “It was also said, ‘Any person that divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce.’ 32 But I tell you that any man that divorces his wife is causing his wife to be guilty of the sin of adultery. * The only reason for a man to divorce his wife is if his wife had sexual relations with another man. And any

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.
Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
‘Don’t … person’ Quote from Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17.
alter Place where sacrifices or gifts are offered to God.
‘Don’t … adultery’ Quote from Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18.
‘Any person … divorce’ Quote from Deut. 24:1.
adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.
man that marries that divorced woman is guilty of the sin of adultery.

Jesus Teaches About Making Promises
33“You have heard that it was said to our people long ago, ‘When you make a vow (promise), don’t break that promise. Keep the vows (promises) that you make to the Lord.’* 34But I tell you, never make a vow. Don’t make a vow using the name of heaven, because heaven is God’s throne. 35Don’t make a vow using the name of the earth, because the earth belongs to God.* Don’t make a vow using the name of Jerusalem, because that is the city of the great King (God). 36And don’t even say that your own head is proof that you will keep your vow. You cannot make one hair on your head become white or black. 37Say only ‘yes’ if you mean yes, and say only ‘no’ if you mean no. If you must say more than ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ it is from the Evil One (the devil).

Jesus Teaches About Fighting Back
(Lk. 6:29–30)
38“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’* 39But I tell you, don’t stand against an evil person. If someone hits you on the right cheek, then turn and let him hit the other cheek too. 40If a person wants to sue you in court and take your shirt, then let him have your coat too. 41If a soldier forces you to walk with him one mile, then go with him two miles. 42If a person asks you for something, then give it to him. Don’t refuse to give to a person that wants to borrow from you.

Love All People
(Lk. 6:27–28, 32–36)
43“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor* and hate your enemy.’ 44But I tell you, love your enemies. Pray for those people that do bad things to you. 45If you do this, then you will be true sons of your Father in heaven. Your Father lets the sun rise for the good people and the bad people. Your Father sends rain to people that do good and to people that do wrong. 46If you love only the people that love you, then you will get no reward. Even the tax collectors* do that. 47And if you are nice only to your friends, then you are no better than other people. Even the people without God are nice to their friends. 48So you must be perfect, the same as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Jesus Teaches About Giving
6“Be careful! When you do good things, don’t do those things in front of people. Don’t do those things for people to see you. If you do that, then you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.
7“When you give to poor people, don’t announce that you are giving. Don’t do like the hypocrites* do. They blow trumpets before they give so that people will see them. They do that in the synagogues* and on the streets. They want other people to give honor to them. I tell you the truth. Those hypocrites already have their full reward. 8So when you give to poor people, give very secretly. Don’t let any person know what you are doing. 4Your giving should be done in secret. Your Father can see the things that are done in secret. And he will reward you.

Jesus Teaches About Prayer
(Lk.11:2–4)
5“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites.* The hypocrifies love to stand in the synagogues* and on the street corners and pray loudly. They want people to see them pray. I tell you the truth. They already have their full reward. 6When you pray, you should go into your room and close the door. Then pray to your Father. He is there in that secret place. Your Father can see the things that are done in secret. And he will reward you.

7“And when you pray, don’t be like those people that don’t know God. They continue saying things that mean nothing. Don’t pray

tax collector(s) Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the other Jews hated them.
hypocrites Bad people that act like they are good.
synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

vow A very strong promise that a person makes, often using the name of something important.
‘When ... Lord’ See Lev. 19:12; Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21.
the earth ... God Literally, “the earth is his footstool.”
‘An eye ... tooth’ Quote from Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20.
‘Love your neighbor’ Quote from Lev. 19:18.
MATTHEW 6:8–32

like that. They think that God will hear them because of the many things they say. 8 Don’t be like those people. Your Father knows the things you need before you ask him. 9 So when you pray, you should pray like this:

‘Our Father in heaven,
we pray that your name will always
be kept holy.

We pray that your kingdom will come,
and that the things you want
will be done here on earth,
the same as in heaven.

Give us the food we need for each day.

Forgive the sins we have done,
the same as we have forgiven the people
that did wrong to us.

Don’t let us be tempted (tested);
but save us from the Evil One (the devil).’

14 Yes, if you forgive other people for the things they do wrong, then your Father in heaven will also forgive you for the things you do wrong. 15 But if you don’t forgive the wrong things people do to you, then your Father in heaven will not forgive the wrong things you do.

Jesus Teaches About Fasting

16 “When you fast,* don’t make yourselves look sad. The hypocrites* do that. Don’t be like the hypocrites. They make their faces look strange to show people that they are fasting. I tell you the truth, those hypocrites already have their full reward. 17 So when you fast, make yourself look nice. Wash your face. 18 Then people will not know that you are fasting. But your Father that you cannot see will see you. Your Father sees the things that are done in secret. And he will reward you.

Serving God Is More Important than Money

(Lk. 12:22–34; 11:34–36; 16:13)

19 “Don’t save treasures for yourselves here on earth. Moths and rust will destroy treasures here on earth. And thieves can break into your house and steal the things you have. 20 So save your treasure in heaven. The treasures in heaven cannot be destroyed by moths or rust. And thieves cannot break in and steal that treasure. 21 Your heart will be where your treasure is.

22 “How you look at other people makes you the kind of person you are. 23 If you look at people and want to help them, you will be full of light (goodness). But if you look at people in a selfish way, you will be full of darkness (evil). And if the only light you have is really darkness, then you have the worst kind of darkness.*

24 “No person can serve two masters at the same time. He will hate one master and love the other master. Or he will follow one master and refuse to follow the other master. So you cannot serve God and Money* at the same time.

Put God’s Kingdom First

(Lk. 12:22–34)

25 “So I tell you, don’t worry about the food you need to live. And don’t worry about the clothes you need for your body. Life is more important than food. And the body is more important than clothes. 26 Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or save food in barns. But your heavenly Father feeds those birds. And you know that you are worth much more than the birds. 27 You cannot add any time to your life by worrying about it.

28 “And why do you worry about clothes? Look at the flowers in the field. See how they grow. They don’t work or make clothes for themselves. 29 But I tell you that even Solomon, the great and rich king, was not dressed as beautifully as one of these flowers. 30 God clothes the grass in the field like that. That grass is living today, but tomorrow it is thrown into the fire to be burned. So you know that God will clothe you much more. Don’t have so little faith!

31 Don’t worry and say, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ 32 All the people that don’t know God

Verse 13 Some Greek copies add: “For the kingdom and the power and the glory belong to you forever and ever. Amen.”

fast To live without food for a time of prayer or mourning.

hypocrites Bad people that act like they are good.

Verses 22, 23 Literally, “22 The lamp of the body is the eye. So, if your eye is pure (without envy), your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be dark. So, if the light in you is darkness, how much is the darkness.”

Money Or, mammon, an Aramaic word meaning “wealth.”
try to get these things. Don’t worry, because your Father in heaven knows that you need these things. 33 The thing you should want most is God’s kingdom and doing the good things God wants you to do. Then all these other things you need will be given to you. 34 So don’t worry about tomorrow. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Tomorrow will have its own worries.

Jesus Teaches About Judging People
(Lk. 6:37–38, 41–42)

7 “Don’t judge other people, and God will not judge you. 2 If you judge other people, you will be judged in the same way you judge them. And the way you give to other people will be the way God gives to you.

Jesus Teaches About Judging People
(Lk. 6:37–38, 41–42)

7 “Don’t judge other people, and God will not judge you. 2 If you judge other people, you will be judged in the same way you judge them. And the way you give to other people will be the way God gives to you.

3 “Why do you notice the small piece of dust that is in your brother’s eye, but you don’t notice the big piece of wood that is in your own eye? 4 Why do you say to your brother, ‘Let me take that little piece of dust out of your eye?’ Look at yourself first! You still have that big piece of wood in your own eye.

5 You are a hypocrite.” First, take the wood out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly to take the dust out of your brother’s eye.

6 “Don’t give holy things to dogs. They will only turn and hurt you. And don’t throw your pearls to pigs. They will only step on them.

Continue to Ask God for All You Need
(Lk. 11:9–13)

7 “Continue to ask, and God will give to you. Continue to search, and you will find. Continue to knock, and the door will open for you. 8 Yes, if a person continues asking, that person will receive. If a person continues looking, that person will find. And if a person continues knocking, the door will open for that person.

9 “Do any of you have a son? If your son asked for bread, would you give him a rock? No! 10 Or if your son asked for a fish, would you give him a snake? No! 11 You are not like God—you are evil. But you know how to give good things to your children. So surely your heavenly Father will give good things to those people that ask him.

hypocrite A bad person that acts like he is good.

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.
false prophets People that say they speak for God but do not really speak God’s truth.
demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
miracle(s) Amazing works done by God’s power.
MATTHEW 7:24–8:17

A Wise Person and a Foolish Person
(Lk. 6:47–49)

24“Every person that hears these things I say and obeys is like a wise man. The wise man built his house on rock. 25It rained hard and the water rose. The winds blew and hit that house. But the house did not fall, because the house was built on rock. 26But the person that hears the things I teach and does not obey those things is like a foolish man. The foolish man built his house on sand. 27It rained hard, the water rose, and the winds blew and hit that house. And the house fell with a loud noise.”

28When Jesus finished saying these things, the people were amazed at his teaching. 29Jesus did not teach like their teachers of the law. Jesus taught like a person that had authority (power).

Jesus Heals a Sick Man
(Mk. 1:40–45; Lk. 5:12–16)

8Jesus came down from the hill. Many, many people followed him. 2Then a man sick with leprosy* came to Jesus. The man bowed down before Jesus and said, “Lord, you have the power to heal me if you want.” 3Jesus touched the man. Jesus said, “I want to heal you. Be healed!” And immediately the man was healed from his leprosy. 4Then Jesus said to him, “Don’t tell any person about what happened. But go and show yourself to the priest.* And offer the gift that Moses commanded for people that are made well. This will show people that you are healed.”

Jesus Heals an Officer’s Servant
(Lk. 7:1–10; Jn. 4:43–54)

5Jesus went to the city of Capernaum. When Jesus entered the city, an army officer* came to him and begged for help. 6The officer said, “Lord, my servant is very sick at home in bed. He can’t move his body and has much pain.” 7Jesus said to the officer, “I will go and heal him.”

8The officer answered, “Lord, I am not good enough for you to come into my house. All you need to do is command that my servant be healed, and he will be healed. 9I myself am a man under the authority (power) of other men. And I have soldiers under my authority. I tell one soldier, ‘Go,’ and he goes. I tell another soldier, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and my servant obeys me. I know that you also have power like this.”

10When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Jesus said to those people that were with him, “I tell you the truth. This man has more faith than any person I have found, even in Israel. 11Many people will come from the east and from the west. Those people will sit and eat with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* in the kingdom of heaven. 12And those people (the Jews) that should have the kingdom will be thrown out. They will be thrown outside into the darkness. In that place people will cry and grind their teeth with pain.”

13Then Jesus said to the officer, “Go home. Your servant will be healed the way you believed he would.” And at that same time his servant was healed.

Jesus Heals Many People
(Mk. 1:29–34; Lk. 4:38–41)

14Jesus went to Peter’s house. There Jesus saw that Peter’s mother-in-law was in bed with a high fever. 15Jesus touched her hand and the fever left her. Then she stood up and began to serve Jesus. 16That evening people brought to Jesus many people that had demons* inside them. Jesus spoke and the demons left the people. Jesus healed all the people that were sick. 17Jesus did these things to make happen what Isaiah the prophet* said:

“He took away our diseases and carried away our sicknesses.”

Isaiah 53:4

leprosy A very bad skin disease.
show yourself to the priest The law of Moses said a priest must say when a Jew with leprosy was well.
officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

Israel The Jewish nation (people).
Abraham, Isaac, Jacob Three of the most important Jewish leaders during the time of the Old Testament.
demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
prophet A person that spoke for God. Sometimes a prophet told things that would happen in the future.
Following Jesus  
(Lk. 9:57–62)

18Jesus saw that all the people were around him. So Jesus told his followers to go to the other side of the lake. 19Then a teacher of the law came to Jesus and said, “Teacher, I will follow you any place you go.”

20Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes to live in. The birds have nests to live in. But the Son of Man* has no place where he can rest his head.”

21Another man, one of Jesus’ followers, said to Jesus, “Lord, let me go and bury my father first. Then I will follow you.”

22But Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and let the people that are dead bury their own dead.”

The Followers See Jesus’ Power  
(Mk. 4:35–41; Lk. 8:22–25)

23Jesus got into a boat and his followers went with him. 24After the boat left the shore, a very bad storm began on the lake. The waves covered the boat. But Jesus was sleeping.

25The followers went to Jesus and woke him. They said, “Lord, save us! We will drown!”

26Jesus answered, “Why are you afraid? You don’t have enough faith.” Then Jesus stood and gave a command to the wind and the waves. The wind stopped, and the lake became very calm.

27The men were amazed. They said, “What kind of man is this? Even the wind and the water obey him!”

Jesus Sends Demons Out from Two Men  
(Mk. 5:1–20; Lk. 8:26–39)

28Jesus arrived at the other side of the lake in the country of the Gadarene* people. There, two men came to Jesus. They had demons* inside them. These men lived in the burial caves. They were very dangerous. So people could not use the road by those caves.

29The two men came to Jesus and shouted, “What do you want with us, Son of God? Did you come here to punish us before the right time?”

30Near that place there was a large herd of pigs feeding. 31The demons* begged Jesus, “If you make us leave these men, please send us into that herd of pigs.”

32Jesus said to them, “Go!” So the demons* left those men and went into the pigs. Then the whole herd of pigs ran down the hill and into the lake. All the pigs drowned in the water.

33The men that had the work of caring for the pigs ran away. They went into town and told the people what happened. They told about all that happened with the pigs and with the men that had demons.

34Then the whole town went out to see Jesus. When the people saw Jesus, they begged him to leave their area.

Jesus Heals a Crippled Man  
(Mk. 2:1–12; Lk. 5:17–26)

9Jesus got into a boat and went back across the lake to his own town. 2Some people brought to Jesus a man that was paralyzed (crippled). The man was lying on a mat. Jesus saw that these people had much faith. So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “Young man, you’ll be glad to hear this! Your sins are forgiven.”

3Some of the teachers of the law heard this. They said to themselves, “This man (Jesus) talks like he is God—that is blasphemy.”

4Jesus knew they were thinking this. So Jesus said, “Why are you thinking such evil thoughts? 5–6The Son of Man* has power on earth to forgive sins. But how can I prove this to you? Maybe you are thinking it was easy for me to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’ There is no proof that it really happened. But what if I say to the man, ‘Stand up and walk’? Then you will be able to see that I really have this power.” So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “Stand up. Take your mat and go home.”

7And the man stood up and went home. 8The people saw this and they were amazed. The people praised God for giving power like this to people.

Matthew (Levi) Follows Jesus  
(Mk. 2:13–17; Lk. 5:27–32)

9When Jesus was leaving, he saw a man named Matthew. Matthew was sitting at his place for collecting taxes. Jesus said to him, “Follow me.” Then Matthew stood up and followed Jesus.

Son of Man  A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Gadarene  From Gadara, an area southeast of Lake Galilee.

demon(s)  Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

blasphemy  Saying things against God.
MATTHEW 9:10–30

10 Jesus ate dinner at Matthew’s house. Many tax collectors* and other bad people came and ate with Jesus and his followers. 11 The Pharisees* saw that Jesus was eating with these people. The Pharisees asked Jesus’ followers, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and other bad people?” 12 Jesus heard the Pharisees* say this. So Jesus said to the Pharisees, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor. It is the sick people that need a doctor. 13 I will tell you something. Go and learn what it means: ‘I don’t want animal sacrifices; I want you to show kindness to people.’ I did not come to invite good people. I came to invite sinners.”

Jesus Is Not like Other Religious Leaders
(Mk. 2:18–22; Lk. 5:33–39)

14 Then the followers of John* came to Jesus. They said to Jesus, “We and the Pharisees* fast often. But your followers don’t fast. Why?” 15 Jesus answered, “When there is a wedding, the friends of the bridegroom* are not sad while he is with them. But the time will come when the bridegroom will leave them. The friends are sad when the bridegroom leaves. Then they will fast.” 16 When a person sews a patch over a hole on an old coat, he never uses a piece of cloth that is not yet shrunk. If he does, the patch will shrink and pull away from the coat. Then the hole will be worse. 17 Also, people never pour new wine into old wine bags.* Why? Because the old bags will break. But people always pour new wine into new wine bags. Then the wine and the wine bags will continue to be good.”

Jesus Gives Life to a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman
(Mk. 5:21–43; Lk. 8:40–56)

18 While Jesus was saying these things, a leader of the synagogue* came to him. The leader bowed down before Jesus and said, “My daughter has just died. But come and touch her with your hand, and she will live again.” 19 So Jesus stood up and went with the leader. Jesus’ followers went too. 20 There was a woman that had been bleeding for twelve years. The woman came behind Jesus and touched the bottom of his coat. 21 The woman was thinking, “If I can touch his coat, then I will be healed.” 22 Jesus turned and saw the woman. Jesus said, “Be happy, dear woman. You are made well because you believed.” Then the woman was healed.

23 Jesus continued going with the Jewish leader and went into the leader’s house. Jesus saw people there that make music for funerals. And he saw many people there upset because the girl died. 24 Jesus said, “Go away. The girl is not dead. She is only asleep.” But the people laughed at Jesus. 25 After the people were put out of the house, Jesus went into the girl’s room. Jesus held the girl’s hand, and the girl stood up. 26 The news about this spread all around the area.

Jesus Heals More People

27 When Jesus was leaving there, two blind men followed him. The blind men said loudly, “Show kindness to us, Son of David.” 28 Jesus went inside, and the blind men went with him. Jesus asked the men, “Do you believe that I am able to make you see again?” The blind men answered, “Yes, Lord, we believe.” 29 Then Jesus touched their eyes and said, “You believe that I can make you see again, so this will happen.” Then the men were able to see again. Jesus warned them very strongly. Jesus said, “Don’t tell any person about this.”
But the blind men left and spread the news about Jesus all around that area.

When the two men were leaving, some people brought another man to Jesus. This man could not talk because he had a demon* inside him. Jesus forced the demon to leave the man. Then the man that couldn’t talk was able to speak. The people were amazed and said, “We have never seen anything like this in Israel.”

But the Pharisees* said, “The leader of demons* (the devil) is the one that gives him (Jesus) power to force demons out.”

Jesus felt sorry for the people. Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages. Jesus taught in their synagogues* and told people the Good News about the kingdom. And Jesus healed all kinds of diseases and sicknesses. Jesus saw the many people and felt sorry for them. Jesus felt sorry for the people because the people were worried and helpless. The people were like sheep without a shepherd to lead them.

Jesus said to his followers, “There are many, many people to harvest (save). But there are only a few workers to help harvest them. God owns the harvest (people). Pray to him that he will send more workers to help gather his harvest.”

Jesus called his twelve followers* together. Jesus gave them power over evil spirits. Jesus gave them power to heal every kind of disease and sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles*: Simon (also called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector; James, son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot* and Judas Iscariot. Judas is the one that gave Jesus to his enemies.

Jesus gave these twelve apostles* some orders. Then he sent them to tell people about the kingdom. Jesus said, “Don’t go to the non-Jewish people. And don’t go into any town where the Samaritans* live. But go to the people of Israel (the Jews). They are like sheep that are lost. When you go, tell them this: ‘The kingdom of heaven is coming soon.’ Heal sick people. Give dead people life again. Heal those people that have leprosy.* Force demons* to leave people. I give you these powers freely. So help other people freely. Don’t carry any money with you—gold or silver or copper. Don’t carry a bag. Take for your trip only the clothes and shoes you are wearing. Don’t take a walking stick. A worker should be given the things he needs.

When you enter a city or town, find some worthy person there and stay in his home until you leave. When you enter that home say, ‘Peace be with you.’ If the people in that home welcome you, then they are worthy of your peace. May they have the peace you wished them. But if the people don’t welcome you, then they are not worthy of your peace. Take back the peace you wished for them. And if a home or town refuses to welcome you or listen to you, then leave that place. Shake their dust off your feet.* I tell you the truth. On the judgment day it will be worse for that town than for the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah.*

Jesus warned about troubles.

Listen! I am sending you, and you will be like sheep among wolves. So be smart like snakes. But also be like doves and do nothing wrong. Be careful of people. They will arrest...
you and take you to be judged. They will whip you in their synagogues.* 18 You will be taken to stand before governors and kings. People will do this to you because of me. You will tell about me to those kings and governors and to the non-Jewish people. 19 When you are arrested, don’t worry about what to say or how you should say it. At that time you will be given the things to say. 20 It will not really be you speaking. The Spirit of your Father will be speaking through you.

21 “Brothers will turn against their own brothers and give them to be killed. Fathers will turn against their own children and give them to be killed. Children will fight against their own parents and will send their parents to be killed. 22 All people will hate you because you follow me. But the person that continues strong until the end will be saved. 23 When you are arrested, don’t worry about what to say or how you should say it. At that time you will be given the things to say. 20 It will not really be you speaking. The Spirit of your Father will be speaking through you.

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Fear God, Not People

26 “So don’t be afraid of those people. Everything that is hidden will be shown. Everything that is secret will be made known. 27 I tell you these things in the dark (secretly). But I want you to tell these things in the light. I speak these things quietly and only to you. But you should tell these things freely to all people. 28 Don’t be afraid of people. They can only kill the body. They cannot kill the soul. The only one you should fear is the One (God) that can destroy the body and the soul. He can send the body and the soul to hell. 29 When birds are sold, two small birds cost only a penny. But not even one of those little birds can die without your Father knowing it. 30 God even knows how many hairs are on your head. 31 So don’t be afraid. You are worth much more than many birds.

Telling People About Your Faith

32 “When a person stands before other people and says he believes in me, then I will say that person belongs to me. I will say this before my Father in heaven. 33 But when a person stands before people and says he does not believe in me, then I will say that person does not belong to me. I will say this before my Father in heaven.

Following Jesus May Bring You Trouble

34 “Don’t think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace. I came to bring a sword. 35–36 I have come to make this happen:

‘The people in a person’s own family will be his enemies. A son will be against his father. A daughter will be against her mother. A daughter-in-law will be against her mother-in-law.’

37 “Any person that loves his father or mother more than he loves me is not good enough to follow me. Any person who loves his son or daughter more than he loves me is not good enough to follow me. 38 If a person will not accept the cross (suffering) that will be given to him when he follows me, then that person is not good enough for me. 39 Any person that loves his life {more than he loves me} will lose true life. Any person that gives up his life for me will find true life.

God Will Bless People Who Accept You

40 The person that accepts you also accepts me. And the person that accepts me also accepts the One (God) that sent me. 41 Any person that meets a prophet* and accepts him will get the same reward a prophet gets. And any person that accepts a good man because
that man is good will get the same reward a good man gets. 42If any person helps one of these little ones because they are my followers, then that person will truly get his reward. That person will get his reward even if he only gave my follower a cup of cold water.”

**Jesus and John the Baptizer**
(Lk. 7:18–35)

11 Jesus finished telling these things to his twelve followers. Then Jesus left there and went to the towns in Galilee to teach the people and tell them about God.

2John the Baptizer was in prison. He heard about the things Christ was doing. So John sent some of his followers to Jesus. 3John’s followers asked Jesus, “Are you the man that John said was coming, or should we wait for another man?”

4Jesus answered, “Go back to John and tell him about the things that you hear and see: 5Blind people are able to see again; crippled people are able to walk again; people that have leprosy* are healed; deaf people can hear again; dead people are raised from death; and the Good News* is told to the poor people. 6The person that can accept* me is blessed.”

7While John’s followers were leaving, Jesus began talking to the people about John. Jesus said, “What did you people go out to the desert to see? A weed* blown by the wind? No! 8Really, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No! Those people that wear fine clothes live in king’s palaces. 9So what did you go out to see? A prophet*? Yes, and I tell you, John is more than a prophet. 10This Scripture* was written about John:

‘Listen! I (God) will send my helper* ahead of you.
He will prepare the way for you.’

Malachi 3:1

11I tell you the truth: John the Baptizer is greater than any man that has ever lived. But even the least important person in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John. 12Since the time John the Baptizer came until now, the kingdom of heaven has been going forward strongly.* People using force have been trying to get the kingdom. 13All the prophets* and the law* of Moses spoke until the time John came. They told about the things that would happen. 14And if you will believe the things the law and the prophets said, then you will believe that John is Elijah.* The law and the prophets said he would come. 15You people that hear me, listen!

16“What can I say about the people that live today? What are they like? The people today are like children sitting in the market place. One group of children calls to the other group,

17 ‘We played flute music for you, but you did not dance; we sang a sad song, but you were not sad.’

18Why do I say people are like that? Because John came, and he did not eat like other people or drink wine. And people say, ‘He has a demon* inside him.’ 19The Son of Man* came eating like other people and drinking wine, and people say, ‘Look at him! He eats too much and drinks too much wine. He is a friend of tax collectors* and other bad people.’ But wisdom is shown to be right by the things it does.”

**Jesus Warns People That Don’t Believe**
(Lk. 10:13–15)

20Then Jesus criticized the cities where he did most of his miracles.* Jesus criticized those cities because the people there did not change their lives and stop sinning. 21Jesus said, “It

leprosy  A very bad skin disease.

Good News  The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

can accept  Literally, “is not offended by.”

weed  Literally, “reed.” Jesus means that John was not weak.

prophet  A person that spoke for God.

Scripture  Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

helper  Literally, “messenger.”

has been ... strongly  Or, “has suffered violence.”

prophets  People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Elijah  See Mal. 4:5–6.

demon(s)  Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

Son of Man  A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

tax collector(s)  Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the other Jews hated them.

miracle(s)  Amazing works done by God’s power.
will be bad for you Chorazin." It will be bad for you Bethsaida." I did many miracles in you. If those same miracles had happened in Tyre and Sidon," then those people in Tyre and Sidon would have changed their lives a long time ago. Those people would have worn sackcloth* and put ashes on themselves to show that they were sorry for their sins. 22But I tell you, on the day of judgment it will be worse for you than for Tyre and Sidon. 23And you, Capernaum,* will you be lifted up to heaven? No! You will be thrown down to the place of death. I did many miracles in you. If those same miracles had happened in Sodom,* the people of Sodom would have stopped sinning and it would still be a city today. 24But I tell you it will be worse for you in the day of judgment than for Sodom.”

Jesus Offers Rest to His People

(Lk. 10:21–22)

25Then Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. I praise you because you have hidden these things from the wise and smart people. But you have shown these things to people that are like little children. 26Yes, Father, you did this because this is what you really wanted to do.

27“My Father has given me all things. No person knows the Son—only the Father knows the Son. And no person knows the Father—only the Son knows the Father. And the only people that will know about the Father are those people the Son chooses to tell.

28“Come to me all you people that are tired and have heavy burdens. I will give you rest. 29Accept my work and learn from me. I am gentle and humble in spirit. And you will find rest for your souls. 30Yes, the work that I ask you to accept is easy. The burden I give you to carry is not heavy.”

Chorazin, Bethsaida Towns by Lake Galilee where Jesus preached to the people.

Tyre and Sidon Towns in Lebanon where bad people lived.

sackcloth A rough cloth made from animal hair. People sometimes wore it to show sadness.

Capernaum A town in Galilee where Jesus taught.

Sodom A city that God destroyed to punish the evil people that lived there.
MATTHEW 12:11–32

Jesus’ Power Is from God
(Mk. 3:20–30; Lk. 11:14–23; 12:10)

Then some people brought a man to Jesus. This man was blind and could not talk, because he had a demon inside him. Jesus healed the man, and the man could talk and see. All the people were amazed. The people said, “Maybe this man (Jesus) is the Son of David (that God promised to send to us)!” The Pharisees heard the people saying this. The Pharisees said, “This man uses the power of Beelzebul (the devil) to force demons out of people. Beelzebul is the ruler of demons.”

Jesus knew the things that the Pharisees were thinking. So Jesus said to them, “Every kingdom that is fighting against itself will be destroyed. And every city that is divided cannot continue. And every family that is divided cannot succeed. So if Satan (the devil) forces out his own demons, then Satan is divided. And his kingdom will not be able to continue. You say that I use the power of Beelzebul to force out demons. If that is true, then what power do your people use when they force out demons? So your own people will prove that you are wrong. But I use the power of God’s Spirit to force out demons. This shows that the kingdom of God has come to you.

“If a person wants to enter a strong man’s house and steal his things, first the person must tie the strong man. Then the person can steal the things from the strong man’s house. If a person is not with me, then he is against me. The person that does not work with me is working against me. So I tell you, people can be forgiven of every sin they do. And people can be forgiven for every bad thing they say. But if a person speaks against (refuses to accept) the Holy Spirit, then that person will not be forgiven. Any person that says things against the Son of Man can be forgiven. But any person that says things against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. That person will not be forgiven now or in the future.

“Is it right ... day” It was against Jewish law to work on the Sabbath day.

Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

prophet A person that spoke for God. Sometimes a prophet told things that would happen in the future.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

Son of David Name for the Christ (Messiah). He was from the family of David, king of Israel about 1000 years B.C.

if Satan ... demons Literally, “if Satan forces out Satan.”

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
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MATTHEW 12:33–13:3

The Things You Do Show What You Are
(Lk. 6:43–45)

33“If you want good fruit, you must make the tree good. If your tree is not good then it will have bad fruit. A tree is known by the kind of fruit it makes. 34You snakes! You are evil people! How can you say anything good? The mouth speaks the things that are in the heart. 35A good person has good things saved in his heart. And so he speaks the good things that come from his heart. But an evil person has evil saved in his heart. So he speaks the evil things that come from his heart. 36And I tell you that people will have to explain about every careless thing they have said. This will happen on the day of judgment. 37The words you have said will be used to judge you. Some of your words will make you right, but some of your words will make you guilty.”

Give Us Proof!
(Mk. 8:11–12; Lk. 11:29–32)

38Then some of the Pharisees* and teachers of the law answered Jesus. They said, “Teacher, we want to see you do a miracle* as a sign (proof).”

39Jesus answered, “Evil and sinful people are the ones that want to see a miracle for a sign (proof). But no miracle will be given as a sign to those people. The only sign will be the miracle that happened to the prophet* Jonah. 40Jonah was in the stomach of the big fish for three days and three nights. In the same way, the Son of Man* will be in the grave three days and three nights. 41On the judgment day, you people that live now will be compared with the people from Nineveh,* and they will be witnesses to show that you are wrong (guilty). Why? Because when Jonah preached to those people, they changed their hearts and lives. And you are listening to someone greater than Jonah, {but you refuse to change}!

People Today Are Full of Evil
(Lk. 11:24–26)

42On the judgment day, you people that live now will also be compared with the Queen of the South,* and she will be a witness to show that you are wrong (guilty). Why? Because she traveled from far, far away to listen to Solomon’s wise teaching. And I tell you that someone greater than Solomon is right here, {but you won’t listen to me}!

Jesus’ Followers Are His Family
(Mk. 3:31–35; Lk. 8:19–21)

46While Jesus was talking to the people his mother and brothers stood outside. They wanted to talk to Jesus. 47A person told Jesus, “Your mother and brothers are waiting for you outside. They want to talk to you.”

48Jesus answered, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” 49Then Jesus pointed to his followers and said, “See! These people are my mother and my brothers. 50My true brother and sister and mother is any person that does the things my Father in heaven wants.”

Jesus Uses a Story About Planting Seed
(Mk. 4:1–9; Lk. 8:4–8)

13That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. 2Many, many people gathered around Jesus. So Jesus got into a boat and sat down. All the people stayed on the shore. 3Then Jesus used stories

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
miracle(s) Amazing works done by God’s power.
prophet A person that spoke for God. Jonah’s story is in the Old Testament book of Jonah.
Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
Nineveh City where Jonah preached. Read Jonah 3.
Queen of the South Queen of Sheba. She traveled 1000 miles to learn God’s wisdom from Solomon. Read 1 Kings 10:1–13.
to teach the people many things. Jesus said: “A farmer went out to plant his seed. 4While the farmer was planting, some seed fell by the road. The birds came and ate all that seed. 5Some seed fell on rocky ground. The ground there did not have enough dirt. The seed grew very fast there, because the ground was not deep. 6But when the sun rose, it burned the plants. The plants died because they did not have deep roots. 7Some other seed fell among thorny weeds. The weeds grew and stopped the good plants from growing. 8Some other seed fell on good ground. In the good ground, the seed grew and made grain. Some plants made 100 times more grain. Some plants made 60 times more, and some made 30 times more grain. 9You people that hear me, listen!”

Why Jesus Used Stories to Teach

( Mk. 4:10–12; Lk. 8:9–10 )

10The followers came to Jesus and asked, “Why do you use these stories to teach the people?”

11Jesus answered, “Only you can know the secret truths about the kingdom of heaven. Those other people cannot know these secret truths. 12The person that has \{some understanding\} will be given more. And he will have even more than he needs. But the person that does not have \{much understanding\} will lose even the little \{understanding\} that he has. 13This is why I use these stories to teach the people: The people see, but they don’t really see. The people hear, but they don’t really understand. 14So these people show that the things Isaiah said about them are true:

‘You people will listen
and you will hear,
but you will not understand.

You people will look
and you will see,
but you will not understand
what you see.

15Yes, the minds of these people
\{the Jews\} are now closed.
They have ears,
but they don’t listen.
And they refuse to see \{the truth\}.’

If their minds were not closed,
they might see with their eyes;
they might hear with their ears;
they might understand with their minds.
Then they might turn back to me and
be healed.’

Isaiah 6:9–10

16But you are blessed. You understand the things you see with your eyes. And you understand the things you hear with your ears.

17I tell you the truth. Many prophets\* and good people wanted to see the things that you now see. But they did not see these things. And many prophets and good people wanted to hear the things that you now hear. But they did not hear these things.

Jesus Explains the Seeds

( Mk. 4:13–20; Lk. 8:11–15 )

18“So listen to the meaning of that story about the farmer. 19What is the seed that fell by the path? That seed is like the person that hears the teaching about the kingdom but does not understand it. The Evil One \{(the devil)\} comes and takes away the things that were planted in that person’s heart. 20And what is the seed that fell on rocky ground? That seed is like the person that hears the teaching and quickly and gladly accepts that teaching. 21But that person does not let the teaching go deep into his life. He keeps that teaching only a short time. When trouble or persecution* comes because of the teaching he accepted, then he quickly quits. 22And what is the seed that fell among the thorny weeds? That seed is like the person that hears the teaching but lets worries about this life and love for money stop that teaching from growing. So the teaching does not make fruit* in that person’s life. 23But what is the seed that fell on the good ground? That seed is like the person that hears the teaching and understands it. That person grows and makes fruit, sometimes 100 times more, sometimes 60 times more, and sometimes 30 times more.”

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

persecution Being hurt or bothered by God’s enemies.

fruit The good things God wants his people to do.
A Story About Wheat and Weeds

24 Then Jesus used another story to teach them. Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a man that planted good seed in his field. 25 That night, all the people were asleep. The man’s enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat. Then the enemy went away. 26 Later, the wheat grew and heads of grain grew on the wheat plants. But at the same time the weeds also grew. 27 Then the man’s servants came to him and said, ‘You planted good seed in your field. Where did the weeds come from?’ 28 “The man answered, ‘An enemy planted weeds.’

“The servants asked, ‘Do you want us to go pull the weeds?’ 29 “The man answered, ‘No, because when you pull up the weeds, you might also pull up the wheat. 30 Let the weeds and the wheat grow together until the harvest time. At the harvest time I will tell the workers this: First gather the weeds and tie them together to be burned. Then gather the wheat and bring it to my barn.’”

Jesus Teaches with More Stories
(Mk. 4:30–34; Lk. 13:18–21)

31 Then Jesus told the people another story: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. A person plants that seed in his field. 32 That seed is one of the smallest of all seeds. But when the seed grows, it is one of the largest garden plants. It becomes a tree, big enough for the birds to come and make nests in its branches.” 33 Then Jesus told the people another story: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman mixes into a big bowl of flour to make bread. The yeast makes all the dough (bread) rise.”

34 Jesus used stories to tell all these things to the people. Jesus always used stories to teach the people. 35 This is the same as what the prophet* said:

“I will speak using stories; I will tell things that have been secrets since the world was made.”

Psalm 78:2

Jesus Explains a Hard Story

36 Then Jesus left the people and went into the house. His followers came to him and said, “Explain to us the meaning of the story about the weeds in the field.”

37 Jesus answered, “The person that planted the good seed in the field is the Son of Man.* 38 The field is the world. The good seed are all the people who belong to God’s kingdom. The weeds are those people that belong to the Evil One (the devil). 39 And the enemy that planted the bad seed is the devil. The harvest time is the end of the world.* And the workers that gather are God’s angels.

40 “The weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire. It will be the same at the end of the world.* 41 The Son of Man* will send his angels, and his angels will find the people that cause sin and all people that do evil. The angels will take those people out of his kingdom. 42 The angels will throw those people into the place of fire. In that place the people will be crying and grinding their teeth with pain. 43 Then the good people will shine like the sun. They will be in the kingdom of their Father. You people that hear me, listen!

Stories About a Treasure and a Pearl

44 “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. One day a man found the treasure. The man was very happy to find the treasure. He hid the treasure in the field again. The man went and sold everything that he owned to buy that field.

45 “Also, the kingdom of heaven is like a salesman looking for fine pearls. 46 One day the salesman found a very fine pearl. The salesman went and sold everything he had to buy that pearl.

A Story About a Fishing Net

47 “Also, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was put into the lake. The net caught many different kinds of fish. 48 The net became full, so the fishermen pulled the net to the

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prophet A person that spoke for God. Sometimes a prophet told things that would happen in the future.

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

world Literally, “age,” or “time.”
world Literally, “age,” or “time.”
synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.
miracle(s) Amazing works done by God’s power.
prophet A person that spoke for God.
Herod Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great.

Jesus Feeds More than 5,000 People
(Mk. 6:30–44; Lk. 9:10–17; Jn. 6:1–14)

13When Jesus heard what happened to John,* Jesus left in a boat. Jesus went alone to a place where there were no people. But the people heard that Jesus left. So the people left their towns and followed Jesus. They went by land to the same place Jesus went. 14When Jesus came there, he saw many, many people there. Jesus felt sorry for them, and he healed the people that were sick.

15Late that afternoon, the followers came to Jesus and said, “No people live in this place. And it is already late. Send the people...”
16 Jesus answered, “The people don’t need to go away. You give them some food to eat.”

17 The followers answered, “But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish.”

18 Jesus said, “Bring the bread and the fish to me.” Then Jesus told the people to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves of bread and the two fish. Jesus looked into the sky and thanked God for the food. Then Jesus divided the loaves of bread. Jesus gave the bread to the followers, and the followers gave the bread to the people. All the people ate and were filled. After the people finished eating, the followers filled twelve baskets with the pieces of food that were not eaten. There were about 5,000 men there that ate. There were also women and children that ate.

Jesus Walks on the Lake
(Mk. 6:45–52; Jn. 6:16–21)

22 Then Jesus made the followers get into the boat. Jesus told them to go to the other side of the lake. Jesus said that he would come later. Jesus stayed there to tell the people they could go home. After Jesus said good-bye to the people, he went up into the hills. Jesus went there alone to pray. It was late, and Jesus was there alone. At this time, the boat was already far away on the lake. The boat was having trouble because of the waves. The wind was blowing against it.

Between three and six o’clock in the morning, Jesus’ followers were still in the boat. Jesus came to them. He was walking on the water. The followers saw Jesus walking on the water and they were afraid. They said, “It’s a ghost!” The followers shouted with fear.

27 But Jesus quickly spoke to them. Jesus said, “Don’t worry! It’s me! Don’t be afraid.”

28 Peter said, “Lord, if that is really you, then tell me to come to you on the water.”

29 Jesus said, “Come, Peter.” Then Peter left the boat and walked on the water to Jesus.

30 But while Peter was walking on the water, he saw the wind and the waves. Peter became afraid and began sinking down into the water. Peter shouted, “Lord, save me!”

31 Then Jesus caught Peter with his hand. Jesus said, “Your faith is small. Why did you doubt?”

32 After Peter and Jesus were in the boat, the wind became calm. Then those followers in the boat worshiped Jesus and said, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Jesus Heals Many Sick People
(Mk. 6:53–56)

34 After they crossed the lake, they came to the shore at Gennesaret. The people in that place saw Jesus. They knew who he was. So they told the other people all around there that Jesus had come. The people brought all their sick people to Jesus. The people begged Jesus to let them only touch his coat to be healed. And all the sick people that touched Jesus’ coat were healed.

God’s Law and Rules That People Make
(Mk. 7:1–23)

15 Then some Pharisees* and teachers of the law came to Jesus. They came from Jerusalem and asked Jesus, “Why do your followers not obey the rules given to us by our great people that lived before us? Your followers don’t wash their hands before they eat!”

3 Jesus answered, “And why do you refuse to obey God’s command so that you can follow those rules you have? God said, ‘You must honor (respect) your father and mother.’* And God also said, ‘Any person that says bad things to his father or mother must be killed.’*

5 But you teach that a person can say to his father or mother, ‘I have something I could use to help you. But I will not use it to help you. I will give it to God.’ You teach that person to not honor his father. So you teach that it is not important to do what God said. You think that it is more important to follow those rules you have. You are hypocrites!* Isaiah was right when he spoke about you. Isaiah said:
8 ‘These people say they honor me, 
but they don’t really make me 
an important part of their lives. 
9 Their worship of me is for nothing. 
The things they teach are only rules 
that people have made.’” *Isaiah 29:13*

10Jesus called the people to him. Jesus said, 
“Listen and understand what I am saying. 
11It is not the things a person puts in his mouth 
that make him wrong. * It is the things a person 
says with his mouth that make him wrong.” 
12Then the followers came to Jesus and 
asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees* are 
angry because of what you said?” 
13Jesus answered, “Every plant that my 
Father in heaven has not planted himself will 
be pulled up by the roots. 14Stay away from 
the Pharisees. * They lead the people, but they 
are like blind men leading other blind men. 
And if a blind man leads another blind man, 
then both men will fall into a hole.” 
15Peter said, “Explain to us what you said 
earlier to the people.” 
16 Jesus said, “You still have trouble 
understanding? 17Surely you know that all the 
food that enters a person’s mouth goes into the 
stomach. Then that food goes out of the body. 
18But the bad things a person says with his mouth 
come from the way a person thinks. And 
these are the things that make a person wrong.* 
19All these bad things begin in a person’s mind: 
evil thoughts, murder, adultery,* sexual sins, 
stealing, lying, saying bad things against other 
people. 20These things make a person wrong. 
But not washing his hands before he eats does 
not make a person wrong.”

**Jesus Helps a Non-Jewish Woman**  
(Mk. 7:24–30)

21Jesus left that place and went to the area 
of Tyre and Sidon. 22A Canaanite woman from 
that area came to Jesus. The woman shouted, 
“Lord, Son of David,* please help me! My 
daughter has a demon* inside her, and she is 
suffering very much.” 
23But Jesus did not answer the woman. So 
the followers came to Jesus and begged him, 
“Tell the woman to go away. She is following 
us and shouting.” 
24Jesus said, “God sent me only to the lost 
people* of Israel (the Jews).” 
25Then the woman came to Jesus again. She 
bowed before Jesus and said, “Lord, help me!” 
26Jesus answered, “It is not right to take the 
children’s bread and give it to the dogs.” 
27The woman said, “Yes, Lord, but even the 
dogs eat the pieces of food that fall from their 
master’s table.” 
28Then Jesus answered, “Woman, you have 
great faith! I will do the thing you wanted me 
to do.” And at that time the woman’s 
daughter was healed.

**Jesus Heals Many People**

29Then Jesus left that place and went to the 
shore of Lake Galilee. Jesus went up on a hill 
and sat down. 
30Many, many people came to Jesus. These 
people brought many other sick people and put 
the sick people before Jesus. There were 
people that could not walk, blind people, 
crippled people, deaf people, and many others. 
Jesus healed all these people. 31People were 
amazed when they saw that people that could 
not speak were able to speak again. Crippled 
people were made strong again. People that 
could not walk were able to walk again. The 
blind were able to see again. All the people 
thanked the God of Israel (the Jews) for this.

**Jesus Feeds More than 4,000 People**  
(Mk. 8:1–10)

32Jesus called his followers to him and said, 
“I feel sorry for these people. They have been 
with me three days, and now they have 
nothing to eat. I don’t want to send them away 
hungry. They might faint while going home.” 
33The followers asked Jesus, “Where can 
we get enough bread to feed all these people? 
We are far away from any town.”

wrong Literally, “unclean” or “not pure.”  
Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that 
claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.  
adulter y Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.  
Son of David Name for the Christ (Messiah). He was from the 
family of David, king of Israel about 1000 years B.C.  
demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.  
people Literally, “sheep.”
Jesus asked, “How many loaves of bread do you have?”

The followers answered, “We have seven loaves of bread and a few small fish.”

Jesus told the people to sit on the ground.

Jesus took the seven loaves of bread and the fish. Then Jesus gave thanks to God for the food. Jesus divided the food and gave it to the followers. The followers gave the food to the people.

All the people ate and were full. After this, the followers filled seven baskets with the pieces of food that were not eaten.

There were about 4,000 men there that ate. There were also women and children that ate.

After they ate, Jesus told the people they could go home. Jesus got into the boat and went to the area of Magadan.

Some Jewish Leaders Test Jesus
(Mk. 8:11–13; Lk. 12:54–56)

The Pharisees* and Sadducees* came to Jesus. They wanted to test Jesus. So they asked Jesus to show them a miracle* to prove that he was from God.

Jesus answered, “When you people see the sunset, you know what the weather will be. If the sky is red, then you say we will have good weather. And in the morning you watch the sunrise. If the sky is dark and red, then you say that it will be a rainy day. These things are signs of the weather. You see these signs in the sky and you know what they mean. In the same way, you see the things that are happening now. These things are also signs. But you don’t know the meaning of these signs. Evil and sinful people are the kind of people that want a miracle* for a sign (proof). But those people will have no sign—only the sign of Jonah.” Then Jesus left that place and went away.

Jesus’ Followers Misunderstand Him
(Mk. 8:14–21)

Jesus and his followers went across the lake (Lake Galilee). But the followers forgot to bring bread. Jesus said to the followers, “Be careful! Guard against the yeast* of the Pharisees* and the Sadducees.”

The followers discussed the meaning of this. They said, “Did Jesus say this because we forgot to bring bread?”

Jesus knew that the followers were talking about this. So Jesus asked them, “Why are you talking about not having bread? Your faith is small. You still don’t understand? Remember the five loaves of bread that fed the 5,000 people? And remember that you filled many baskets with bread after the people finished eating? And remember the seven loaves of bread that fed the 4,000 people? Remember that you filled many baskets with bread after the people finished eating? So I was not talking to you about bread. Why don’t you understand that? I am telling you to be careful and guard against the yeast* of the Pharisees* and the Sadducees.”

Then the followers understood what Jesus meant. Jesus was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread. Jesus was telling them to guard against the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Peter Says That Jesus Is the Christ
(Mk. 8:27–30; Lk. 9:18–21)

Jesus went to the area of Caesarea Philippi. Jesus said to his followers, “I am the Son of Man.* Who do the people say I am?”

The followers answered, “Some people say you are John the Baptizer. Other people say you are Jeremiah* or one of the prophets.”

yeast Used here as a symbol of bad influence. Like yeast, the hypocrisy of the Jewish religious leaders could not be seen. But their wrong teaching influenced many people.

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Elijah A man that spoke for God about 850 B.C.

Jeremiah A man that spoke for God about 600 B.C.

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don’t live again after death.

miracle(s) Amazing works done by God’s power.

sign of Jonah Jonah’s three days in a big fish are like Jesus’ three days in the grave. Read the book of Jonah in the Old Testament.
Matthew 16:15–17:10

15Then Jesus said to his followers, “And who do you say I am?”

16Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ,* the Son of the living God.”

17Jesus answered, “You are blessed, Simon son of Jonah. No person taught you that. My Father in heaven showed you who I am. 18So I tell you, you are Peter.* And I will build my church on this rock. The power of death* will not be able to defeat my church. 19I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. When you speak judgment here on earth, that judgment will be God’s judgment. When you promise forgiveness here on earth, that forgiveness will be God’s forgiveness.”

20Then Jesus warned his followers not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.*

Jesus Says He Must Die
(Mk. 8:31–9:1; Lk. 9:22–27)

21From that time Jesus began telling his followers that he must go to Jerusalem. Jesus explained that the older Jewish leaders, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law would make him suffer many things. And Jesus told his followers that he must be killed. Then, on the third day, he would be raised from death.

22Peter spoke to Jesus alone. Peter began to criticize Jesus. Peter said, “God save you from those things, Lord! Those things will never happen to you!”

23Then Jesus said to Peter, “Go away from me, Satan*! You are not helping me! You don’t care about the things of God. You only care about things that people think are important.”

24Then Jesus said to his followers, “If any person wants to follow me, he must say ‘No’ to the things he wants. That person must accept the cross (suffering) that is given to him, and he must follow me. 25The person that wants to save his life will lose it. And every person that gives his life for me will save it.

26It is worth nothing for a person to have the whole world, if he loses his soul. A person could never pay enough to buy back his soul.

27The Son of Man* will come again with his Father’s glory and with his angels. At that time, the Son of Man will reward each person for the things he has done. 28I tell you the truth. There are some people standing here that will see the Son of Man coming with his kingdom before they die.”

Jesus Seen with Moses and Elijah
(Mk. 9:2–13; Lk. 9:28–36)

17Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John the brother of James and went up on a high mountain. They were all alone there. 2While these followers watched him, Jesus was changed. His face became bright like the sun. And his clothes became white as light. 3Then two men were there, talking with Jesus. The men were Moses and Elijah.*

4Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you want, I will put three tents here—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

5While Peter was talking, a bright cloud came over them. A voice came from the cloud. The voice said, “This (Jesus) is my Son and I love him. I am very pleased with him. Obey him!”

6The followers with Jesus heard this voice. They were very afraid, so they fell to the ground. 7But Jesus came to the followers and touched them. Jesus said, “Stand up. Don’t be afraid.” 8The followers looked up, and they saw Jesus was now alone.

9Jesus and the followers were walking down the mountain. Jesus commanded the followers, “Don’t tell any person about the things you saw on the mountain. Wait until the Son of Man* has been raised from death. Then you can tell people about what you saw.”

10The followers asked Jesus, “Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah* must come* first before the Christ* comes?”

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
Peter The Greek name “Peter,” like the Aramaic name “Cephas,” means “rock.”
power of death Literally, the “gates of Hades.”
When you ... God’s forgiveness Literally, “Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”
Satan Name for the devil meaning “the enemy.” Jesus means that Peter was talking like Satan.

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
Moses and Elijah Two important Jewish leaders in the past.
Elijah A man that spoke for God about 850 B.C.
Elijah must come See Mal. 4:5-6.
11Jesus answered, “They are right to say that Elijah is coming. And it is true that Elijah will make all things the way they should be. 12But I tell you, Elijah has already come. People did not know who he was. People did to him all the bad things they wanted to do. It is the same with the Son of Man. Those same people will make the Son of Man suffer.” 13Then the followers understood that Jesus meant that John the Baptist was really Elijah.

Jesus Heals a Sick Boy
(Mk. 9:14–29; Lk. 9:37–43a)
14Jesus and the followers went back to the people. A man came to Jesus and bowed before him. 15The man said, “Lord, be kind to my son. He has epilepsy and is suffering very much. My son often falls into the fire or into the water. 16I brought my son to your followers, but they could not heal him.”

17Jesus answered, “You people have no faith. Your lives are all wrong. How long must I stay with you? How long must I continue to be patient with you? Bring the boy here.”

18Jesus gave a strong command to the demon inside the boy. Then the demon came out of the boy, and the boy was healed.

19Then the followers came to Jesus alone. They said, “We tried to force the demon out of the boy, but we could not. Why were we not able to make the demon go out?”

20Jesus answered, “You were not able to make the demon go out, because your faith is too small. I tell you the truth. If your faith is as big as a mustard seed, then you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there.’ And it will move. All things will be possible for you.”

Jesus Talks About His Death
(Mk. 9:30–32; Lk. 9:43b–45)
22Later, the followers met together in Galilee. Jesus said to the followers, “The Son of Man will be given into the control of men. 23Those men will kill the Son of Man. But on the third day the Son of Man will be raised from death.” The followers were very sad to hear that Jesus would be killed.

Jesus Teaches About Paying Taxes
24Jesus and his followers went to Capernaum. In Capernaum some men came to Peter. They were the men that collected the two-drachma tax. 25They asked, “Does your teacher pay the two-drachma tax?”

26Peter answered, “Yes, Jesus pays the tax.”

27Peter went into the house where Jesus was. Before Peter could speak, Jesus said to him, “The kings on the earth get different kinds of taxes from people. But who are the people that pay the taxes? Are these people the king’s children? Or is it other people that pay the taxes? What do you think?”

28Peter answered, “The other people pay the taxes.”

Jesus said, “Then the children of the king don’t have to pay taxes. 29But we don’t want to make these tax collectors angry. So pay the tax in this way: Go to the lake and fish. After you catch the first fish, open the fish’s mouth. Inside its mouth you will find a four-drachma coin. Take that coin and give it to the tax collectors. That will pay the tax for you and me.”

Jesus Tells Who Is the Greatest
(Mk. 9:33–37; Lk. 9:46–48)
18At that time the followers came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

2Jesus called a little child to come to him. Jesus stood the child before the followers. 3Then Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. You must change and become like little children in your hearts. If you don’t do this, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4The
greatest (most important) person in the kingdom of heaven is the person that makes himself humble like this child.

5“If a person accepts a little child like this in my name, then that person accepts me.

Jesus Warns About Causes of Sin
(Mk. 9:42–48; Lk. 17:1–2)

6“If one of these little children believes in me, and another person causes that child to sin, then it will be very bad for that person. It would be better for that person to have a millstone* tied around his neck and be drowned in the deep sea. 7I feel sorry for the people in the world because of the things that make people sin. Those things must happen. But it will be very bad for the person that causes those things to happen.

8“If your hand or your foot makes you sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose part of your body but have life forever. That is much better than to have two hands and two feet but be thrown into the fire (hell) that burns forever. 9If your eye makes you sin, take it out and throw it away. It is better for you to have only one eye but have life forever. That is much better than to have two eyes but be thrown into the fire of hell.

Jesus Uses a Story About a Lost Sheep
(Lk. 15:3–7)

10“Be careful. Don’t think these little children are worth nothing. I tell you that these children have angels in heaven. And those angels are always with my Father in heaven. 11*

12“If a man has 100 sheep, but one of the sheep becomes lost, then the man will leave the other 99 sheep on the hill. He will go to look for the lost sheep. Right? 13And if the man finds the lost sheep, the man is happier about that one sheep than about the 99 sheep that were never lost. I tell you the truth. 14In the same way, your Father in heaven does not want any of these little children to be lost.

When a Person Hurts You
(Lk. 17:3)

15“If your brother or sister does something wrong to you, go and tell that person what he did wrong. Do this alone with that person. If that person listens to you, then you have helped that person to be your brother again. 16But if that person refuses to listen, then go to him again and bring one or two people with you. Then there will be two or three other people that will be able to tell all that happened.* 17If that person refuses to listen to them, then tell the church (group of believers). If that person refuses to listen to the church, then treat him like he is a person that does not believe in God. Treat him like he is a tax collector. 18“I tell you the truth. When you speak judgment here on earth, that judgment will be God’s judgment. When you promise forgiveness here on earth, that forgiveness will be God’s forgiveness.*

19“Also, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about something, then you can pray for it. And the thing you ask for will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20This is true, because if two or three people are together believing in me, I am there with them.”

Story About Forgiveness

21Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, when my brother won’t stop doing wrong to me, how many times must I forgive him? Should I forgive him as many as seven times?”

22Jesus answered, “I tell you, you must forgive him more than seven times. You must continue to forgive him even if he does wrong to you seventy-seven times.”

23“So the kingdom of heaven is like a king that decided to collect the money that his servants owed him. 24The king began to collect his money. One servant owed the king several thousand pounds of silver. 25The servant was...
not able to pay the money to his master, the king. So the master ordered that everything the servant owned should be sold, even the servant’s wife and children. The money would be used to pay the king what the servant owed.

26“But the servant fell on his knees and begged, ‘Be patient with me. I will pay you everything I owe.’

27The master felt sorry for his servant. So the master told the servant he did not have to pay. The master let the servant go free.

28“Later, that same servant found another servant that owed him a few dollars’ worth of silver. The servant grabbed the other servant around the neck and said, ‘Pay me the money you owe me!’

29“The other servant fell on his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me. I will pay you everything I owe.’

30“But the first servant refused to be patient. The servant told the judge that the other servant owed him money, and the other servant was thrown into prison. The servant had to stay in prison until he could pay everything he owed. 31All the other servants saw what happened. They felt very sorry for the man. So they went and told their master everything that happened.

32”Then the master called his servant in and said, ‘You evil servant. You owed me much money, but you begged me to forgive your debt. So I told you that you did not have to pay anything. 33So you should have given the same mercy to that other man that is a servant with you. You should have given him the same mercy that I gave you.’ 34The master was very angry, so he put the servant in prison to be punished. And the servant had to stay in prison until he could pay everything he owed.

35“This king did the same as my heavenly Father will do to you. You must truly forgive your brother or sister, or my heavenly Father will not forgive you.”

**Jesus Teaches About Divorce**

(Mk. 10:1–12)

19After Jesus said all these things, he left Galilee. Jesus went into the area of Judea on the other side of the Jordan River. 2Many people followed Jesus. Jesus healed the sick people there.

3Some Pharisees came to Jesus. They tried to make Jesus say something wrong. They asked Jesus, “Is it right for a man to divorce his wife for any reason he chooses?”

4Jesus answered, “Surely you have read this in the Scriptures: When God made the world, 5‘he made people male and female.’ 6And God said, ‘So a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. And the two people will become one.’ 7So the two people are not two, but one. God joined those two people together. So no person should separate them.”

7The Pharisees asked, “So why did Moses give a command allowing a man to divorce his wife by writing a certificate of divorce?”

8Jesus answered, “Moses allowed you to divorce your wives because you refused to accept God’s teaching. But divorce was not allowed in the beginning. 9I tell you that any person that divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of the sin of adultery. The only reason for a person to divorce and marry again is if his first wife had sexual relations with another man.”

10The followers said to Jesus, “If that is the only reason a man can divorce his wife, then it is better not to marry.”

11Jesus answered, “Not every person can accept this teaching about marriage. But God has made some people able to accept it. 12There are different reasons why some men cannot marry. Some men were born without the ability to make children. Other men were made that way later in life by other people. And other men have given up marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. But the person that can marry should accept this teaching about marriage.”

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

‘he made … female’ Quote from Gen. 1:27 or 5:2.

‘So a man … one’ Quote from Gen. 2:24.

a command … certificate of divorce See Deut. 24:1.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

some men cannot marry Literally, “there are eunuchs.”

But … marriage Or, “The person that can accept this teaching about not marrying should accept it.”
Jesus Welcomes Children
(Mk. 10:13–16; Lk. 18:15–17)

13 Then the people brought their little children to Jesus so that Jesus could put his hands on them and pray for them. When the followers saw this, they told the people to stop bringing their children to Jesus. 14 But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me. Don’t stop them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people that are like these children.” 15 After Jesus put his hands on the children, he left there.

A Rich Man Refuses to Follow Jesus
(Mk. 10:17–31; Lk. 18:18–30)

16 A man came to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to have life forever?” 17 Jesus answered, “Why do you ask me about what is good? Only God is good. But if you want to have life forever, obey the commands.” 18 The man asked, “Which commands?” 19 Jesus answered, “‘You must not murder anyone, you must not do the sin of adultery,* you must not steal anything, you must not tell lies about other people, 20 you must honor (respect) your father and mother,’* and ‘you must love other people the same as you love yourself.’”
21 The young man said, “I have obeyed all these things. What else do I need?”
22 Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, then go and sell all the things you own. Give the money to the poor people. If you do this, you will have a rich treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me!”
23 But when the man heard this, he was very sad. The man was very rich and wanted to keep his money. So he left Jesus.
24 Then Jesus said to his followers, “I tell you the truth. It will be very hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. 25 Yes, I tell you that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Israel First, Israel was the Jewish nation, but the name is also used to mean all of God’s people.

silver coin A Roman denarius. One coin was the average pay for one day’s work.

25 When the followers heard this, they were very surprised. They asked, “Then who can be saved?”
26 Jesus looked at his followers and said, “This is something that people cannot do themselves. But God can do all things.”
27 Peter said to Jesus, “We left everything we had and followed you. So what will we have?”
28 Jesus said to the followers, “I tell you the truth. When the new world is made, the Son of Man will sit on his great throne. And all of you that followed me will also sit on thrones. You will sit on twelve thrones and you will judge the twelve family groups of Israel.* 29 And every person that has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or farms to follow me will get much more than he left. And that person will have life forever. 30 Many people that have the highest place in life now will have the lowest place in the future. And many people that have the lowest place now will have the highest place in the future.

Jesus Uses a Story About Farm Workers
20 “The kingdom of heaven is like a man that owned some land. The man grew grapes on his land. One morning, the man went out very early to hire some other people to work in his field. 2 The man agreed to pay the workers one silver coin* for working that day. Then the man sent the people into the field to work.

3 At about nine o’clock the man went to the market place and saw some other people standing there. These people were doing nothing. 4 So the man said to them, ‘If you go and work in my field, I will pay you what your work is worth.’ 5 So the people went to work in the field.

6 At about five o’clock the man went to the market place again. He saw some other people standing there. The man asked them, ‘Why did you stand here all day doing nothing?’

put his hands on them Showing that Jesus was giving special blessings to these children.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

‘You must not … mother’ Quote from Ex. 20:12–16.

‘you must love … yourself’ Quote from Lev. 19:18.
1138

MATTHEW 20:7–30

7“The people said, ‘No person gave us a job.’

“Then you can go and work in my field.’

8“At the end of the day, the owner of the field said to the boss of all the workers, ‘Call the workers and pay all of them. Start by paying the last people I hired. Then pay all of them, ending with the workers I hired first.’

9“The workers that were hired at five o’clock came to get their pay. Each worker got one silver coin.” 10Then those workers that were hired first came to get their pay. Those workers thought they would be paid more than the other workers. But each one of those workers also received one silver coin. 11When they got their silver coin, these workers complained to the man that owned the land. 12The workers said, ‘Those people were hired last and worked only one hour. But you paid them the same as us. And we worked hard all day in the hot sun.

13“But the man that owned the field said to one of those workers, ‘Friend, I am being fair with you. You agreed to work for one silver coin. Right? 14So take your pay and go. I want to give the man that was hired last the same pay that I gave you. I can do what I want with my own money. Are you jealous because I am good to those people?’

15“So the people that have the last place now will have the first place in the future. And the people that have the first place now will have the last place in the future.”

Jesus Talks About His Own Death

(Mk. 10:32–34; Lk. 18:31–34)

17Jesus was going to Jerusalem. His twelve followers were with him. While they were walking, Jesus gathered the followers together and spoke to them privately. Jesus said to them, 18“We are going to Jerusalem. The Son of Man* will be given to the leading priests and the teachers of the law. The priests and teachers of the law will say that the Son of Man must die. 19They will give the Son of Man to the non-Jewish people. Those people will laugh at him and beat him with whips, and then they will kill him on a cross. But on the third day after his death, he will be raised to life again.”

A Mother Asks a Special Favor

(Mk. 10:35–45)

20Then Zebedee’s wife came to Jesus. Her sons were with her. The mother bowed before Jesus and asked him to do something for her. 21Jesus said, “What do you want?”

She said, “Promise that one of my sons will sit at your right side in your kingdom. And promise that the other son will sit at your left side in your kingdom.”

22So Jesus said to the sons, “You don’t understand what you are asking. Can you accept the kind of suffering that I must have?”

The sons answered, “Yes, we can!”

23Jesus said to them, “Truly you will suffer the same things that I will suffer. But I cannot choose the person that will sit at my right side or my left side. My Father has decided who will have those places. He has prepared those places for those people. Those places belong to them.”

24The other ten followers heard this. They became angry with the two brothers. 25Jesus called all the followers together. Jesus said, “You know that the rulers of the non-Jewish people love to show their power over the people. And their important leaders love to use all their authority over the people. 26But it should not be that way with you. If one of you wants to become great, then he must serve you like a servant. 27If one of you wants to become first, then he must serve you like a slave. 28It is the same with the Son of Man.* The Son of Man did not come for other people to serve him. The Son of Man came to serve other people. The Son of Man came to give his life to save many people.”

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

(Mk. 10:46–52; Lk. 18:35–43)

29When Jesus and his followers were leaving Jericho, many, many people followed Jesus. 30There were two blind men sitting by the road. The blind men heard that Jesus was

silver coin A Roman denarius. One coin was the average pay for one day’s work.

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

accept ... must have Literally, “drink the cup that I must drink.” Jesus used the idea of drinking from a cup to mean accepting the terrible things that would happen to him.
coming by. So the blind men shouted, “Lord, Son of David,* please help us!”

31All the people criticized the blind men. They told the blind men not to speak. But the blind men shouted more and more, “Lord, Son of David,* please help us!”

32Jesus stopped and said to the blind men, “What do you want me to do for you?”

33The blind men answered, “Lord, we want to be able to see.”

34Jesus felt sorry for the blind men. Jesus touched their eyes and they were able to see. Then the men followed Jesus.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem like a King
(Mk. 11:1–11; Lk. 19:28–38; Jn. 12:12–19)

21Jesus and his followers were coming closer to Jerusalem. But first they stopped at Bethphage at the hill called the Mount of Olives.* There Jesus sent two of his followers into the town. Jesus said to the followers, “Go to the town you can see there. When you enter it, you will find a donkey tied there. With the donkey you will find a young donkey. Untie the two donkeys and bring them to me. 3If any person asks you why you are taking the donkeys, tell that person, ‘The Master needs these donkeys. He will send them back soon.’”

4This happened to make clear the full meaning of what the prophet* said:

5“Tell the city of Zion, ‘Now your king is coming to you. He is humble and he is riding on a donkey. He is riding on a young donkey, born from a work animal.’”

6The followers went and did what Jesus told them to do. 7The followers brought the mother donkey and the young donkey to Jesus. They put their coats on the donkeys, and Jesus sat on the coats. 8Jesus rode along the road to Jerusalem.* Many people spread their coats on the road for Jesus. Other people cut branches from the trees and spread the branches on the road. 9Some of the people were walking ahead of Jesus. Other people were walking behind Jesus. The people shouted,

“Praise* to the Son of David!* Welcome! God bless the One that comes in the name of the Lord!”

Psalm 118:26

Praise* to God in heaven!”

10Then Jesus went into Jerusalem. All the people in the city were confused. They asked, “Who is this man?”

11The many people following Jesus answered, “This man is Jesus. He is the prophet* from the town of Nazareth in Galilee.”

Jesus Goes to the Temple
(Mk. 11:15–19; Lk. 19:45–48; Jn. 2:13–22)

12Jesus went into the temple* area. He threw out all the people that were selling and buying things there. Jesus turned over the tables that belonged to the men that were exchanging different kinds of money. And Jesus turned over the benches of those men that were selling doves. 13Jesus said to all the people there, “It is written {in the Scriptures*}, ‘My house will be called a house for prayer.’* But you are changing God’s house into a ‘hiding place for thieves.’”

14Some blind people and some crippled people came to Jesus in the temple* area. Jesus healed these people. 15The leading priests and the teachers of the law saw what Jesus did. They saw that Jesus was doing great things and saw the children praising Jesus in the temple area. The children were saying, “Praise* to the Son of David.”* All these things made the priests and the teachers of the law angry.

Son of David Name for the Christ (Messiah). He was from the family of David, king of Israel about 1000 years B.C.

Mount of Olives A hill east of the city of Jerusalem where a person could look down into the temple area.

prophet A person that spoke for God. Sometimes a prophet told things that would happen in the future.

Praise Literally, “Hosanna,” a Hebrew word used in praying to God for help. Here, it was probably a shout of joy used in praising God or his Messiah.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

‘My house ... prayer’ Quote from Isa. 56:7.

‘hiding place for thieves’ Quote from Jer. 7:11.
16 The leading priests and the teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Do you hear the things these children are saying?”

Jesus answered, “Yes. The Scripture* says, ‘You (God) have taught children and babies to give praise.’ Have you not read that Scripture?”

17 Then Jesus left that place and went out of the city to Bethany. Jesus stayed there that night.

Jesus Shows the Power of Faith
(Mk. 11:12–14, 20–24)

18 Early the next morning, Jesus was going back to the city. Jesus was very hungry.

19 Jesus saw a fig tree beside the road. Jesus went to the fig tree {to get a fig to eat}. But there were no figs on the tree. There were only leaves. So Jesus said to the tree, “You will never again have fruit!” And then the tree dried up and died.

20 The followers saw this. They were very surprised. They asked, “How did the fig tree dry up and die so quickly?”

21 Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth. If you have faith and no doubts, you will be able to do the same as I did to this tree. And you will be able to do more. You will be able to say to this mountain, ‘Go, mountain, fall into the sea.’ And if you have faith, it will happen. 22 If you believe, you will get anything you ask for in prayer.”

Jewish Leaders Doubt Jesus’ Authority
(Mk. 11:27–33; Lk. 20:1–8)

23 Jesus went into the temple* area. While Jesus was teaching there, the leading priests and the older leaders of the people came to Jesus. They said to Jesus, “Tell us! What authority (power) do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?”

24 Jesus answered, “I will ask you a question too. If you answer me, then I will tell you what authority I have to do these things. 25 Tell me: When John baptized* people, did that come from God or was it only from other people?”

The priests and the Jewish leaders talked about Jesus’ question. They said to each other, “If we answer, ‘John’s baptism was from God,’ then Jesus will say, ‘Then why didn’t you believe John?’ 26 But we can’t say John’s baptism was from someone else. We are afraid of the people, because they all believe that John was a prophet.”

27 So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know {where John’s authority came from}.”

Then Jesus said, “Then I won’t tell you what authority I have to do these things!”

Jesus Uses a Story About Two Sons
28 “Tell me what you think about this: There was a man that had two sons. The man went to the first son and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’

29 “The son answered, ‘I will not go.’ But later the son decided he should go, and the son went.

30 “Then the father went to the other son and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’ The son answered, ‘Yes, sir, I will go and work.’ But the son did not go.

31 “Which of the two sons obeyed his father?”

The Jewish leaders answered, “The first son.” Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth. 32 You think the tax collectors* and the prostitutes* are bad people. But they will enter the kingdom of God before you enter. 33 John came showing you the right way to live. And you did not believe John. But the tax collectors and prostitutes believed John. And you saw that the tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. But you still refused to change and believe him.

God Sends His Son
(Mk. 12:1–12; Lk. 20:9–19)

33 “Listen to this story: There was a man that owned a vineyard. He put a wall around the field and dug a hole for a wine press.* Then the man built a tower. He leased the land to some farmers. Then he left for a trip. 34 Later, it was time for the grapes to be picked. So the

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
‘You ... praise’ Quote from Ps. 8:3 (Greek Version).
temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
baptize(d) A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

prophet A person that spoke for God.
tax collector(s) Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the other Jews hated them.
prostitutes Women paid by men for sexual sin.
wine press A place dug in rock used to mash grapes and collect the juice for making wine.
man sent his servants to the farmers to get his share of the grapes.

35“But the farmers grabbed the servants and beat one. They killed another one and then killed a third servant with rocks. 36So the man sent some other servants to the farmers. The man sent more servants than he sent the first time. But the farmers did the same thing to the servants that they did the first time. 37So the man decided to send his son to the farmers. The man said, ‘The farmers will respect my son.’

38“But when the farmers saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the owner’s son. This vineyard will be his. If we kill him, then it will be ours!’ 39So the farmers took the son, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

40“So what will the owner of the vineyard do to these farmers when he comes?”

41The Jewish priests and leaders said, ‘He will surely kill those evil men. Then he will lease the land to some other farmers. He will lease it to farmers that will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.’

42Jesus said to them, ‘Surely you have read this in the Scriptures:*

‘The stone that the builders did not want became the cornerstone.*

The Lord did this, and it is wonderful to us.’

Psalm 118:22–23

43“So I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you. God’s kingdom will be given to people that do the things God wants in his kingdom. 44The person that falls on this stone will be broken. And if the stone falls on a person, then it will crush that person.”*

45The leading priests and the Pharisees* heard these stories that Jesus told. They knew that Jesus was talking about them. 46They wanted to find a way to arrest Jesus. But they were afraid of the people, because the people believed that Jesus was a prophet.*

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

cornerstone First and most important rock of a building.

Verse 44 Some Greek copies omit verse 44.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

prophet A person that spoke for God.

22 Jesus used stories to say some other things to the people. Jesus said, 2“The kingdom of heaven is like a king that prepared a wedding dinner for his son. 3The king invited some people to the feast. When the feast was ready, the king sent his servants to tell those people to come. But the people refused to come to the king’s feast.

4vThen the king sent some more servants. The king said to the servants, ‘I have already invited those people. So tell them that my feast is ready. I have killed my best bulls and calves to be eaten. Everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.’

5vThen the servants went and told the people to come. But the people refused to listen to the servants. Those people went to do other things. One person went to work in his field, and another person went to his business. 6Some of the other people grabbed the servants, beat them, and killed them. 7The king was very angry. The king sent his army to kill those people that killed his servants. And the army burned their city.

8vAfter that, the king said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready. I invited those people, but they were not good enough to come to my feast. 9So go to the street corners and invite all the people you see. Tell them to come to my feast.’ 10So the servants went into the streets. They gathered all the people they could find. The servants brought good people and bad people to the place where the wedding feast was ready. And that place was filled with people.

11vThen the king came in to see all the people. The king saw a man there that was not dressed in the right clothes for a wedding. 12The king said, ‘Friend, how were you allowed to come in here? You are not wearing the right clothes for a wedding.’ But the man said nothing. 13So the king told some servants, ‘Tie this man’s hands and feet. Throw the man out into the darkness. In that place, people will cry and grind their teeth *with pain.*

14vYes, many people are invited. But only a few are chosen.”
Some Jewish Leaders Try to Trick Jesus
(Mk. 12:13–17; Lk. 20:20–26)

15Then the Pharisees* left the place where Jesus was teaching. They made plans to catch Jesus saying something wrong. 16The Pharisees sent some men to Jesus to trick him. They sent some of their own followers and some men from the group called Herodians.* These men said, “Teacher, we know that you are an honest man. We know that you teach the truth about God’s way. You are not afraid of what other people think about you. All men are the same to you. 17So tell us what you think. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar*? Yes or no?”

18But Jesus knew that these men were trying to trick him. So he said, “You hypocrites*! Why are you trying to catch me saying something wrong? 19Show me a coin used for paying the tax.” The men showed Jesus a silver coin.* 20Then Jesus asked, “Whose picture is on the coin? And whose name is written on the coin?”

21The men answered, “It is Caesar’s picture and Caesar’s name.”

Then Jesus said to them, “Give to Caesar* the things that are Caesar’s. And give to God the things that are God’s.”

22Those men heard what Jesus said, and they were amazed. They left him and went away.

Some Sadducees Try to Trick Jesus
(Mk. 12:18–27; Lk. 20:27–40)

23That same day some Sadducees* came to Jesus. (Sadducees believe that no person will rise from death.) The Sadducees asked Jesus a question. 24They said, “Teacher, Moses told us that if a married man dies and he had no children, then his brother must marry the woman. Then they will have children for the dead brother.” 25There were seven brothers among us. The first one married but died. He had no children. So his brother married the woman. 26Then the second brother also died. The same thing happened to the third brother and all the other brothers. 27The woman was last to die. 28But all seven men had married her. So when people rise from death, whose wife will she be?”

29Jesus answered, “You don’t understand because you don’t know what the Scriptures* say. And you don’t know about the power of God. 30At the time when people rise from death, there will be no marriage. People will not be married to each other. All people will be like the angels in heaven. 31Surely you have read what God said to you about the rising from death? 32God said, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’* 33If God said he is their God, then these men are not really dead. He is the God only of living people.”

33All the people heard this. They were amazed at Jesus’ teaching.

Which Command Is the Most Important?
(Mk. 12:28–34; Lk. 10:25–28)

34The Pharisees* learned that Jesus told the Sadducees* things they could not argue with. So the Pharisees met together. 35One Pharisee was an expert in the law of Moses. That Pharisee asked Jesus a question to test him. 36The Pharisee said, “Teacher, which command in the law is the most important?”

37Jesus answered, “‘You must love the Lord your God. You must love him with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’* 38This is the first and most important command. 39And the second command is like the first: ‘You must love other people the same as you love yourself.’* 40All of the law and the

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Herodians A Jewish political group.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

hypocrites Bad people that act like they are good.

silver coin A Roman denarius. One coin was the average pay for one day’s work.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don’t live again after death.

if ... dead brother See Deut. 25:5 and Gen. 38:8.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob Three of the most important Jewish leaders during the time of the Old Testament.

‘I am ... Jacob’ Quote from Ex. 3:6.

‘You must love ... mind’ Quote from Deut. 6:5.

‘You must love ... yourself’ Quote from Lev. 19:18.
The only reason they do good things is for other people to see them. They wear special boxes full of Scriptures. They make these boxes bigger and bigger. And they make their special prayer clothes very long so that people will see them. Those Pharisees and teachers of the law love to get the most important seats at the feasts. And they love to get the most important seats in the synagogues. They love for people to show respect to them in the market places. And they love to have people call them ‘Teacher.’

But you must not be called ‘Teacher.’ You are all brothers and sisters together. You have only one Teacher. And don’t call any person on earth ‘Father.’ You have one Father. He is in heaven. And you should not be called ‘Master.’ You have only one Master, the Christ. The person that serves you like a servant is the greatest person among you. Every person that makes himself better than other people will be made humble. Every person that makes himself humble will be made great.

It will be bad for you teachers of the law and Pharisees. You are hypocrites. You take away widows’ houses, and you make long prayers so that people can see you. So you will have a worse punishment.” See Mk. 12:40; Lk. 20:47.

Jesus Asks the Pharisees a Question

(Mk. 12:35-37; Lk. 20:41-44)

41So while the Pharisees were together, Jesus asked them a question. 42Jesus said, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” The Pharisees answered, “The Christ is the Son of David.”

43Then Jesus said to the Pharisees, “Then why did David call him ‘Lord’? David was speaking by the power of the Holy Spirit. David said,

44 ‘The Lord (God) said to my Lord (Christ):

Sit by me at my right side,

and I will put your enemies under your control.”

Psalm 110:1

David calls the Christ ‘Lord.’ So how can he be David’s son?”

None of the Pharisees could answer Jesus’ question. And after that day no person was brave enough to ask Jesus any more questions to try to trick him.

Jesus Criticizes the Religious Leaders

(Mk. 12:38-40; Lk. 11:37-52; 20:45-47)

Then Jesus spoke to the people and to his followers. Jesus said, 2“The teachers of the law and the Pharisees have the authority to tell you what the law of Moses says. 3So you should obey the things they say. You should do all the things they tell you to do. But their lives are not good examples for you to follow. They tell you to do things, but they don’t do those things themselves. 4They make strict rules that are hard for people to obey. They try to force other people to obey all those rules. But they themselves will not try to follow any of those rules.

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

Son of David Name for the Christ (Messiah). He was from the family of David, king of Israel about 1000 years B.C.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

control Literally, “feet.”
name of the temple\textsuperscript{*} to make a promise, that means nothing. But if any person uses the gold that is in the temple to make a promise, then he must keep that promise.\textsuperscript{17} You are blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple? The temple makes that gold holy. So the temple is greater.\textsuperscript{18} And you say, "If any person uses the altar\textsuperscript{9} to make a promise, that means nothing. But if any person uses the gift on the altar to make a promise, then he must keep his promise."\textsuperscript{19} You are blind. You understand nothing! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar? The altar makes the gift holy. So the altar is greater.\textsuperscript{20} The person that uses the altar to make a promise is really using the altar and also everything on the altar.\textsuperscript{21} And the person that uses the temple to make a promise is really using the temple and also the One that lives in the temple. The person that uses heaven to make a promise is also using God's throne and the One that sits on that throne.

\textsuperscript{23}It will be bad for you teachers of the law and Pharisees. You are hypocrites. You give God one tenth of everything you own—even your mint, dill, and cummin. But you don't obey the really important teachings of the law—being fair, showing mercy, and being faithful. These are the things you should do. And you should also continue to do those other things.\textsuperscript{24} You guide the people, but you are blind! Think about a person picking a little fly out of his drink and then swallowing a camel! You are like that.\textsuperscript{25} It will be bad for you teachers of the law and Pharisees. You are hypocrites. You wash clean the outside of your cups and dishes. But inside they are full of things that you got by cheating other people and pleasing yourselves.\textsuperscript{26} Pharisees, you are blind! First make the inside of the cup clean and good. Then the outside of the cup can be truly clean.\textsuperscript{27} It will be bad for you teachers of the law and Pharisees. You are hypocrites. You are like tombs\textsuperscript{*} that are painted white. The outside of those tombs looks fine. But inside, the tombs are full of the bones of dead people. And all kinds of unclean things are inside there.\textsuperscript{28} It is the same with you. People look at you and think that you are good. But on the inside you are full of hypocrisy\textsuperscript{*} and evil.

\textsuperscript{29}It will be bad for you teachers of the law and Pharisees. You are hypocrites. You build tombs for the prophets.\textsuperscript{*} And you show honor to the graves of people that lived good lives.\textsuperscript{30} And you say, "If we had lived during the time of our fathers, we would not have helped them kill these prophets."\textsuperscript{31} You give proof that you are children (descendants) of those people that killed the prophets.\textsuperscript{32} And you will finish the sin that your fathers started!\textsuperscript{33} You are snakes! You are from a family of poisonous snakes! You will not escape God. You will all be judged guilty and go to hell!\textsuperscript{34} So I tell you this: I send to you prophets\textsuperscript{*} and wise men and teachers. You will kill some of these people. You will hang some of them on crosses. You will beat some of these people in your synagogues.\textsuperscript{*} You will chase them from town to town.\textsuperscript{35} So you will be guilty for the death of all the good people that have been killed on earth. You will be guilty for the killing of that good man Abel.\textsuperscript{*} And you will be guilty for the killing of Zechariah\textsuperscript{*} son of Berachiah. He was killed between the temple\textsuperscript{*} and the altar.\textsuperscript{*} You will be guilty for the killing of all the good people that lived between the time of Abel and the time of Zechariah.\textsuperscript{36} I tell you the truth. All of these things will happen to you people that are living now.

\textsuperscript{1144}

\textbf{temple} The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
\textbf{altar} An altar is a place where sacrifices or gifts are offered to God. There was an altar in front of the temple in Jerusalem.
\textbf{Pharisees} The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
\textbf{hypocrites} Bad people that act like they are good.
\textbf{mint, dill, cummin} Small plants grown in gardens and used for spices. Only very religious people would be careful enough to give a tenth of these plants.
\textbf{You are like that} Meaning, "You worry about the smallest mistakes but do the biggest sin."

\textbf{tombs} Small buildings made to show respect for important persons that had died.
\textbf{hypocrisy} Acting like you are good when you are not.
\textbf{prophets} People that spoke for God.
\textbf{fathers} Important ancestors of the Jews, especially the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups.
\textbf{synagogue(s)} Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.
\textbf{Abel, Zechariah} In the Hebrew Old Testament, the first and last men to be murdered.
Jesus Warns the People of Jerusalem

(Lk. 13:34–35)

37“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets.* You kill with rocks those men that God sent to you. Many, many times I wanted to help your people. I wanted to gather your people together like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you did not let me. 38Now your house will be left completely empty. 39I tell you, you will not see me again until that time when you will say, ‘Welcome! God bless the one that comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Future Destruction of the Temple

(Mk. 13:1–31; Lk. 21:5–33)

24Jesus left the temple* area and was walking away. But his followers came to him to show him the temple’s buildings. Jesus asked the followers, “Are you looking at these buildings? I tell you the truth. They will be destroyed. Every stone will be thrown down to the ground. Not one stone will be left on another.”

Later, Jesus was sitting at a place on the Mount of Olives.* The followers came to be alone with Jesus. They said, “Tell us when these things will happen. And what will happen to show us that it is time for you to come again and time for the world* to end?”

Jesus answered: “Be careful! Don’t let any person fool you. 5Many people will come and use my name. They will say, ‘I am the Christ.’* And they will fool many people. 6You will hear about wars that are being fought. And you will hear stories about other wars beginning. But don’t be afraid. These things must happen before the end comes. 7Nations will fight against other nations. Kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. There will be times when there is no food for people to eat. And there will be earthquakes in different places. 8These things are like the first pains when something new is born.

9Then people will treat you badly. People will give you (to the rulers) to be persecuted (hurt) and killed. All people will hate you. All these things will happen to you because you believe in me. 10At that time, many believers will lose their faith. They will turn against each other and hate each other. 11Many false prophets* will come. They will cause many people to believe wrong things. 12There will be more and more evil in the world. So most believers will stop showing love. 13But the person that continues strong to the end will be saved. 14The Good News about (God’s) kingdom will be told in the whole world. It will be told to every nation. Then the end will come.

15“Daniel the prophet* spoke about ‘the terrible thing that causes destruction.’ You will see this terrible thing standing in the holy place (the temple).” (You that read this should understand what it means.) 16“At that time, the people in Judea should run away to the mountains. 17People should run away without wasting the time to stop for anything. If a person is on the roof of his house, he must not go down to get things out of his house. 18If a person is in the field, he must not go back to get his coat. 19At that time, it will be bad for women that are pregnant or have small babies! 20Pray that it will not be winter or a Sabbath day* when these things happen and you have to run away. 21Why? Because at that time there will be much trouble. There will be more trouble than has ever happened since the beginning of the world. And nothing as bad as that will ever happen again. 22But God has decided to make that terrible time short. If that time were not made short, then no person would continue living. But God will make that time short to help the people he has chosen.

23At that time, some person might say to you, ‘Look, there is the Christ!’ Or another person might say, ‘There he is!’ But don’t believe false prophets People that say they speak for God but do not really speak God’s truth.

prophets People that spoke for God.

*Mt. 23:37–24:23

*Ps. 118:26

*Dan. 9:27; 12:11 (see also Dan. 11:31).

Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God. 
Matthew 24:24–48

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them. 24 False Christs and false prophets* will come and do great things and miracles.* They will do these things to the people God has chosen. They will do these things to try to fool his people, if that is possible. 25 Now I have warned you about this before it happens.

26 "Some person might tell you, ‘The Christ* is there in the desert!’ But don’t go into the desert to look for the Christ. Another person might say, ‘There is the Christ in that room!’ But don’t believe that. 27 When the Son of Man* comes, he will be seen by all people. It will be like lightning flashing in the sky that can be seen everywhere. 28 My coming will be clear, the same as any time you see vultures* gathering, you know there is a dead body.

29 Soon after the trouble of those days, this will happen:

‘The sun will become dark, and the moon will not give light. The stars will fall from the sky, and everything in the sky will be changed.’ Isaiah 13:10; 34:4

30 "At that time, there will be something in the sky that shows the Son of Man* coming. All the people of the world will cry. All the people will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds in the sky. The Son of Man will come with power and great glory. 31 The Son of Man will use a loud trumpet to send his angels all around the earth. The angels will gather his chosen people from every part of the earth.

32 The fig tree teaches us a lesson: When the fig tree’s branches become green and soft, and new leaves begin to grow, then you know that summer is near. 33 It is the same with these things that I told you would happen. When you see all these things happening, you will know that the time* is near, ready to come. 34 I tell you the truth. All these things will happen while people of this time are still living! 35 The whole world, earth and sky, will be destroyed, but the words I have said will never be destroyed!

Only God Knows When the Time Will Be
(Mk. 13:32–37; Lk. 17:26–30, 34–36)

36 "No person knows when that day or time will be. The Son and the angels in heaven don’t know when that day or time will be. Only the Father knows. 37 When the Son of Man* comes, it will be the same as the thing that happened during Noah’s time. 38 In those days before the flood, people were eating and drinking. People were marrying and giving their children to be married. The people were still doing those things until the day Noah entered the boat. 39 Those people knew nothing about what was happening. But then the flood came and all those people were destroyed. It will be the same when the Son of Man comes. 40 Two men will be working together in the field. One man will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding grain with a mill.* One woman will be taken and the other woman will be left.

42 "So always be ready. You don’t know the day your Lord will come. 43 Remember this: If the owner of the house knew what time the thief was coming, then the owner would be ready for him. The owner would watch and not let the thief enter his house. 44 So you also must be ready. The Son of Man* will come at a time when you don’t expect him.

Good Servants and Bad Servants
(Lk. 12:41–48)

45 "Who is the wise and trusted servant? The master trusts one servant to give the other servants their food at the right time. Who is the servant that the master trusts to do that work? 46 When the master comes and finds that servant doing the work he gave him, the servant will be very happy. 47 I tell you the truth. The master will choose that servant to take care of everything the master owns. 48 But what will happen if the servant is evil and

false prophets People that say they speak for God but do not really speak God’s truth.
miracles Here, powerful acts done by Satan’s power.
Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
vultures Or, eagles—birds that eat dead animals.
time The time Jesus has been talking about when a very important thing will happen. In Luke Jesus says that it is the time for God’s kingdom to come (Lk. 21:31).
mill Two large, flat rocks used for grinding grain to make flour.
thinks his master will not come back soon?  
49Then that servant will begin to beat the other servants. That servant will eat the food and get drunk with other people like him. 50Then the master of that servant will come when the servant is not ready. It will be a time when the servant is not expecting the master. 51Then the master will punish that servant. The master will send him away to be with the hypocrites.* And in that place people will cry and grind their teeth with pain.

Story About Ten Girls

25“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten girls that went to wait for the bridegroom.* They brought their lamps with them. 2Five of the girls were foolish. And five of the girls were wise. 3The five foolish girls brought their lamps, but they did not bring more oil for the lamps to burn. 4The wise girls brought their lamps and more oil in jars. 5The bridegroom was very late. All the girls became tired and began sleeping. 6“At midnight someone announced, ‘The bridegroom* is coming! Come and meet him!’ 7”Then all the girls woke up. The girls made their lamps ready. 8But the foolish girls said to the wise girls, ‘Give us some of your oil. The oil in our lamps is all gone.’ 9“The wise girls answered, ‘No! The oil we have might not be enough for all of us. But go to the people that sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ 10“So the five foolish girls went to buy oil. While they were gone, the bridegroom* came. The girls that were ready went in with the bridegroom to the wedding feast. Then the door was closed and locked. 11“Later the other girls came. The girls said, ‘Sir, sir, open the door to let us in.’ 12“But the bridegroom answered, ‘I tell you the truth. I don’t know you.’ 13“So always be ready. You don’t know the day or the time when the Son of Man* will come.

Story About Three Servants

14“The kingdom of heaven is, like a man leaving home to travel to another place for a visit. Before the man left, he talked with his servants. The man told his servants to take care of the things he owned while he was gone. 15He decided how much each servant would be able to care for. The man gave one servant five bags of money.* He gave another servant two bags of money. And he gave a third servant one bag of money. Then that man left. 16The servant that got five bags of money went quickly to invest the money. Those five bags of money earned five more. 17It was the same with the servant that had two bags of money. That servant invested the money and earned two more. 18But the servant that got one bag of money went away and dug a hole in the ground. Then the servant hid his master’s money in that hole. 19“After a long time the master came home. The master asked the servants what they did with his money. 20The servant that got five bags of money brought five more bags of money to the master. The servant said, ‘Master, you trusted me to care for five bags of money. So I used your five bags of money to earn five more.’ 21“The master answered, ‘You did right. You are a good servant that can be trusted. You did well with that small amount of money. So I will let you care for much greater things. Come and share my happiness with me.’ 22“Then the servant that got two bags of money came to the master. The servant said, ‘Master, you gave me two bags of money to care for. So I used your two bags of money to earn two more.’ 23“The master answered, ‘You did right. You are a good servant that can be trusted. You did well with a small amount of money. So I will let you care for much greater things. Come and share my happiness with me.’ 24“Then the servant that got one bag of money came to the master. The servant said, ‘Master, I knew that you were a very hard

hypocrites Bad people that act like they are good.
bridegroom A man that is getting married.
Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
bags of money Literally, “talents.” A talent was about 60 to 80 pounds of gold, silver or copper coins.
man. You harvest things you did not plant. You gather crops where you did not put any seed. So I was afraid. I went and hid your money in the ground. Here is the one bag of money you gave me.'

So I was afraid. I went and hid your money in the ground. Here is the one bag of money you gave me.'

26"The master answered, ‘You are a bad and lazy servant! You say you knew that I harvest things I did not plant, and that I gather crops where I did not put any seed. So you should have put my money in the bank. Then, when I came home, I would get my money back. And I would also get the interest that my money earned.’

27So the master told his other servants, ‘Take the one bag of money from that servant and give it to the servant that has ten bags of money. Every person that uses what he has will get more. That person will have much more than he needs. But the person that does not use what he has will have everything taken away from him.’

28Then the master said, ‘Throw that useless servant outside, into the darkness! In that place people will cry and grind their teeth with pain.’

The Son of Man Will Judge All People

31“The Son of Man will come again. He will come with great glory. All his angels will come with him. He will be king and sit on his great throne. All the people of the world will be gathered before the Son of Man. Then the Son of Man will separate all people into two groups. This is like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. The Son of Man will put the sheep (good people) on his right and the goats (bad people) on his left.

34"Then the king will say to those good people on his right, ‘Come. My Father has given you great blessings. Come and get the kingdom God promised you. That kingdom has been prepared for you since the world was made. You can have this kingdom, because I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you invited me into your home. I was without clothes, and you gave me something to wear. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you came to visit me.’

37"Then the good people will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food? When did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you alone and away from home and invite you into our home? When did we see you without clothes and give you something to wear? When did we see you sick or in prison and care for you?’

40 "Then the king will answer, ‘I tell you the truth. Anything you did for any of my people here, you also did for me.’

41 "Then the king will say to those bad people on his left, ‘Go away from me. God has already decided that you will be punished. Go into the fire that burns forever. That fire was prepared for the devil and his angels. You must go away, because I was hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you did not invite me into your home. I was without clothes, and you gave me nothing to wear. I was sick and in prison, and you did not care for me.’

44 "Then those people will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty? When did we see you alone and away from home? Or when did we see you without clothes or sick or in prison? When did we see these things and not help you?’

45 "Then the king will answer, ‘I tell you the truth. Anything you refused to do for any of my people here, you refused to do for me.’

46 "Then those bad people will go away. They will have punishment forever. But the good people will go and have life forever.’

The Jewish Leaders Plan to Kill Jesus

(Mk. 14:1–2; Lk. 22:1–2; Jn. 11:45–53)

After Jesus finished saying all these things, he said to his followers, “You know that the day after tomorrow is Passover. On that day the Son of Man will be given to his enemies to be killed on a cross.”

any of my people here Literally, “one of the least of these brothers of mine.”

Passover Important Jewish holy day. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.
Then the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders had a meeting at the palace where the high priest* lived. The high priest’s name was Caiaphas. In the meeting, they tried to find a way to arrest Jesus without the people seeing it. They planned to arrest Jesus and kill him. The men in the meeting said, “We cannot arrest Jesus during Passover.* We don’t want the people to become angry and cause a riot.”

A Woman Does Something Special
(Mk. 14:3–9; Jn. 12:1–8)

6Jesus was in Bethany. He was at the house of Simon the leper.* 7While Jesus was there, a woman came to him. She had an alabaster* jar filled with very expensive perfume. The woman poured this perfume on Jesus’ head while Jesus was eating. 8The followers saw the woman do this and became upset at the woman. The followers asked, “Why waste that perfume? 9That perfume could be sold for much money and the money could be given to poor people.”

But Jesus knew what happened. Jesus said, “Why are you troubling this woman? She did a very good thing for me. 11You will always have poor people with you. But you will not always have me. 12This woman poured perfume on my body to prepare me for burial after I die. 13I tell you the truth. The Good News* will be told to people in all the world. And in every place where the Good News is told, the story of what this woman did will also be told. And people will remember her.”

Judas Becomes an Enemy of Jesus
(Mk. 14:10–11; Lk. 22:3–6)

14Then one of the twelve followers went to talk to the leading priests. This was the follower named Judas Iscariot. Judas said, “I will give you Jesus. What will you pay me for doing this?” The priests gave Judas 30 silver coins. After that time Judas waited for the best time to give Jesus to the priests.

Jesus Eats the Passover Meal

On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread,* the followers came to Jesus. The followers said, “We will prepare everything for you to eat the Passover* meal. Where do you want us to have the meal?”

Jesus answered, “Go into the city. Go to a man I know. Tell him that the teacher says, ‘The chosen time is near. I will have the Passover* meal with my followers at your house.’” The followers obeyed and did the thing Jesus told them to do. They prepared the Passover meal.

In the evening Jesus was at the table with the twelve followers. They were all eating. Then Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. One of you twelve here will soon give me to my enemies.”

The followers were very sad to hear this. Each follower said to Jesus, “Lord, surely I am not the one!”

Jesus answered, “The man that has dipped his hand into the same bowl with me is the person that will be against me. The Son of Man* will go {and die}. The Scriptures* say this will happen. But it will be very bad for the person that gives the Son of Man {to be killed}. It would be better for that person if he were never born.”

Then Judas said to Jesus, “Teacher, surely I will not be against you!” (Judas is the one that would give Jesus to his enemies.) Jesus answered, “Yes, it is you.”

The Lord’s Supper
(Mk. 14:22–26; Lk. 22:15–20; 1 Cor 11:23–25)

While they were eating, Jesus took some bread. Jesus thanked God for the bread and divided it. He gave the bread to his followers.

Festival of Unleavened Bread An important Jewish holiday week. In the Old Testament it began the day after Passover, but by this time the two holidays had become one.

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
Jesus said, “Take this bread and eat it. This bread is my body.”

27 Then Jesus took a cup of wine. Jesus thanked God for it and gave it to the followers. Jesus said, “Every one of you drink this. 28 This wine is my blood. My blood (death) begins the new agreement [from God to his people]. This blood is given for many people to forgive their sins. 29 I tell you this: I will not drink this wine again until that day when we are together in my Father’s kingdom and the wine is new. Then I will drink it again with you.”

30 All the followers sang a song. Then they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

**Jesus Says His Followers Will Leave Him**


31 Jesus told the followers, “Tonight you will lose your faith because of me. It is written [in the Scriptures]*:

‘I will kill the shepherd,
and the sheep will run away.’

Zechariah 13:7

32 But [after I die], I will rise from death. Then I will go into Galilee. I will be there before you go there.”

33 Peter answered, “All the other followers may lose their faith because of you. But I will never lose my faith.”

34 Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth. Tonight you will say you don’t know me. You will say this three times before the rooster crows.”

35 But Peter answered, “I will never say that I don’t know you! I will even die with you!” And all the other followers said the same thing.

**Jesus Prays Alone**

(Mk. 14:32–42; Lk. 22:39–46)

36 Then Jesus went with his followers to a place called Gethsemane. Jesus said to his followers, “Sit here while I go there and pray.”

37 Jesus told Peter and the two sons of Zebedee to come with him. Then Jesus began to be very sad and troubled. 38 Jesus said to Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, “My soul is full of sorrow. My heart is breaking with sadness. Stay awake with me and wait.”

39 Then Jesus walked a little farther away from them. Jesus fell to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, don’t give me this cup* of suffering. But do what you want, not what I want.” 40 Then Jesus went back to his followers. Jesus found his followers sleeping. Jesus said to Peter, “You men could not stay awake with me for one hour? 41 Stay awake and pray for strength against temptation. Your spirit wants to do what is right. But your body is weak.”

42 Then Jesus went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this painful thing to be taken from me, and if I must do it, then I pray that what you want will be done.”

43 Then Jesus went back to the followers. Again Jesus found them sleeping. Their eyes were very tired. 44 So Jesus left them and went away one more time and prayed. This third time he prayed, he said the same thing.

45 Then Jesus went back to the followers and said, “You are still sleeping and resting? The time has come for the Son of Man* to be given to sinful people. 46 Stand up! We must go. Here comes the man that is giving me to my enemies.”

**Jesus Is Arrested**

(Mk. 14:43–50; Lk. 22:47–53; Jn. 18:3–12)

47 While Jesus was still speaking, Judas came there. Judas was one of the twelve followers. Judas had many people with him. These people were sent from the leading priests and the older leaders of the people. These people with Judas had swords and clubs. 48 Judas* planned to do something to show the people which man was Jesus. Judas said, “The man I kiss is Jesus. Arrest him.” 49 So Judas went to Jesus and said, “Hello, teacher!” Then Judas kissed Jesus.

**Mount of Olives** A hill east of the city of Jerusalem where a person could look down into the temple area.

**Scriptures** Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

cup Jesus is talking about the bad things that will happen to him. Accepting these things will be very hard, like drinking a cup of something that tastes very bad.

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Judas Literally, “the one that betrayed him.”

Jesus answered, “Friend, do the thing you came to do.”

Then the men came and grabbed Jesus and arrested him. 51When that happened, one of the followers with Jesus grabbed his sword and pulled it out. This follower hit the servant of the high priest* with the sword and cut off his ear.

52Jesus said to the man, “Put your sword back in its place. People that use swords will be killed with swords. 53Surely you know I could ask my Father and he would give me more than twelve armies of angels. 54But this thing must happen this way so that it will be like the Scriptures* said.”

55Then Jesus said to all the people, “You came to get me with swords and clubs like I am a criminal. Every day I sat in the temple* area teaching. You did not arrest me there. 56But all these things have happened so that it will be like the prophets* wrote.” Then all of Jesus’ followers left him and ran away.

Jesus Before the Jewish Leaders

57The men that arrested Jesus led him to the house of Caiaphas the high priest.* The teachers of the law and the older Jewish leaders were gathered there. 58Peter followed Jesus, but he did not come near Jesus. Peter followed Jesus to the yard of the high priest’s house. He went in and sat with the guards. Peter wanted to see what would happen to Jesus.

59The leading priests and the Jewish council tried to find something against Jesus so that they could kill him. They tried to find people to lie and say that Jesus had done wrong. 60Many people came and told false things about Jesus. But the council could find no real reason to kill Jesus. Then two people came 61and said, “This man (Jesus) said, ‘I can destroy the temple* of God and build it again in three days.’”

62Then the high priest* stood and said to Jesus, “These people have said things against you. Do you have something to say about these charges against you? Are these people telling the truth?” 63But Jesus said nothing.

Again the high priest* said to Jesus, “You are now under oath. I command you by the power of the living God to tell us the truth. Tell us, are you the Christ,* the Son of God?”

64Jesus answered, “Yes, I am. But I tell you, in the future you will see the Son of Man* sitting at the right side of God. And you will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven.”

65When the high priest* heard this, he was very angry. He tore his clothes and said, “This man has said things that are against God! We don’t need any more witnesses. You all heard him say these things against God. 66What do you think?”

The Jewish leaders answered, “He is guilty, and he must die.”

67Then they spit in Jesus’ face. And they hit him with their fists. Other people slapped Jesus. 68They said, “Show us that you are a prophet,* Christ!* Tell us who hit you!”

Peter Is Afraid to Say He Knows Jesus

69At that time, Peter was sitting in the yard. A servant girl came to Peter. The girl said, “You were with Jesus, that man from Galilee.” 70But Peter said that he was never with Jesus. He said this to all the people there. Peter said, “I don’t know what you are talking about.”

71Then Peter left the yard. At the gate, another girl saw him. The girl said to the people there, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.”

72Again, Peter said that he was never with Jesus. Peter said, “I promise to God that I don’t know what you are talking about.”

73A short time later, some people standing there went to Peter and said, “We know you are one of those men that followed Jesus. We know this because of the way you talk.”

74Then Peter began to curse. He said strongly, “I promise to God that I don’t know

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high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.
Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
prophet A prophet could say things that most people could not know.
this man Jesus!” After Peter said this, a rooster crowed. 75Then Peter remembered what Jesus had told him: “Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you don’t know me.” Then Peter went outside and cried bitterly.

**Jesus Is Taken to Governor Pilate**
(Mk. 15:1; Lk. 23:1–2; Jn. 18:28–32)

27Early the next morning, all the leading priests and older leaders of the people decided to kill Jesus. 2They tied Jesus with chains. Then they led him to Pilate the governor. They gave Jesus to Pilate.

**Judas Kills Himself**
(Acts 1:18–19)
3Judas saw that they had decided to kill Jesus. Judas was the one that gave Jesus to his enemies. When Judas saw what happened, he was very sorry for what he did. So he took the 30 silver coins back to the priests and the leaders. 4Judas said, “I sinned. I gave you an innocent man to be killed.”

The Jewish leaders answered, “We don’t care! That’s a problem for you, not us.”
3So Judas threw the money into the temple.* Then Judas left that place and hanged himself.

6The leading priests picked up the silver coins in the temple. They said, “Our law does not allow us to keep this money with the temple money, because this money has paid for a man’s death.” 7So they decided to use the money to buy a field called Potter’s Field. This field would be a place to bury people that died while visiting in Jerusalem. 8That is why that field is still called the Field of Blood.
9So the thing happened that Jeremiah the prophet* said:

“They took 30 silver coins. That was how much the Jewish people decided to pay for his life. 10They used those 30 silver coins to buy the potter’s field, like the Lord commanded me.”*

**Governor Pilate Questions Jesus**
(Mk. 15:2–5; Lk. 23:3–5; Jn. 18:33–38)
11Jesus stood before Pilate the governor. Pilate asked him questions. He said, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

Jesus answered, “Yes, I am.”
12When the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders accused Jesus, he said nothing.
13So Pilate said to Jesus, “You hear these people accusing you of all these things. Why don’t you answer?”
14But Jesus said nothing to answer Pilate. Pilate was very surprised at this.

**Pilate Tries but Fails to Free Jesus**
15Every year at the Passover* time the governor would free one person from the prison. This was always a person that the people wanted to be made free. 16At that time there was a man in prison who was known to be very bad. His name was Barabbas.* 17All the people gathered at Pilate’s house. Pilate asked the people, “I will free one man for you. Which man do you want me to free: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Christ*?” 18Pilate knew that the people gave Jesus to him because the people were jealous.
19Pilate said these things while he was sitting in the place for judging. While he was sitting there, his wife sent a message to him. The message said, “Don’t do anything with that man (Jesus). He is not guilty. And today I had a dream about him, and it troubled me very much.”
20But the leading priests and older Jewish leaders told the people to ask for Barabbas to be made free and for Jesus to be killed.
21Pilate said, “I have Barabbas and Jesus. Which do you want me to make free for you?” The people answered, “Barabbas!”
22Pilate asked, “So what should I do with Jesus, the one called the Christ*?”
All the people answered, “Kill him on a cross!”

**Passover** Important Jewish holy day. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

**Barabbas** In some Greek copies the name is Jesus Barabbas.

**Christ** The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
23Pilate asked, “Why do you want me to kill him? What wrong has he done?”

But all the people shouted louder, “Kill him on a cross!”

24Pilate saw that he could do nothing to make the people change. And he saw that the people were becoming upset. So Pilate took some water and washed his hands* so that all the people could see. Then Pilate said, “I am not guilty of this man’s death. You are the ones that are doing it!”

25All the people answered, “We will be responsible for his death. We accept for ourselves and for our children any punishment for his death.”

26Then Pilate freed Barabbas. Pilate told some soldiers to beat Jesus with whips. Then Pilate gave Jesus to the soldiers to be killed on a cross.

Pilate’s Soldiers Tease Jesus
(Mk. 15:16–20; Jn. 19:2–3)

27Then Pilate’s soldiers brought Jesus into the governor’s palace. All the soldiers gathered around Jesus. 28The soldiers took off Jesus’ clothes and put a red robe on him. 29Then the soldiers used thorny branches to make a crown. They put this crown of thorns on Jesus’ head, and they put a stick in his right hand. Then the soldiers bowed before Jesus and teased him. They said, “Hello, king of the Jews!” 30The soldiers spit on Jesus. Then they took his stick and hit him on the head many times. 31After they finished teasing Jesus, the soldiers took off the robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led Jesus away to be killed on a cross.

Jesus Is Killed on a Cross
(Mk. 15:21–32; Lk. 23:26–39; Jn. 19:17–19)

32The soldiers were going out of the city with Jesus. The soldiers forced another man there to carry the cross for Jesus. This man’s name was Simon from Cyrene. 33They came to the place called Golgotha. (Golgotha means “The Place of the Skull.”) 34At Golgotha, the soldiers gave Jesus wine to drink. This wine was mixed with gall.* Jesus tasted the wine but refused to drink it. 35The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. Then the soldiers gambled with dice to decide who would get Jesus’ clothes. 36The soldiers sat there and continued watching Jesus. 37The soldiers put a sign above Jesus’ head with the charge against him written on it. The sign said: “THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.” 38Two robbers were nailed to crosses beside Jesus. One robber was put beside Jesus on the right and the other was put on the left. 39People walked by and said bad things to Jesus. People shook their heads 40and said, “You said you could destroy the temple and build it again in three days. So save yourself! Come down from that cross, if you are really the Son of God!”

41The leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the older Jewish leaders were also there. These men teased Jesus the same as the other people. 42They said, “He saved other people. But he can’t save himself! People say he is the king of Israel (the Jews). If he is the king, then he should come down now from the cross. Then we will believe in him. 43He trusted God. So let God save him now, if God really wants him. He himself said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” 44And in the same way, the robbers that were being killed on crosses beside Jesus also said bad things to him.

Jesus Dies
(Mk. 15:33–41; Lk. 23:44–49; Jn. 19:28–30)

45At noon the whole country became dark. This darkness continued for three hours. 46At about three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” This means, “My God, my God, why have you left me alone?”

47Some of the people standing there heard this. The people said, “He is calling Elijah.”

48Quickly one of the people ran and got a sponge. That person filled the sponge with vinegar and tied the sponge to a stick. Then he

* washed his hands* Pilate did this as a sign to show that he wanted no part in what the people did.

* gall* Probably a drink of wine mixed with drugs to relieve pain.

“My God ... alone” Quote from Ps. 22:1.

“He is calling Elijah” The word for “My God” (Eli in Hebrew or Eloï in Aramaic) sounded to the people like the name of Elijah, a famous man that spoke for God about 850 B.C.
used the stick to give the sponge to Jesus to drink from it. 49 But the other people said, “Don’t bother him (Jesus). We want to see if Elijah will come to save him.”

50 Again Jesus cried with a loud voice. Then he died.

51 When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple was torn into two pieces. The tear started at the top and tore all the way to the bottom. Also, the earth shook and rocks were broken. 52 All the graves opened, and many of God’s people that had died were raised from death. 53 Those people came out of the graves. After Jesus was raised from death, those people went into the holy city (Jerusalem), and many people saw them.

54 The army officer and the soldiers guarding Jesus saw this earthquake and everything that happened. They were very afraid and said, “He really was the Son of God!”

55 Many women were standing away from the cross, watching. These were the women that followed Jesus from Galilee to care for him. 56 Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of James and John* were there.

Jesus Is Buried
(Mk. 15:42–47; Lk. 23:50–56; Jn. 19:38–42)

57 That evening a rich man named Joseph came to Jerusalem. Joseph was a follower of Jesus from the town of Arimathea. 58 Joseph went to Pilate and asked to have Jesus’ body. Pilate gave orders for the soldiers to give Jesus’ body to Joseph. 59 Then Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a new linen cloth. 60 Joseph put Jesus’ body in a new tomb (grave) that Joseph had dug in a wall of rock. Then he closed the tomb by rolling a very large stone to cover the entrance. After he did these things, Joseph went away. 61 Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary were sitting near the tomb.

The Tomb of Jesus Is Guarded

62 That day was the day called Preparation day.* The next day, the leading priests and the Pharisees* went to Pilate. 63 They said, “Sir, we remember that while that liar was still alive he said, ‘After three days I will rise from death.’ 64 So give the order for the tomb to be guarded well until after three days. His followers might come and try to steal the body. Then they could tell the people that he has risen from death. That lie will be even worse than what they said about him before.”

65 Pilate said, “Take some soldiers and go guard the tomb the best way you know.” 66 So they all went to the tomb and made it safe from thieves. They did this by sealing the stone in the entrance and putting soldiers there to guard it.

News That Jesus Has Risen from Death
(Mk. 16:1–8; Lk. 24:1–12; Jn. 20:1–10)

28 The day after the Sabbath day* was the first day of the week. At dawn on the first day, Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary went to look at the tomb.*

2 At that time there was a very strong earthquake. An angel of the Lord came from the sky. The angel went to the tomb and rolled the stone away from the entrance. Then the angel sat on the stone. 3 The angel was shining very bright like lightning. His clothes were white like snow. 4 The soldiers guarding the tomb were very afraid of the angel. They shook with fear and became like dead men.

5 The angel said to the women, “Don’t be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus, the one that was killed on the cross. 6 But Jesus is not here. He has risen from death, like he said he would. Come and see the place where his body was. 7 And go quickly and tell his followers. Tell them: ‘Jesus has risen from death. He is going into Galilee. He will be there before you. You will see him there.’” Then the angel said, “Now I have told you.”

Preparation day Friday, the day before the Sabbath day.
Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.
tomb A grave dug in a wall of rock.
Matthew 28:8–20

8 So the women left the tomb* quickly. They were afraid, but they were also very happy. They ran to tell his followers what happened. 9 While the women were running to tell the followers, Jesus was standing there before them. Jesus said, “Hello!” The women went to Jesus. They held him at his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to the women, “Don’t be afraid. Go and tell my brothers (followers) to go to Galilee. They will see me there.”

Report to the Jewish Leaders

11 The women went to tell the followers. At the same time, some of the soldiers that were guarding the tomb* went into the city. They went to tell the leading priests everything that happened. 12 Then the priests met with the older Jewish leaders and made a plan. They paid the soldiers much money to tell a lie. 13 They said to the soldiers, “Tell the people that Jesus’ followers came during the night and stole the body while you were sleeping. 14 If the governor hears about this, we will satisfy him and save you from trouble.” 15 So the soldiers kept the money and obeyed the priests. And that story is still spread among the Jews even today.

Jesus Talks to His Followers

(Mk. 16:14–18; Lk. 24:36–49; Jn. 20:19–23; Acts 1:6–8)

16 The eleven followers went to Galilee. They went to the mountain where Jesus told them to go. 17 On the mountain the followers saw Jesus. They worshiped him. But some of the followers did not believe that it was really Jesus. 18 So Jesus came to them and said, “All authority (power) in heaven and on earth is given to me. 19 So go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptize* them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.* 20 Teach those people to obey everything that I have told you. You can be sure that I will be with you always. I will continue with you until the end of the world.”

*tomb: A grave dug in a wall of rock.

Baptize: A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

The Coming of Jesus
(Mt. 3:1–12; Lk. 3:1–9, 15–17; Jn. 1:19–28)

The Good News* about Jesus Christ, the Son of God,* begins 2 with what the prophet* Isaiah said would happen. Isaiah wrote:

“Listen! I (God) will send my helper* ahead of you.
He will prepare the way for you.”

Isaiah 40:3

“‘There is a person shouting in the desert:
Prepare the way for the Lord.
Make his paths straight.’”

Malachi 3:1

So John the Baptist came and was baptizing people in the desert area. He told the people to be baptized* to show they wanted to change their lives. Then their sins would be forgiven. 5 All the people from Judea and Jerusalem went out to John. These people told the sins they had done, and then they were baptized by John in the Jordan River.

6 John wore clothes made from camel’s hair. John had a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts* and wild honey. 7 This is what John told the people: “There is a person coming later who is greater than I am. I am not good enough to kneel down and untie his

shoes. 8 I baptize you with water. But that person who is coming will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”*

Jesus Is Baptized
(Mt. 3:13–17; Lk. 3:21–22)

9 At that time Jesus came from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the place where John was. John baptized* Jesus in the Jordan River.

10 While Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw the sky open. The Holy Spirit* came down to Jesus like a dove. 11 A voice came from heaven and said: “You are my Son and I love you. I am very pleased with you.”

Jesus Goes Away to Be Tempted
(Mt. 4:1–11; Lk. 4:1–13)

12 Then the Spirit sent Jesus into the desert alone. 13 Jesus was in the desert 40 days. He was there with the wild animals. While Jesus was in the desert, he was tempted by Satan 1 (the devil). 2 Then angels came and helped Jesus.

Jesus Chooses Some Followers
(Mt. 4:12–22; Lk. 4:14–15; 5:1–11)

14 After this, John was put into prison. Jesus went into Galilee and told people the Good News from God. 15 Jesus said, “The right time is now here. The kingdom of God is near. Change your hearts and lives and believe the Good News!”

16 Jesus was walking by Lake Galilee. Jesus saw Simon* and Simon’s brother, Andrew. These two men were fishermen, and they were

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
the Son of God Some Greek copies omit these words.
prophet A person that spoke for God. Sometimes a prophet told things that would happen in the future.
helper Literally, “messenger.”
baptize(d) A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.
locusts Insects like grasshoppers. The law of Moses said that locusts could be eaten. See Lev. 11:21–22.

Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
Simon Simon’s other name was Peter.
throwing a net into the lake to catch fish. 17Jesus said to them, “Come and follow me. I will make you a different kind of fishermen. You will work to gather people, not fish.” 18So Simon and Andrew left their nets and followed Jesus.

19Jesus continued walking by Lake Galilee. He saw two more brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in their boat, preparing their nets to catch fish. 20Their father Zebedee and the men that worked for him were in the boat with the brothers. When Jesus saw the brothers he told them to come. They left their father and followed Jesus.

Jesus Heals a Man That Had an Evil Spirit
(Lk. 4:31–37)

21 Jesus and his followers went to Capernaum.* On the Sabbath day* Jesus went into the synagogue* and taught the people. 22The people there were amazed at Jesus’ teaching. Jesus did not teach like their teachers of the law. Jesus taught like a person that had authority (power). 23While Jesus was in the synagogue, a man was there that had an evil spirit, from the devil, inside him. The man shouted, 24“Jesus of Nazareth! What do you want with us? Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are—God’s Holy One!” 25Jesus said strongly, “Be quiet! Come out of the man!” 26The evil spirit made the man shake. Then the spirit made a loud noise and came out of the man. 27The people were amazed. They asked each other, “What is happening here? This man is teaching something new. And he teaches with authority (power)! He even gives commands to evil spirits, and the spirits obey him.” 28So the news about Jesus spread quickly everywhere in the area of Galilee.

Jesus Preparers to Tell the Good News
(Lk. 4:42–44)

35The next morning, Jesus woke up very early. Jesus left the house while it was still dark. He went to a place to be alone and pray. 36Later, Simon* and his friends went to look for Jesus. 37They found Jesus and said, “All the people are looking for you!” 38Jesus answered, “We should go to another place. We can go to other towns around here. Then I can tell people God’s message in those places also. That is why I came.” 39So Jesus traveled everywhere in Galilee. He spoke in the synagogues.* And he forced demons* to leave people.

Jesus Heals a Sick Man
(Mt. 8:1–4; Lk. 5:12–16)

40A man that had leprosy* came to Jesus. The man bowed on his knees and begged Jesus, “You have the power to heal me if you want.” 41Jesus felt sorry for the man. So Jesus touched the man and said, “I want to heal you. Be healed!” 42Immediately the leprosy disappeared, and he was healed. 43Jesus told the man to go. But Jesus warned him strongly. Jesus said, 44“Don’t tell any

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Capernaum  A town in Galilee where Jesus taught.
Sabbath day  Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.
synagogue(s)  Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.
Simon  Simon’s other name was Peter.
demon(s)  Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
who he was  The demons knew that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.
leprosy  A very bad skin disease.
person about what I did for you. But go and show yourself to the priest. And offer a gift to God because you have been healed. Offer the gift that Moses commanded.* This will show people that you are healed." 45The man left there and told all the people he saw that Jesus had healed him. So the news about Jesus spread. And that is why Jesus could not enter a town if people saw him. Jesus stayed in places where people did not live. But people came from all the towns to the places where Jesus was.

Jesus Heals a Crippled Man
(Mt. 9:1–8; Lk. 5:17–26)

2 A few days later, Jesus came back to Capernaum.* The news spread that Jesus was back home. 2 Many, many people gathered to hear Jesus speak. The house was full. There was no place to stand, not even outside the door. Jesus was teaching these people. 3 Some people brought a paralyzed (crippled) man to Jesus. Four men were carrying the paralyzed man. 4 But they could not bring the man to Jesus because the house was full of people. So the men went to the roof above Jesus and made a hole in the roof. Then they lowered the mat with the paralyzed man on it. 5 Jesus saw that these men had much faith. So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “Young man, your sins are forgiven.”

6 Some of the teachers of the law were sitting there. They saw what Jesus did, and they said to themselves, “Why does this man say things like that? He is saying things that are against God. Only God can forgive sins.”

8 Jesus knew that these teachers of the law were thinking those things about him. So Jesus said to them, “Why do you have these questions in your minds? 9–10 The Son of Man* has power on earth to forgive sins. But how can I prove this to you? Maybe you are thinking it was easy for me to say to the crippled man, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’ There is no proof that it really happened. But what if I say to the man, ‘Stand up. Take your bed and walk’? Then you will be able to see if I really have this power or not.” So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, 11 “I tell you, stand up. Take your mat and go home.” 12 The paralyzed man stood up. He took his mat and walked out of the room. All the people could see him. The people were amazed and praised God. They said, “This is the most amazing thing we have ever seen!”

Levi (Matthew) Follows Jesus
(Mt. 9:9–13; Lk. 5:27–32)

13 Jesus went to the lake again. Many people followed him there. So Jesus taught them. 14 Jesus was walking beside the lake, and he saw a man named Levi, son of Alphaeus. Levi was sitting at his place for collecting taxes. Jesus said to him, “Follow me.” Then Levi stood up and followed Jesus.

15 Later that day, Jesus ate at Levi’s house. There were many tax collectors* and other bad people eating there with Jesus and his followers. There were many of these people that followed Jesus. 16 The teachers of the law (they were Pharisees*) saw Jesus eating with these tax collectors and other bad people. They asked Jesus’ followers, “Why does he (Jesus) eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

17 Jesus heard this, and he said to them, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor. It is the sick people that need a doctor. I did not come to invite good people. I came to invite sinners.”

Jesus Is Not like Other Religious Leaders
(Mt. 9:14–17; Lk. 5:33–39)

18 The followers of John* and the Pharisees* were fasting. Some people came to Jesus and said, “John’s followers fast, and the followers of the Pharisees fast. But your followers don’t fast. Why?”

19 Jesus answered, “When there is a wedding, the friends of the bridegroom* are not sad while he is with them. They cannot be sad while their Lord is with them. When the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will be sad.”

**Moses commanded** See Lev. 14:1–32.
**Capernaum** A town in Galilee where Jesus taught.
**Son of Man** A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

tax collector(s) Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the other Jews hated them.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

John John the Baptist, who preached to the Jews about Christ’s coming. See Mk. 1:4–8.

fasting, fast To fast is to live without food for a time of prayer or mourning.

bridegroom A man that is getting married.
fast* (be sad) while the bridegroom is still there. 20But the time will come when the bridegroom will leave them. The friends are sad when the bridegroom leaves. Then they will fast.

21“When a person sews a patch over a hole on an old coat, that person never uses a piece of cloth that is not yet shrunk. If he does, the patch will shrink and pull away from the coat. Then the hole will be worse. 22Also, people never pour new wine into old wine bags.* Why? Because the new wine will break the bags, and the wine will be ruined with the wine bags. People always put new wine into new wine bags.”

Jesus Is Lord over the Sabbath Day
(Mt. 12:1–8; Lk. 6:1–5)

23On the Sabbath day,* Jesus was walking through some grain fields. Jesus’ followers were walking with him. The followers picked some grain to eat. 24The Pharisees* saw this and said to Jesus, “Why are your followers doing that? It is against the Jewish law to do that on the Sabbath day.”

25Jesus answered, “You have read what David* did when he and the people with him were hungry and needed food. 26It was during the time of Abiathar the high priest.* David went into God’s house and ate the bread that was offered to God. And the law of Moses says that only priests can eat that bread. David also gave some of the bread to those people with him.”

27Then Jesus said to the Pharisees,* “The Sabbath day* was made to help people. People were not made to be ruled by the Sabbath day. 28So the Son of Man* is Lord (master) of every day, even the Sabbath.”

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fasting, fast To fast is to live without food for a time of prayer or mourning.
wine bags Animal skins used for holding wine.
Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.
Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.
high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.
Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

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Jesus Heals a Man on the Sabbath Day
(Mt. 12:9–14; Lk. 6:6–11)

3Another time Jesus went into the synagogue.* In the synagogue there was a man with a crippled hand. 3Some Jews there were watching Jesus closely. They were waiting to see if he would heal the man on a Sabbath day.* They wanted to see Jesus do something wrong so that they could accuse him. 3Jesus said to the man with the crippled hand, “Stand up here so that all the people can see you.”

4Then Jesus asked the people, “Which thing is right to do on the Sabbath day: to do good, or to do evil? Is it right to save a life or to destroy one?” The people said nothing to answer Jesus.

5Jesus looked at the people. He was angry. But he felt very sad because they were stubborn. Jesus said to the man, “Let me see your hand.” The man put his hand out for Jesus, and it was healed. 6Then the Pharisees* left and made plans with the Herodians* about a way to kill Jesus.

Many People Follow Jesus

7Jesus went away with his followers to the lake. Many people from Galilee followed him. 8Many, many people also came from Judea, from Jerusalem, from Idumea, from the area across the Jordan River, and from the area around Tyre and Sidon.* These people came because they heard about all the things Jesus was doing. 9Jesus saw the many people. So he told his followers to get a small boat and make it ready for him. Jesus wanted the boat so that the many, many people would not push against him. 10Jesus had healed many people. So all the sick people were pushing toward him to touch him. 11Some people had evil spirits from the devil inside them. When the evil spirits saw Jesus, they bowed before him and shouted, “You are the Son of God!” 12But Jesus commanded the spirits strongly not to tell people who he was.
**MARK 3:13–4:8**

**Jesus Chooses His Twelve Apostles**  
(Mt. 10:1–4; Lk. 6:12–16)

13Then Jesus went up on a hill. Jesus told some men to come to him. These were the men Jesus wanted. These men went up to Jesus. 14Jesus chose twelve men and called them apostles.* Jesus wanted these twelve men to be with him, and he wanted to send them to other places to tell people *God’s message. 15And Jesus wanted these men to have the power to force demons* out of people. 16These are the names of the twelve men Jesus chose: Simon (Jesus gave him the name Peter); James and John, the sons of Zebedee (Jesus gave them the name Boanerges. This name means “Sons of Thunder.”); Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alpheaus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot,* 19and Judas Iscariot. Judas is the one that gave Jesus *to his enemies.  

**Jesus’ Power Is from God**  
(Mt. 12:22–32; Lk. 11:14–23; 12:10)

20Then Jesus went home. But again many people gathered there. There were so many people that Jesus and his followers could not eat. 21Jesus’ family heard about all these things. They went to get him because people said that Jesus was crazy. 22And the teachers of the law from Jerusalem said, “Beelzebul (the devil) is living inside him (Jesus)! He uses power from the ruler of demons* to force demons out of people.” 23So Jesus called them together and talked to them using some stories. Jesus said, “Satan will not force his own demons* out of people. 24A kingdom that fights against itself cannot continue. 25And a family that is divided cannot succeed. 26And if Satan is against himself and fights against his own people, then he cannot continue. That would be the end of Satan. 27If a person wants to enter a strong man’s house and steal his things, first the person must tie the strong man. Then the person can steal the things from the strong man’s house.

**Jesus’ Followers Are His True Family**  
(Mt. 12:46–50; Lk. 8:19–21)

31Then Jesus’ mother and brothers came. They stood outside and sent a person in to tell Jesus to come out. 32Many people were sitting around Jesus. They said to him, “Your mother and brothers are waiting for you outside.” 33Jesus asked, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” 34Then Jesus looked at those people sitting around him. He said, “These people are my mother and my brothers! 35My true brother and sister and mother are those people that do the things God wants.”

**Story About a Farmer Planting Seed**  
(Mt. 13:1–9; Lk. 8:4–8)

4Another time Jesus began teaching by the lake. Many, many people gathered around Jesus. So Jesus got into a boat and went out on the lake. All the people stayed on the shore next to the water. 2Jesus taught the people from the boat. Jesus used many stories to teach them. He said, 3“Listen! A farmer went out to plant his seed. While the farmer was planting, some seed fell by the road. The birds came and ate all that seed. 5Some seed fell on rocky ground. The seed grew very fast there because the ground was not deep. 6But the sun rose and the plants were burned. The plants died because they did not have deep roots. 7Some seed fell among thorny weeds. The weeds grew and stopped the good plants from growing. So those plants did not make grain. 8Some other seed fell on good ground. In the good ground, the seed began to grow. It grew and made...
Then Jesus said, “You people that hear me, listen!”

Jesus Tells Why He Used Stories
(Mt. 13:10–17; Lk. 8:9–10)

10 Later, Jesus was away from the people. The twelve apostles* and Jesus’ other followers asked him about the stories.
11 Jesus said, “Only you can know the secret truth about the kingdom of God. But to those other people I tell everything by using stories.
12 I do this so that:
   ‘They will look and look, but never really see;
   they will listen and listen, but never understand.
   If they saw and understood, they might change and be forgiven.’
   Isaiah 6:9–10

Jesus Explains the Story About the Seed
(Mt. 13:18–23; Lk. 8:11–15)

13 Then Jesus said to the followers, “Do you understand this story? If you don’t, then how will you understand any story? 14 The farmer is like a person that plants God’s teaching in people. 15 Sometimes the teaching falls on the path. This is like some people. Those people hear the teaching of God. But Satan *(the devil)* comes and takes away the teaching that was planted in them. 16 Other people are like the seed planted on rocky ground. They hear the teaching and quickly and gladly accept it. 17 But those people don’t allow the teaching to go deep into their lives. They keep that teaching only a short time. When trouble or persecution* comes because of the teaching they accepted, they quickly quit. 18 Other people are like the seed planted among the thorny weeds. These people hear the teaching. 19 But then these things come into their lives: the worries of this life, the love of money, and wanting all kinds of other things. These things stop the teaching from growing. So that teaching does not make fruit* in the lives of those people. 20 Other people are like the seed planted on the good ground. They hear the teaching and accept it. Then they grow and make fruit—sometimes 30 times more, sometimes 60 times more, and sometimes 100 times more.”

You Must Use What You Have
(Lk. 8:16–18)

21 Then Jesus said to them, “Do you take a lamp and hide it under a bowl or under a bed? No! You put the lamp on a lamp table. 22 Everything that is hidden will be made clear. Every secret thing will be made known. 23 You people that hear me, listen!
24 Think carefully about the things you hear. The way you give is the way God will give to you. But God will give you more than you give. 25 The person that has something will receive more. But the person that does not have much will lose even the little amount he has.”

Jesus Uses a Story About Seed
(Mt. 13:31–32; 34–35; Lk. 13:18–19)

26 Then Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is like a man that plants seed in the ground. 27 The seed begins to grow. It grows night and day. It is not important if the man is sleeping or awake; the seed still grows. The man does not know how the seed grows. 28 Without any help, the ground grows grain. First the plant grows, then the head, and then all the grain in the head. 29 When the grain is ready, the man cuts it. This is the harvest time.”

The Kingdom Is Like a Mustard Seed

30 Then Jesus said, “What can I use to show you what the kingdom of God is like? What story can I use to explain it? 31 The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. The mustard seed is the smallest seed that you plant in the ground. 32 But when you plant this seed, it grows and becomes the largest of all the plants in your garden. It has branches that are very big. The wild birds can come and make nests there and be protected from the sun.”

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*apostles* The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

*persecution(s)* Being hurt or bothered by Christ’s enemies.

*fruit* The good things God wants his people to do.
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33Jesus used many stories like these to teach them. He taught them all that they could understand. 34Jesus always used stories to teach the people. But when Jesus and his followers were alone together, Jesus explained everything to them.

**The Followers See Jesus’ Power**
(Mt. 8:23–27; Lk. 8:22–25)

35That day, at evening, Jesus said to his followers, “Come with me across the lake.” 36Jesus and the followers left the people there. They went in the same boat that Jesus was already sitting in. There were also other boats with them. 37A very bad wind came on the lake. The waves were coming over the sides and into the boat. The boat was almost full of water. 38Jesus was inside the boat, sleeping with his head on a pillow. The followers went to him and woke him. They said, “Teacher, do you care about us? We will drown!”

39Jesus stood up and commanded the wind and the waves to stop. Jesus said, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind stopped and the lake became calm.

40Jesus said to his followers, “Why are you afraid? You still have no faith?”

41The followers were very afraid and asked each other, “What kind of man is this? Even the wind and the water obey him!”

**Jesus Frees a Man from Evil Spirits**
(Mt. 8:28–34; Lk. 8:26–39)

5Jesus and his followers went across the lake to the area where the Gerasene people lived. 2When Jesus got out of the boat, a man came to him from the caves where dead people are buried. This man had an evil spirit, from the devil, living inside of him. 3This man lived in the burial caves. No person could tie him. Even chains could not keep this man tied. 4Many times people had used chains to tie the man’s hands and feet. But the man broke the chains on his hands and feet. No person was strong enough to control him. 5Day and night the man walked around the burial caves and on the hills. The man would scream and cut himself with rocks.

6While Jesus was far away, the man saw him. The man ran to Jesus and bowed down before him. 7–8Jesus said to the man, “You evil spirit, come out of that man.” So the man shouted with a loud voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you to promise to God that you will not punish me!”

9Then Jesus asked the man, “What is your name?”

The man answered, “My name is Legion,* because there are many spirits inside me.”

10The spirits inside the man begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of that area.

11A large herd of pigs was eating on a hill near there. 12The evil spirits begged Jesus, “Send us to the pigs. Let us go into them.”

13So Jesus allowed them to do this. The evil spirits left the man and went into the pigs. Then the herd of pigs ran down the hill and into the lake. All the pigs were drowned. There were about 2,000 pigs in that herd.

14The men that had the work of caring for the pigs ran away. The men ran to the town and to the farms. They told all the people what happened. The people went out to see what happened. 15The people came to Jesus. They saw the man that had the many evil spirits. The man was sitting and was wearing clothes. He was in his right mind again. The people were afraid. 16Some people were there and saw what Jesus did. These people told the other people what happened to the man that had the demons* living in him. And they also told about the pigs. 17Then the people began to beg Jesus to leave their area.

18Jesus was preparing to leave in the boat. The man that was freed from the demons begged to go with Jesus.

19But Jesus did not allow the man to go. Jesus said, “Go home to your family and friends. Tell them about all the things the Lord did for you. Tell them that the Lord was good to you.”

20So the man left and told the people in the Ten Towns* about the great things Jesus did for him. All the people were amazed.

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*Legion This name means very many. A legion was about 5,000 men in the Roman army.

demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

Ten Towns Greek, “Decapolis,” an area on the east side of Lake Galilee. It once had ten main towns.
Jesus went in the boat back across to the other side of the lake. There, many people gathered around him by the lake. A leader of the synagogue* came to that place. His name was Jairus. Jairus saw Jesus and bowed down before him. Jairus begged and begged Jesus. He said, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her. Then she will be healed and will live.”

So Jesus went with Jairus. Many people followed Jesus. They were pushing very close around him.

A woman was there among the people. This woman had been bleeding for the past twelve years. The woman suffered very much. Many doctors tried to help her. All the money she had was spent. But she was not improving. Her sickness was becoming worse.

The woman heard about Jesus. So she followed Jesus with the people and touched his coat. The woman thought, “If I can touch his clothes, that will be enough to heal me.”

When the woman touched his coat, her bleeding stopped. The woman felt that her body was healed from the suffering.

Jesus felt power go out from him. So he stopped and turned around. Then he asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

The followers said to Jesus, “There are many people pushing against you. But you ask, ‘Who touched me?’”

But Jesus continued looking for the person that touched him. The woman knew that she was healed. So she came and bowed at Jesus’ feet. The woman was shaking with fear. She told Jesus the whole story. Jesus said to the woman, “Dear woman, you are made well because you believed. Go in peace. You will have no more suffering.”

Jesus was still there speaking. Some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue* leader. The men said, “Your daughter is dead. There is now no need to bother the teacher (Jesus).”

Jesus did not care what the men said. Jesus said to the synagogue leader, “Don’t be afraid; only believe.”

Jesus let only Peter, James, and John the brother of James go with him. Jesus and these followers went to the house of Jairus, the synagogue* leader. Jesus saw many people there crying loudly. There was much confusion. Jesus entered the house and said to the people, “Why are you people crying and making so much noise? This child is not dead. She is only sleeping.” But all the people laughed at Jesus. Jesus told the people to leave the house. Then Jesus went into the room where the child was. He brought the child’s father and mother and his three followers into the room with him.

Then Jesus held the girl’s hand and said to her, “Talitha, koum!” (This means, “Little girl, I tell you to stand up!”) The girl stood up and began walking. (The girl was twelve years old.) The father and mother and the followers were amazed.

Jesus gave the father and mother very strict orders not to tell people about this. Then Jesus told them to give the girl some food to eat.

Jesus left there and went back to his home town. His followers went with him. On the Sabbath day* Jesus taught in the synagogue.* Many people heard him teach and were amazed. These people said, “Where did this man get this teaching? How did he get this wisdom? Who gave it to him? And where did he get the power to do miracles?{Surely, not from God!} He is only the carpenter. And his mother is Mary. He is the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon. And his sisters are here with us.” The people did not accept Jesus.

Jesus said to the people, “Other people give honor to a prophet.* But in his own town with his own people and in his own home, a prophet does not get honor.” Jesus was not able to do many miracles* in that town.

Jesus Goes to His Home Town

Jesus said to the people, “Other people give honor to a prophet.* But in his own town with his own people and in his own home, a prophet does not get honor.” Jesus was not able to do many miracles* in that town.

Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.

miracle(s) Amazing works done by God’s power.

prophet A person that spoke for God.
only miracles he did were to heal some sick people by putting his hands on them. Jesus was very surprised because those people did not have faith. Then Jesus went to other villages in that area and taught.

**Jesus Sends His Apostles on a Mission**  
(Mt. 10:1, 5–15; Lk. 9:1–6)

Jesus called the twelve followers together. Jesus sent them out in groups of two. Jesus gave them power over evil spirits. This is what Jesus told his followers: “Take nothing for your trip. Take only a stick for walking. Take no bread, no bag, and no money in your pockets. Wear shoes, and take only the clothes you are wearing. When you enter a house, stay in that house until you leave that town. If any town refuses to accept you or refuses to listen to you, then leave that town. Shake their dust off your feet. This will be a warning to them.”

The followers left there and went to other places. They talked to the people and told them to change their hearts and lives. The followers forced many demons out of people. And the followers put olive oil on sick people and healed them.

**Herod Thinks Jesus Is John the Baptizer**  
(Mt. 14:1–12; Lk. 9:7–9)

King Herod heard about Jesus, because Jesus was now famous. Some people said, “He himself is John the Baptizer. He is risen from death. That is why he can do these miracles.” Other people said, “He is Elijah.” Other people said, “Jesus is a prophet.” He is like the prophets that lived long ago.”

Herod heard these things about Jesus. He said, “I killed John by cutting off his head. Now John has been raised from death!”

Shake their dust off your feet A warning. It would show that they were finished talking to these people.
demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
put olive oil on Olive oil was used like a medicine.
Herod Herod Antipas, tetrarch (ruler) of Galilee and Perea, son of Herod the Great.
miracle(s) Amazing works done by God’s power.
Elijah A man that spoke for God about 850 B.C.
prophet A person that spoke for God.

**How John the Baptizer Was Killed**

Herod himself had ordered his soldiers to arrest John. So John was put into prison. Herod did this to please his wife, Herodias. Herodias was the wife of Philip, Herod’s brother. But then Herod married Herodias. John told Herod that it was not right for him to be married to his brother’s wife. So Herodias hated John. She wanted to kill him. But Herodias was not able to persuade Herod to kill John. Herod knew that all the people thought John was a good and holy man. So Herod protected John. Herod enjoyed listening to John preach. But John’s message always bothered Herod.

Then the right time came for Herodias to cause John’s death. It happened on Herod’s birthday. Herod gave a dinner party for the most important government leaders, the commanders of his army, and the most important people in Galilee. The daughter of Herodias came to the party and danced. When she danced, Herod and the people eating with him were very pleased.

So King Herod said to the girl, “I will give you anything you want.” Herod promised her, “Anything you ask for I will give to you. I will even give you half of my kingdom.”

The girl went to her mother and asked, “What should I ask King Herod to give me?” Her mother answered, “Ask for the head of John the Baptizer.”

Quickly the girl went back in to the king. The girl said to the king, “Please give me the head of John the Baptizer. Bring it to me now on a plate.”

King Herod was very sad. But he had promised to give the girl anything she wanted. And the people eating there with Herod heard his promise. So Herod did not want to refuse the thing she asked for. So the king sent a soldier to cut off John’s head and bring it. So the soldier went and cut off John’s head in the prison. Then the soldier brought John’s head back on a plate. He gave the head to the girl. Then the girl gave the head to her mother. John’s followers heard about what happened.
So they came and got John’s body. They put it in a tomb* (grave).

Jesus Feeds More than 5,000 People
(Mt. 14:13–21; Lk. 9:10–17; Jn. 6:1–14)

30The apostles* told Jesus sent out came back to Jesus. They gathered around Jesus and told him about all the things they did and taught. 31Jesus and his followers were in a very busy place. There were many, many people. Jesus and his followers did not even have time to eat. Jesus said to his followers, “Come with me. We will go to a quiet place to be alone. There we will get some rest.”

32So Jesus and his followers went away alone. They went in a boat to a place where there were no people. 33But many people saw them leave. The people knew it was Jesus. So people from all the towns ran to the place where Jesus was going. The people were there before Jesus arrived. 34When Jesus arrived there, he saw many people waiting. Jesus felt sorry for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd* to care for them. So Jesus taught the people many things.

35It was now late in the day. So Jesus’ followers came to him. They said, “No people live in this place. And it is already very late. 36So send the people away. They need to go to the farms and towns around here to buy some food to eat.”

37But Jesus answered, “You give them some food to eat.”

The followers said to Jesus, “We can’t buy enough bread to feed all these people! We would all have to work a month to earn enough money to buy that much bread!”

38Jesus asked the followers, “How many loaves of bread do you have now? Go and see.”

The followers counted their loaves of bread. They came to Jesus and said, “We have five loaves of bread and two fish.”

39Then Jesus said to the followers, “Tell all the people to sit in groups on the green grass.”

40So all the people sat in groups. There were about 50 or 100 people in each group. 41Jesus took the five loaves and two fish. He looked up to the sky and thanked God for the bread. Then Jesus divided the bread and gave it to his followers. Jesus told his followers to give the bread to the people. Then Jesus divided the two fish and gave the fish to the people. 42All the people ate and were full. 43After the people finished eating, the followers filled twelve baskets with the pieces of bread and fish that were not eaten. 44There were about 5,000 men there that ate.

Jesus Walks on the Water
(Mt. 14:22–33; Jn. 6:16–21)

45Then Jesus told the followers to get into the boat. Jesus told them to go to the other side of the lake to Bethsaida. Jesus said that he would come later. Jesus stayed there to tell the people they could go home. 46After Jesus said good–bye to the people, he went into the hills to pray.

47That night, the boat was still in the middle of the lake. Jesus was alone on the land. 48Jesus saw the boat far away on the lake. He saw the followers working hard to row the boat. The wind was blowing against them. Sometime between three and six o’clock in the morning, Jesus went to the boat. Jesus was walking on the water. Jesus continued walking until he was almost past the boat. 49But the followers saw Jesus walking on the water. They thought he was a ghost. The followers shouted with fear. 50All the followers saw Jesus and were very afraid. But Jesus spoke to the followers and said, “Don’t worry! It’s me! Don’t be afraid.” 51Then Jesus got into the boat with the followers. And the wind became calm. The followers were completely amazed. 52They still didn’t understand his power. It was like the miracle he did with the bread. They still didn’t understand what that meant.

Jesus Heals Many People
(Mt. 14:34–36)

53Jesus and his followers went across the lake. They came to shore at Gennesaret. They tied the boat there. 54When they were out of the boat, the people saw Jesus. They knew who he was. 55The people ran to tell other people everywhere in that area that Jesus was there. The people brought sick people on beds to

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tomb A grave dug in a wall of rock.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
every place Jesus went. Jesus went into towns and cities and farms around that area. And every place Jesus went, the people brought sick people to the market places. They begged Jesus to let them touch any part of his coat. And all the people that touched him were healed.

God’s Law and Rules that People Make
(Mt. 15:1–20)

Some Pharisees* and some teachers of the law came from Jerusalem. They gathered around Jesus. The Pharisees and teachers of the law saw that some of Jesus’ followers ate food with hands that were not clean. (“Not clean” means that they did not wash their hands in the way the Pharisees said people must.) The Pharisees and all the Jews never eat before washing their hands in this special way. They do this to follow the teaching given to them by their great people that lived before them. And when the Jews buy something in the market, they never eat it until they wash it in a special way. They also follow other rules from their people that lived before them. They follow rules like the washing of cups, pitchers, and pots.*

The Pharisees and teachers of the law said to Jesus, “Your followers don’t follow the rules given to us by our great people that lived before us. Your followers eat their food with hands that are not clean. Why do they do this?”

Jesus answered, “You are all hypocrites.* Isaiah was right when he spoke about you. Isaiah wrote,

‘These people say they honor me, but they don’t really make me an important part of their lives.

Their worship of me is for nothing.
The things they teach are only rules that people have made.’ Isaiah 29:13

You have stopped following the commands of God. Now you follow the rules you got from other people.”

Then Jesus said to them: “You think you are smart! You ignore the commands of God so that you can follow your own teachings!

Moses said, ‘You must honor (respect) your father and mother.* Then Moses also said, ‘Any person that says bad things to his father or mother must be killed.’* But you teach that a person can say to his father or mother, ‘I have something I could use to help you. But I will not use it to help you. I will give it to God.’ You are telling that person that he does not have to do anything for his father or mother. So you are teaching that it is not important to do what God said. You think that it is more important to follow those rules you teach people. And you do many things like that.”

Jesus called the people to him again. He said, “Every person should listen to me and understand what I am saying. There is nothing a person puts into his body that makes him wrong.* A person is made wrong by the things that come from him.”

Then Jesus left the people and went into the house. The followers asked Jesus about this story. Jesus said, “You still have trouble understanding? Surely you know that nothing that enters a person from the outside can make him wrong. Food does not go into a person’s mind. Food goes into the stomach. Then that food goes out of the body.” (When Jesus said this, he meant that there is no food that is wrong for people to eat.)

And Jesus said, “The things that come from a person are the things that make that person wrong. All these bad things begin inside a person, in the mind: bad thoughts, sexual sins, stealing, murder, adultery,* greed, doing bad things to people, lying, doing things that are morally wrong, jealousy, saying bad things about people, proud boasting, and foolish living. All these evil things come from inside a person. These things make a person wrong.”

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
pots Some Greek copies add “and couches.”
hypocrites Bad people that act like they are good.

You must honor … mother” Quote from Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16.
‘Any person … killed’ Quote from Ex. 21:17.
wrong Literally, “unclean” or “not pure”.
Verse 16 Some Greek copies add verse 16: “You people that hear me, listen!”
adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.
Jesus Helps a Non-Jewish Woman
(Mt. 15:21–28)

Jesus left that place and went to the area around Tyre. Jesus went into a house there. Jesus did not want the people in that area to know he was there. But Jesus could not stay hidden. 25A woman heard that Jesus was there. Her little daughter had an evil spirit {from the devil} inside her. So the woman came to Jesus and bowed down near his feet. 26The woman was not a Jew. She was Greek, born in Phoenicia, an area in Syria. The woman begged Jesus to force the demon* out of her daughter.

Jesus told the woman: “It is not right to take the children’s bread and give it to the dogs. First let the children eat all they want.”

The woman answered, “That is true, Lord. But the dogs under the table can eat the pieces of food that the children don’t eat.”

Then Jesus told the woman, “That is a very good answer. You may go. The demon* has left your daughter.”

The woman went home and found her daughter lying on the bed. The demon was gone.

Jesus Heals a Deaf Man
31Then Jesus left the area around Tyre and went through Sidon. Jesus went to Lake Galilee. Jesus went through the area of the Ten Towns.*

32While he was there, some people brought a man to him. This man was deaf and could not talk clearly. The people begged Jesus to put his hand on the man {to heal him}.

33Jesus led the man away from the people to be alone with him. Jesus put his hand on the man’s ears. Then Jesus spit and touched the man’s tongue. 34Jesus looked up to the sky and made a breathing sound. Jesus said to the man, “Ephphatha!” (This means, “Open!”) 35When Jesus did this, the man was able to hear. The man was able to use his tongue and spoke clearly.

36Jesus commanded the people not to tell anyone about what happened. Jesus always commanded people not to tell other people about him. But this only caused the people to tell about him more and more. 37The people were really amazed. The people said, “Jesus does everything in a good way. Jesus makes deaf people able to hear. And people that can’t talk—Jesus makes them able to talk.”

Jesus Feeds More than 4,000 People
(Mt. 15:32–39)

8Another time there were many people with Jesus. The people had nothing to eat. So Jesus called his followers to him. Jesus said, “I feel sorry for these people. They have been with me for three days. And now they have nothing to eat. I should not send them home hungry. If they leave without eating, they will faint while going home. Some of these people live a long way from here.”

4Jesus’ followers answered, “But we are far away from any towns. Where can we get enough bread to feed all these people?”

5Then Jesus asked them, “How many loaves of bread do you have?”

The followers answered, “We have seven loaves of bread.”

6Jesus told the people to sit on the ground. Then Jesus took the seven loaves and gave thanks to God. Jesus divided the bread and gave the pieces to his followers. Jesus told the followers to give the bread to the people. The followers obeyed him. 7The followers also had a few small fish. Jesus gave thanks for the fish and told the followers to give the fish to the people. All the people ate and were full. Then the followers filled seven baskets with the pieces of food that were not eaten. 9There were about 4,000 men that ate. After they ate, Jesus told them to go home. 10Then Jesus went in a boat with his followers to the area of Dalmanutha.

The Pharisees Try to Test Jesus
(Mt. 16:1–4)

11The Pharisees* came to Jesus and asked him questions. They wanted to test Jesus. So they asked Jesus to do a miracle* to show that he was from God. 12Jesus made a sad sound like he was troubled. He said, “Why do you...
MARK 8:13–33

people ask to see a miracle as proof? I tell you the truth. No proof like that will be given to you.” 13Then Jesus left the Pharisees. Jesus went in the boat to the other side of the lake.

Jesus’ Followers Misunderstand Him
(Mt. 16:5–12)

14The followers had only one loaf of bread with them in the boat. They forgot to bring more bread. 15Jesus warned them, “Be careful! Guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod.”

16The followers discussed the meaning of this. They said, “He said this because we have no bread.”

17Jesus knew that the followers were talking about this. So Jesus asked them, “Why are you talking about having no bread? You still don’t see or understand? Are you not able to understand? Do you have eyes that can’t see? Do you have ears that can’t hear? Remember what I did before, when we did not have enough bread? 19I divided five loaves of bread for 5,000 people. Remember how many baskets you filled with pieces of food that were not eaten?”

The followers answered, “We filled twelve baskets.”

20 “And remember that I divided seven loaves of bread for 4,000 people. Remember how many baskets you filled with pieces of food that were not eaten?”

The followers answered, “We filled seven baskets.”

21 Then Jesus said to them, “You remember these things I did, but you still don’t understand?”

Jesus Heals a Blind Man In Bethsaida

22Jesus and his followers came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to Jesus. They begged Jesus to touch the man. 23So Jesus held the blind man’s hand and led him out of the village. Then Jesus spit on the man’s eyes. Jesus put his hands on the blind man and asked him, “Can you see now?”

24The blind man looked up and said, “Yes, I see people. They look like trees walking around.”

25Again Jesus put his hands on the blind man’s eyes. Then the man opened his eyes wide. His eyes were healed, and he was able to see everything clearly. 26Jesus told him to go home. Jesus said, “Don’t go into the town.”

Peter Says that Jesus Is the Christ
(Mt. 16:13–20; Lk. 9:18–21)

27Jesus and his followers went to the towns in the area of Caesarea Philippi. While they were traveling, Jesus asked the followers, “Who do people say I am?”

28The followers answered, “Some people say you are John the Baptizer. Other people say you are Elijah. And other people say that you are one of the prophets.”

29Then Jesus asked, “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.”

30Jesus told the followers, “Don’t tell any person who I am.”

Jesus Says He Must Die
(Mt. 16:21–28; Lk. 9:22–27)

31Then Jesus began to teach his followers that the Son of Man must suffer many things. Jesus taught that the Son of Man would not be accepted by the older Jewish leaders, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law. Jesus taught that the Son of Man must be killed and then rise from death after three days. 32Jesus told them everything that would happen. He did not keep anything secret. Peter spoke to Jesus alone. Peter criticized Jesus for saying those things. 33But Jesus turned and looked at his followers. Then he criticized Peter. Jesus said to Peter, “Go away from me, Satan!” You don’t care about the things of

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yeast Used here as a symbol of bad influence.
Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
Herod Herod Antipas, tetrarch (ruler) of Galilee and Perea, son of Herod the Great.
Elijah A man that spoke for God about 850 B.C.
prophets People that spoke for God.
Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
Satan Name for the devil meaning “the enemy.” Jesus means that Peter was talking like Satan.
Good News  The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
I  Literally, “the Son of Man.”
Elijah and Moses  Two important Jewish leaders during the time of the Old Testament.
MARK 9:20–43

So the followers brought the boy to Jesus. When the evil spirit saw Jesus, the spirit attacked the boy. The boy fell down and rolled on the ground. He was foaming from his mouth.

Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has this been happening to the boy?”

The father answered, “Since he was very young. The spirit often throws him into a fire or into water to kill him. If you can do anything for him, please have pity on us and help us.”

Jesus said to the father, “Why did you say ‘if you can’? All things are possible for the one who believes.”

The father became very excited. He said, “I do believe. Help me to believe more!”

Jesus saw that all the people were running there to see what was happening. So Jesus spoke to the evil spirit. Jesus said, “You evil spirit that makes this boy deaf and stops him from talking—I command you to come out of this boy and never enter him again!”

The evil spirit screamed. The spirit caused the boy to fall on the ground again, and then the spirit came out. The boy looked like he was dead. Many people said, “He is dead!”

But Jesus held the boy’s hand and helped him stand.

Jesus went into the house. His followers were alone with him there. They said, “We could not force that evil spirit out. Why?”

Jesus answered, “That kind of spirit can only be forced out by using prayer.”

Jesus Talks About His Death

Jesus and his followers went to Capernaum. They went into a house. Then Jesus said to his followers, “I heard you arguing on the road today. What were you arguing about?”

But the followers did not answer, because their argument on the road was about which one of them was the greatest.

Jesus sat down and called the twelve apostles to him. Jesus said, “If any person wants to be the most important, then he must make all other people more important than himself. That person must serve all other people.”

Then Jesus took a small child. Jesus stood the child before the followers. Jesus held the child in his arms and said, “If a person accepts children like these in my name, then that person is also accepting me. And if a person accepts me, then that person is also accepting the One (God) that sent me.”

Any Person Not Against Us Is for Us

Jesus told the people that uses my name to do powerful things will not soon say bad things about me. The person that is not against us is with us. I tell you the truth. If a person helps you by giving you a drink of water because you belong to the Christ, then that person will truly get his reward.

Jesus Warns About Causes of Sin

If one of these little children believes in me, and another person causes that child to sin, then it will be very bad for that person. It would be better for that person to have a millstone tied around his neck and be drowned in the sea. If your hand makes you

Capernaum A town in Galilee where Jesus taught.
apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
millstone A large, round stone used for grinding grain.

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
Verse 44 Some Greek copies of Mark add verse 44, which is the same as verse 48.
Verse 46 Some Greek copies of Mark add verse 46, which is the same as verse 48.
punished Literally, “salted.”
Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
Moses … certificate of divorce See Deut. 24:1
‘he made … female’ Quote from Gen. 1:27.

sin, cut it off. It is better for you to lose part of your body but have life forever. That is much better than to have two hands and go to hell. In that place the fire never stops. 44 If your foot makes you sin, cut it off. It is better for you to lose part of your body but have life forever. That is much better than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. 46 If your eye makes you sin, take it out. It is better for you to have only one eye but have life forever. That is much better than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell. 48 The worms that eat the people in hell never die. In hell the fire is never stopped. 49 Every person will be punished with fire.

50 Salt is good. But if the salt loses its salty taste, then you can’t make it salty again. So, be full of goodness. And have peace with each other.

Jesus Teaches About Divorce (Mt. 19:1–12)

Then Jesus left that place. He went into the area of Judea and across the Jordan River. Again, many people came to him. And Jesus taught the people like he always did. 3 Some Pharisees came to Jesus. They tried to make Jesus say something wrong. They asked Jesus, “Is it right for a man to divorce his wife?”

Jesus answered, “What did Moses command you to do?”

4 The Pharisees said, “Moses allowed a man to divorce his wife by writing a certificate of divorce.”

5 Jesus said, “Moses wrote that command for you because you refused to accept God’s teaching. But when God made the world, ‘he made people male and female.’ 6 ‘That is why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. And the two people will become one.’ So the people are not two, but one. 9 God has joined those two people together. So no person should separate them.”

10 Later, the followers and Jesus were in the house. The followers asked Jesus again about the question of divorce. 11 Jesus answered, “Any person that divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of sin against his wife. He is guilty of the sin of adultery.”

Verse 46 Some Greek copies of Mark add verse 46, which is the same as verse 48.

Jesus Accepts Children (Mt. 19:13–15; Lk. 18:15–17)

13 People brought their small children to Jesus, so that Jesus could touch them. But the followers told the people not to bring their children to Jesus. 14 Jesus saw what happened. He did not like his followers telling the children not to come. Jesus said to them, “Let the little children come to me. Don’t stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to people that are like these little children. 15 I tell you the truth. You must accept the kingdom of God like a little child accepts things, or you will never enter it.”

16 Then Jesus held the children in his arms. Jesus put his hands on them and blessed them.

A Rich Man Refuses to Follow Jesus (Mt. 19:16–30; Lk. 18:18–30)

17 Jesus started to leave, but a man ran to him and bowed on his knees before Jesus. The man asked, “Good teacher, what must I do to get the life that never ends?”

18 Jesus answered, “Why do you call me good? No person is good. Only God is good. 19 But I will answer your question. You know the commands: ‘You must not murder anyone, you must not do the sin of adultery, you must not steal, you must not lie, you must not cheat, you must honor (respect) your father and mother…. ’”

20 The man said, “Teacher, I have obeyed all these commands since I was a boy.”

Verse 46 Some Greek copies of Mark add verse 46, which is the same as verse 48.

That is why … one’ Quote from Gen. 2:24.
adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.
‘You must not … mother’ Quote from Ex. 20:12–16; Deut. 5:16–20.
MARK 10:21–43

21Jesus looked at the man. Jesus felt love for him. Jesus said, “There is still one more thing you need to do. Go and sell everything you have. Give the money to the poor people. You will have a reward in heaven. Then come and follow me.”

22The man was very sorry to hear Jesus say this, and he left. The man was sad because he was very rich and wanted to keep his money.

23Then Jesus looked at his followers and said to them, “It will be very hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God!”

24The followers were amazed at what Jesus said. But Jesus said again, “My children, it is very hard to enter the kingdom of God! And it will be very hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of God! It would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle!”

26The followers were more amazed and said to each other, “Then who can be saved?”

27Jesus looked at the followers and said, “This is something that people cannot do themselves. It must come from God. God can do all things.”

28Peter said to Jesus, “We left everything to follow you!”

29Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. Every person that has left his home, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or farm for me and for the Good News will get a hundred times more than he left. Here in this world that person will get more homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and farms. And with those things, that person will have persecutions.* But he will also have a reward in the world that is coming. That reward is life forever. Many people that have the highest place now will have the lowest place in the future. And the people that have the lowest place now will have the highest place in the future.”

Jesus Talks Again About His Death
(Mt. 20:17–19; Lk. 18:31–34)

32Jesus and the people with him were going to Jerusalem. Jesus was leading the people. Jesus’ followers were amazed. But those people that followed behind them were afraid.

Jesus gathered the twelve apostles again and talked with them alone. Jesus told them what would happen in Jerusalem. 33Jesus said, “We are going to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be given to the leading priests and teachers of the law. The priests and the teachers of the law will say that the Son of Man must die. They will give the Son of Man to the non-Jewish people. 34Those people will laugh at him and spit on him. They will beat him with whips and kill him. But on the third day after his death, he will rise to life again.”

James and John Ask a Favor
(Mt. 20:20–28)

35Then James and John, sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus. They said, “Teacher, we want to ask you to do something for us.”

36Jesus asked, “What do you want me to do for you?”

37The sons answered, “You will have glory in your kingdom. Let one of us sit at your right, and let one of us sit at your left.”

38Jesus said, “You don’t understand what you are asking. Can you accept the kind of suffering that I must have? Can you be baptized with the same kind of baptism that I must have?”

39The sons answered, “Yes, we can!”

Jesus said to the sons, “You will suffer the same things that I will suffer. And you will be baptized with the same baptism that I must have. But I cannot choose the person that will sit at my right or my left. There are some people that will have those places. Those places are prepared for them.”

41The other ten followers heard this. They became angry with James and John. 42Jesus called all the followers together. Jesus said, “The non-Jewish people have men they call rulers. You know that those rulers love to show their power over the people. And their important leaders love to use all their authority over the people. But it should not be that way

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
accept the kind of suffering that I must have Literally, “drink the cup that I must drink.”
baptized with the same kind of baptism Has a special meaning here—being “baptized” or “buried” in troubles.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
persecution(s) Being hurt or bothered by Christ’s enemies.
with you. If one of you wants to become great, then he must serve you like a servant. 44If one of you wants to become the most important, then he must serve all of you like a slave. 45In the same way, the Son of Man* did not come for other people to serve him. But the Son of Man came to serve other people. The Son of Man came to give his life to save many people.”

**Jesus Heals a Blind Man**
*(Mt. 20:29–34; Lk. 18:35–43)*

46Then they came to the town of Jericho. Jesus was leaving that town with his followers and many other people. A blind man named Bartimaeus (son of Timaeus) was sitting by the road. This man was always begging for money. 47The blind man heard that Jesus from Nazareth was walking by. The blind man shouted, “Jesus, Son of David,* please help me!”

48Many people criticized the blind man. They told him not to speak. But the blind man shouted more and more, “Son of David,* please help me!”

49Jesus stopped and said, “Tell the man to come here.”

So they called the blind man. They said, “Be happy! Stand up! Jesus is calling you.” 50The blind man stood quickly. He left his coat there and went to Jesus. 51Jesus asked the man, “What do you want me to do for you?”

The blind man answered, “Teacher, I want to see again.”

52Jesus said, “Go. You are healed because you believed.” Then the man was able to see again. He followed Jesus on the road.

**Jesus Enters Jerusalem like a King**
*(Mt. 21:1–11; Lk. 19:28–40; Jn. 12:12–19)*

11 Jesus and his followers were coming closer to Jerusalem. They came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives.* There Jesus sent two of his followers to do something. 2Jesus said to the followers, “Go to the town you can see there. When you enter it, you will find a young donkey tied there. No person has ever ridden this donkey. Untie the donkey and bring it here to me. 3If any person asks you why you are taking the donkey, tell that person, ‘The Master needs this donkey. He will send it back soon.’”

4The followers went into the town. They found a young donkey tied in the street near the door of a house. The followers untied the donkey. 5Some people were standing there and saw this. The people asked, “What are you doing? Why are you untying that donkey?” 6The followers answered the way Jesus told them to answer. The people let the followers take the donkey. 7The followers brought the donkey to Jesus. The followers put their coats on the donkey, and Jesus sat on it. 8Many people spread their coats on the road for Jesus. Other people cut branches in the fields and spread the branches on the road. 9Some of the people were walking ahead of Jesus. Other people were walking behind him. All the people shouted,

...Praise Him!
...Welcome! God bless the One that comes in the name of the Lord!

Psalm 118:25–26

10 God bless the kingdom of our father David.* That kingdom is coming!

Praise to God in heaven!”

11Jesus went into Jerusalem and went to the temple.* Jesus looked at everything in the temple area. But it was already late. So Jesus went to Bethany with the twelve apostles.*

**Jesus Says a Fig Tree will Die**
*(Mt. 21:18–19)*

12The next day, Jesus was leaving Bethany. He was hungry. 13Jesus saw a fig tree with leaves. So Jesus went to the tree to see if it had any figs growing on it. But Jesus found no figs on the tree. There were only leaves. It was not
the right time for figs to grow. So Jesus said to the tree, “People will never eat fruit from you again.” Jesus’ followers heard him say this.

Jesus goes to the temple
(Mt. 21:12–17; Lk. 19:45–48; Jn. 2:13–22)

Jesus went to Jerusalem. He went into the temple area. Jesus began to throw out the people that were buying and selling things there. Jesus turned over the tables that belonged to the people that were exchanging different kinds of money. And Jesus turned over the benches of those people that were selling doves. Jesus refused to allow any person to carry things through the temple area.

Then Jesus taught the people. He said, “It is written in the Scriptures, *My house will be called a house for prayer for all people.* But you are changing God’s house into a *hiding place for thieves.*”

The leading priests and the teachers of the law heard these things. They began trying to find a way to kill Jesus. They were afraid of Jesus because all the people were amazed at his teaching. That night, Jesus and his followers left the city.

Jesus shows the power of faith
(Mt. 21:20–22)

The next morning, Jesus was walking with his followers. They saw the fig tree that Jesus spoke to the day before. The fig tree was dry and dead, even the roots. Peter remembered the tree and said to Jesus, “Teacher, look! Yesterday, you told that fig tree to die. Now it is dry and dead!”

Jesus answered, “Have faith in God. I tell you the truth. You can say to this mountain, ‘Go, mountain, fall into the sea.’ And if you have no doubts in your mind and believe that the thing you say will happen, then God will do it for you. So I tell you to ask for things in prayer. And if you believe that you have received those things, then they will be yours. When you are praying, and you remember that you are angry with another person about something, then forgive that person. Forgive them so that your Father in heaven will also forgive your sins.”

Jewish leaders doubt Jesus’ authority
(Mt. 21:23–27; Lk. 20:1–8)

Jesus and his followers went again to Jerusalem. Jesus was walking in the temple area. The leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the older Jewish leaders came to Jesus. They said to Jesus, “Tell us! What authority (power) do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?”

Jesus answered, “I will ask you a question. You answer my question. Then I will tell you whose authority I use to do these things. Tell me: When John baptized people, did that come from God or was it only from other people? Answer me!”

Jesus asked John’s question. They said to each other, “If we answer, ‘John’s baptism was from God,’ then Jesus will say, ‘Then why didn’t you believe John?’ But we can’t say that John’s baptism was from someone else.” (These leaders were afraid of the people, because the people believed that John was a prophet.)

So the leaders answered Jesus, “We don’t know the answer.”

Jesus said, “Then I will not tell you what authority I use to do these things.”

God sends his son
(Mt. 21:33–46; Lk. 20:9–19)

Jesus used stories to teach the people. Jesus said, “A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around the field and dug a hole for a wine press.” Then the man built a tower. He leased the land to some farmers. Then he left for a trip. Later, it was time for the grapes to be picked. So the man sent a servant to the farmers to get his share of the grapes. But the

Verse 26 Some early Greek copies add verse 26: “But if you don’t forgive other people, then your Father in heaven will not forgive your sins.”

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

prophet A person that spoke for God.

wine press A place dug in rock used to mash grapes and collect the juice for making wine.
Farmers grabbed the servant and beat him. They sent the servant away with nothing.

Then the man sent another servant to the farmers. The farmers hit this servant on the head. They showed no respect for him. So the man sent another servant. The farmers killed this servant. The man sent many other servants to the farmers. The farmers beat some of the servants and killed the others.

“The man had one person left to send to the farmers. This person was his son. The man loved his son. But he decided to send the son to the farmers. The son was the last person he could send. The man said, ‘The farmers will respect my son.’

But the farmers said to each other, ‘This is the owner’s son. This vineyard will be his. If we kill him, then it will be ours.’ So the farmers took the son, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

“Now what will the man that owns the vineyard do? He will go to the vineyard and kill those farmers. Then he will lease the land to other farmers. Surely you have read this Scripture:

‘The stone that the builders did not want became the cornerstone.’

The Lord did this, and it is wonderful to us.”

Psalm 118:22–23

These Jewish leaders heard this story that Jesus told. They knew that this story was about them. So they wanted to find a way to arrest Jesus. But they were afraid of the people. So the Jewish leaders left Jesus and went away.

Some Sadducees Try to Trick Jesus

(Sadducees believe that no person will rise from death.) The Sadducees asked Jesus a question. They said, “Teacher, Moses wrote that if a married man dies and he had no children, then his brother must marry the woman. Then they will have children for the dead brother.*

There were seven brothers. The first brother married but died. He had no children. So the second brother married the woman. But he also died and had no children. The same thing happened with the third brother. All seven brothers married the woman and died. None of the brothers had any children with the woman. The woman was last to die. But all seven brothers had married her. So at the time when people rise from death, whose wife will the woman be?”

Jesus answered, “Why did you make this mistake? Is it because you don’t know what the Scriptures say? Or because you don’t know about God’s power? When people rise from death, there will be no marriage. People

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don’t live again after death.

If ... dead brother See Deut. 25:5–6.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
MARK 12:26–42

Is the Christ David’s Son or David’s Lord?  
(Mt. 22:41–46; Lk. 20:41–44)

Jesus was teaching in the temple* area. Jesus asked, “Why do the teachers of the law say that the Christ* is the son of David*?”

With the help of the Holy Spirit,* David himself says:

‘The Lord (God) said to my Lord (Christ): Sit by me at my right side, and I will put your enemies under your control.’”  
Psalm 110:1

David himself calls the Christ ‘Lord.’ So how can the Christ be David’s son?” Many people listened to Jesus and were very pleased.

Jesus criticizes the teachers of the law  
(Mt. 23:1–36; Lk. 20:45–47)

Jesus continued teaching. Jesus said, “Be careful of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around wearing clothes that look important. And they love for people to show respect to them in the market places. They love to get the most important seats in the synagogues.* And they love to get the most important seats at the feasts. They are mean to widows* and steal their homes. Then they try to make themselves look good by saying long prayers. God will punish them very much.”

A Widow Shows the Meaning of Giving  
(Lk. 21:1–4)

Jesus sat near the temple money box* where people put their gifts. He watched the people put money in the box. Many rich people gave much money. Then a poor widow*

will not be married to each other. All people will be like angels in heaven. 26Surely you have read what God said about people rising from death. In the book where Moses wrote about the burning bush,* it says that God told Moses this: ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’** 27If God said he is their God, then these men are not really dead. He is the God only of living people. You Sadducees* are wrong!”

Which Command Is Most Important?  
(Mt. 22:34–40; Lk. 10:25–28)

One of the teachers of the law came to Jesus. He heard Jesus arguing with the Sadducees* and the Pharisees.* He saw that Jesus gave good answers to their questions. So he asked Jesus, “Which of the commands is most important?”

Jesus answered, “The most important command is this: ‘People of Israel, listen! The Lord our God is the only Lord. You must love the Lord your God. You must love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ The second most important command is this: ‘You must love other people the same as you love yourself.’ These two commands are the most important.”

The man answered, “That was a good answer, Teacher. You were right when you said these things. God is the only Lord, and there is no other God. And a person must love God with all his heart, all his mind, and all his strength. And a person must love other people the same as he loves himself. These commands are more important than all the animals and sacrifices we offer to God.”

Jesus saw that the man answered him wisely. So Jesus said to the man, “You are close to the kingdom of God.” And after that time, no person was brave enough to ask Jesus any more questions.

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Jesus sat near the temple money box* where people put their gifts. He watched the people put money in the box. Many rich people gave much money. Then a poor widow*
came and gave two very small copper coins. These coins were not even worth a penny. 43Jesus called his followers to him. Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. This poor widow gave only two small coins. But she really gave more than all the rich people. 44Those people have plenty; they gave only what they did not need. This woman is very poor. But she gave all she had. And she needed that money to help her live.”

Future Destruction of the Temple
(Mt. 24:1–44; Lk. 21:5–33)

13 Jesus was leaving the temple area. One of his followers said to him, “Look, Teacher! This temple has very beautiful buildings with very big stones.”

2Jesus said, “Are you looking at these great buildings? They will all be destroyed. Every stone will be thrown down to the ground. Not one stone will be left on another.”

3Later, Jesus was sitting at a place on the Mount of Olives. He was alone with Peter, James, John, and Andrew. They could all see the temple. Those followers asked Jesus, “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will show us it is time for these things to happen?”

5Jesus said to the followers: “Be careful! Don’t let any person fool you. 6Many people will come and use my name. They will say, ‘I am the One.’ And they will fool many people. 7You will hear about wars that are being fought. And you will hear stories about other wars beginning. But don’t be afraid. These things must happen before the end comes. 8Nations will fight against other nations. Kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. There will be times when there is no food for people to eat. And there will be earthquakes in different places. These things are like the first pains when something new is born.

9“You must be careful. People will arrest you and take you to be judged. They will beat you in their synagogues. You will be forced to stand before kings and governors. You will tell them about me. This will happen to you because you follow me. 10Before these things happen, the Good News must be told to all people. 11You will be arrested and judged. But don’t worry about what you should say. Say the things God gives you to say at that time. It will not really be you speaking. It will be the Holy Spirit speaking.

12“Brothers will turn against their own brothers and give them to be killed. Fathers will turn against their own children and give them to be killed. Children will fight against their own parents and find ways for their parents to be killed. 13All people will hate you because you follow me. But the person that continues strong until the end will be saved.

14“You will see ‘the terrible thing that causes destruction.’ You will see this thing standing in the place where it should not be.” (You that read this should understand what it means.) “At that time, the people in Judea should run away to the mountains. 15People should run away without wasting time to stop for anything. If a person is on the roof of his house, he must not go down to take things out of his house. 16If a person is in the field, he must not go back to get his coat. 17At that time, it will be bad for women that are pregnant or have small babies. 18Pray that these things will not happen in winter. 19Why? Because those days will be full of much trouble. There will be more trouble than has ever happened since the beginning, when God made the world. And nothing as bad as that will ever happen again. 20But God has decided to make that terrible time short. If that time were not made short, then no person could continue living. But God will make that time short to help his special people that he has chosen. 21At that time, some person might say to you, ‘Look, there is the Christ!’ Or another person might say, ‘There he is!’ But don’t believe them. 22False Christs and
false prophets* will come and do great things and miracles. They will do these things to the people God has chosen. They will do these things to try to fool his people, if that is possible. 23 So be careful. Now I have warned you about all this before it happens.

24 During the days after this trouble happens, ‘The sun will become dark, and the moon will not give light. The stars will fall from the sky, and everything in the sky will be changed.’ Isaiah 13:10; 34:4

26 Then people will see the Son of Man* coming in the clouds with power and great glory. 27 The Son of Man will send his angels all around the earth. The angels will gather his chosen people from every part of the earth.

28 The fig tree teaches us a lesson: When the fig tree’s branches become green and soft, and new leaves begin to grow, then you know that summer is near. 29 It is the same with these things that I told you would happen. When you see all these things happening, then you will know that the time* is near, ready to come. 30 I tell you the truth. All these things will happen while people of this time are still living. 31 The whole world, earth and sky, will be destroyed. But the words I have said will never be destroyed.

32 No person knows when that day or time will be. The Son and the angels in heaven don’t know when that day or time will be. Only the Father knows. 33 Be careful! Always be ready! You don’t know when that time will be. 34 This is like a man that goes on a trip and leaves his house. The man lets his servants take care of the house. He gives each servant a special job to do. One servant has the work of guarding the door. The man tells this servant to always be ready. This is the same as I am now telling you. 35 So you must always be ready. You don’t know when the owner of the house will come back. He might come in the afternoon, or at midnight, or in the early morning, or when the sun rises. 36 The owner might come back quickly. If you are always ready, then he will not find you sleeping. 37 I tell you this, and I say this to every person: ‘Be ready!’

The Jewish Leaders Plan to Kill Jesus
(Mt. 26:1–5; Lk. 22:1–2; Jn. 11:45–53)

14 It was now only two days before the Passover* and the Festival of Unleavened Bread.* The leading priests and teachers of the law were trying to find a way to arrest Jesus without the people seeing it. Then they could kill him. 2 They said, “But we cannot arrest Jesus during the festival. We don’t want the people to become angry and cause a riot.”

A Woman Does Something Special
(Mt. 26:6–13; Jn. 12:1–8)

3 Jesus was in Bethany. He was eating in the house of Simon the leper.* While Jesus was there a woman came to him. The woman had an alabaster* jar filled with very expensive perfume. This perfume was made of pure nard.* The woman opened the jar and poured the perfume on Jesus’ head.

4 Some of the followers there saw this. They became upset and complained to each other. They said, “Why waste that perfume? That perfume was worth a full year’s work. It could be sold and the money could be given to poor people.” And they criticized the woman strongly.

6 Jesus said, “Don’t bother the woman. Why are you troubling her? She did a very good thing for me. 7 You will always have poor people with you. You can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. 8 This woman did the only thing she could do for me. She poured perfume on my body. She did this before I die to prepare me for burial. 9 I tell you the truth.

false prophets People that say they speak for God but do not really speak God’s truth.
Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
time The time that Jesus has been talking about when something important will happen. See Lk., 21:31, where Jesus says that this is the time for God’s kingdom to come.

Passover An important Jewish holy day. The Jews ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.
Festival of Unleavened Bread An important Jewish holiday week. In the Old Testament it began the day after Passover, but by this time the two holidays had become one.
leper A person who had leprosy, a very bad skin disease.
alabaster A beautiful kind of stone that can be carved.
nard Very expensive oil from the root of the nard plant.
The Good News* will be told to people in all the world. And in every place where the Good News is told, the story of what this woman did will also be told. The thing she has done will be told and people will remember her.”

**Judas Agrees to Help Jesus’ Enemies**  
(Mt. 26:14–16; Lk. 22:3–6)

10Then one of the twelve apostles* went to talk to the leading priests. This was the follower named Judas Iscariot. Judas wanted to give Jesus to them. 11The leading priests were very happy about this. They promised to pay Judas for doing this. So Judas waited for the best time to give Jesus to them.

**The Good News**  
(Mt. 26:26–30; Lk. 22:15–20; 1 Cor 11:23–25)

22While they were eating, Jesus took some bread. Jesus thanked God for the bread and divided it. He gave the bread to his followers. Jesus said, “Take this bread and eat it. This bread is my body.”

23Then Jesus took a cup of wine. He thanked God for it and gave it to the followers. All the followers drank from the cup.

24Then Jesus said, “This wine is my blood. My blood (death) begins the new agreement {from God to his people}. This blood is given for many people. 25I tell you the truth. I will not drink this wine again until that day when I drink it in the kingdom of God and the wine is new.”

26All the followers sang a song. Then they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

**Jesus’ Followers Will All Leave Him**  
(Mt. 26:31–35; Lk. 22:31–34; Jn. 13:36–38)

27Then Jesus told the followers, “You will all lose your faith. It is written {in the Scriptures}*:

\[I\ will\ kill\ the\ shepherd,\ 
and\ the\ sheep\ will\ run\ away.\]

Zechariah 13:7

28But {after I die}, I will rise from death. Then I will go to Galilee. I will be there before you go there.”

Good News  The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

apostles  The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Festival of Unleavened Bread  An important Jewish holiday week. In the Old Testament it began the day after Passover, but by this time the two holidays had become one.

Passover  An important Jewish holy day. The Jews ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

Son of Man  A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Scriptures  Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Mount of Olives  A hill east of the city of Jerusalem where a person could look down into the temple area.
MARK 14:29–54

29Peter said, “All the other followers may lose their faith. But I will never lose my faith.”

30Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth. Tonight you will say you don’t know me. You will say this three times before the rooster crows twice.”

31But Peter answered strongly, “I will never say I don’t know you! I will even die with you!” And all the other followers said the same thing.

Jesus Prays Alone
(Mt. 26:36–46; Lk. 22:39–46)

32Jesus and his followers went to a place named Gethsemane. Jesus said to the followers, “Sit here while I pray.” 33Jesus told Peter, James, and John to come with him. Then Jesus began to be very troubled and full of sorrow. 34Jesus said to Peter, James, and John, “My soul is full of sorrow. My heart is breaking with sadness. Wait here and stay awake.”

35Jesus walked a little more away from them. Then Jesus fell to the ground and prayed. Jesus prayed that, if possible, he would not have this time of suffering. 36Jesus prayed, “Abba,* Father! You can do all things. Let me not have this cup* {of suffering}. But do what you want, not what I want.”

37Then Jesus went back to his followers. He found them sleeping. He said to Peter, “Simon, why are you sleeping? You could not stay awake with me for one hour?” 38Stay awake and pray for strength against temptation. Your spirit wants to do what is right. But your body is weak.”

39Again Jesus went away and prayed the same thing. 40Then Jesus went back to the followers. Again Jesus found them sleeping. Their eyes were very tired. The followers did not know what they should say to Jesus.

41After Jesus prayed a third time, he went back to his followers. Jesus said to them, “You are still sleeping and resting? That’s enough! The time has come for the Son of Man* to be given to sinful people. 42Stand up! We must go. Here comes the man who is giving me to those people.”

Jesus Is Arrested
(Mt. 26:47–56; Lk. 22:47–53; Jn. 18:3–12)

43While Jesus was still speaking, Judas came there. He was one of the twelve apostles.* Judas had many people with him. These people were sent from the leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the older Jewish leaders. These people with Judas had swords and clubs.

44Judas* planned to do something to show the people which man was Jesus. Judas said, “The man I kiss is Jesus. Arrest him and guard him while you lead him away.” 45So Judas went to Jesus and said, “Teacher!” Then Judas kissed Jesus. 46Then the men grabbed Jesus and arrested him. 47One of the followers standing near Jesus grabbed his sword and pulled it out. This follower hit the servant of the high priest* with the sword and cut off his ear.

48Then Jesus said, “You came to get me with swords and clubs like I am a criminal. 49Every day I was with you teaching in the temple* area. You did not arrest me there. But all these things have happened so that it will be like the Scriptures* said.” 50Then all of Jesus’ followers left him and ran away.

51There was a young man following Jesus. He was wearing only a linen cloth. The people also grabbed this man. 52The cloth he was wearing came off, and he ran away wearing nothing.

Jesus Before the Jewish Leaders
(Mt. 26:57–68; Lk. 22:54–55, 63–71; Jn. 18:13–14, 19–24)

53The people who arrested Jesus led him to the house of the high priest.* All the leading priests, the older Jewish leaders, and the teachers of the law were gathered there. 54Peter followed Jesus, but he did not come near Jesus. Peter followed Jesus to the yard of the high priest’s house. Peter went into the

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AbbA An Aramaic word. Jewish children called their fathers “Abba.”
cup Jesus is talking about the bad things that will happen to him. Accepting these things will be very hard, like drinking a cup full of something that tastes very bad.
Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
Judas Literally, “the one who betrayed him.”
High priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.
Temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.


**MARK 14:55–15:4**

Peter Is Afraid to Say He Knows Jesus
(Mt. 26:69–75; Lk. 22:56–62; Jn. 18:15–18, 25–27)

66 At that time, Peter was still in the yard. A servant girl of the high priest came to Peter.

67 The girl saw Peter warming himself at the fire. She looked closely at Peter.

Then the girl said, “You were with Jesus, that man from Nazareth.”

68 But Peter said that he was never with Jesus. He said, “I don’t know or understand what you are talking about.” Then Peter left and went to the entrance of the yard.

69 The servant girl saw Peter there. Again the girl said to the people who were standing there, “This man is one of those people that followed Jesus.” 70 Again Peter said that it was not true.

A short time later, some people were standing near Peter. The people said, “We know you are one of those people that followed Jesus. You are from Galilee, the same as Jesus.”

71 Then Peter began to curse. He said strongly, “I promise to God that I don’t know this man you are talking about!”

72 After Peter said this, the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered what Jesus told him: “Before the rooster crows twice, you will say three times that you don’t know me.” Then Peter was very sad and began to cry.

Governor Pilate Questions Jesus
(Mt. 27:1–2, 11–14; Lk. 23:1–5; Jn. 18:28–38)

15 Very early in the morning, the leading priests, the older Jewish leaders, the teachers of the law, and all the Jewish council decided what to do with Jesus. They tied Jesus and led him to Pilate, the governor. They gave Jesus to Pilate.

2 Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

Jesus answered, “Yes, that is right.”

3 The leading priests accused Jesus of many things. 4 So Pilate asked Jesus another question. Pilate said, “You can see that these people are accusing you of many things. Why don’t you answer?”

**Verse 68** Many Greek copies add: “and the rooster crowed.”

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yard. Peter was sitting there with the guards. He was warming himself by their fire.

55 The leading priests and all the Jewish council tried to find something that Jesus had done wrong so they could kill him. But the council could find no proof that would allow them to kill Jesus. 56 Many people came and told false things against Jesus. But the people all said different things—none of them agreed.

57 Then some people stood and said something false against Jesus. They said, “We heard this man (Jesus) say, ‘I will destroy this temple that men made. And three days later, I will build another temple—a temple not made by men.’” 58 But also the things these people said did not agree.

60 Then the high priest stood before all the people and said to Jesus, “These people said things against you. Do you have something to say about these charges against you? Are these people telling the truth?” 61 But Jesus said nothing. He did not answer.

The high priest asked Jesus another question: “Are you the Christ, the Son of the blessed God?”

62 Jesus answered, “Yes, I am the Son of God. And in the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right side of the Great One (God). And you will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven.”

63 When the high priest heard this, he was very angry. He tore his clothes and said, “We don’t need any more witnesses! 64 You all heard him say these things against God. What do you think?”

All the people said that Jesus was wrong. They said he was guilty and must be killed.

65 Some of the people there spit at Jesus. They covered Jesus’ eyes and hit him with their fists. They said, “Be a prophet and tell us who hit you!” Then the guards led Jesus away and beat him.

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**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**high priest** The most important Jewish priest and leader.

**Christ** The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

**Son of Man** A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

**prophet** Prophets could tell things that most people could not know.
MARK 15:5–32

5 But Jesus still did not answer. Pilate was very surprised at this.

Pilate Tries but Fails to Free Jesus
(Mt. 27:15–31; Lk. 23:13–25; Jn. 18:39–19.16)

6 Every year at the Passover time the governor would free one person from the prison. He would free any person the people wanted him to free. 7 At that time, there was a man named Barabbas in prison. He was in prison with the rebels. These rebels were guilty of murder during a riot. 8 The people came to Pilate and asked him to free a prisoner like he always did.

9 Pilate asked the people, “Do you want me to free the king of the Jews?” 10 Pilate knew that the leading priests had given Jesus to him because they were jealous of Jesus. 11 But the leading priests persuaded the people to ask Pilate to free Barabbas, not Jesus.

12 Pilate asked the people again, “So what should I do with this man you call the king of the Jews?”

13 The people shouted, “Kill him on a cross!”

14 Pilate asked, “Why? What wrong has he done?”

But the people shouted louder and louder, “Kill him on a cross!”

15 Pilate wanted to please the people. So Pilate freed Barabbas for them. And Pilate told the soldiers to beat Jesus with whips. Then Pilate gave Jesus to the soldiers to be killed on a cross.

16 Pilate’s soldiers brought Jesus into the governor’s palace (called the Praetorium). They called all the other soldiers together.

17 The soldiers put a purple robe on Jesus. Then they used thorny weeds to make a crown. They put the crown of thorns on Jesus’ head. 18 Then they called to Jesus. They said, “Hello, king of the Jews!” 19 The soldiers hit Jesus on the head many times with a stick. They also spit on him. Then they teased Jesus by bowing on their knees and worshiping him. 20 After they finished teasing Jesus, the soldiers took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led Jesus out of the palace to be killed on a cross.

Jesus Is Killed on a Cross
(Mt. 27:32–44; Lk. 23:26–39; Jn. 19:17–19)

21 There was a man from Cyrene walking into the city. The man was Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Simon was walking into the city from the fields. The soldiers forced Simon to carry the cross for Jesus. 22 They led Jesus to the place called Golgotha. (Golgotha means “The Place of the Skull.”) 23 At Golgotha the soldiers tried to give Jesus wine to drink. This wine was mixed with myrrh.* But Jesus refused to drink it. 24 The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. Then the soldiers divided Jesus’ clothes among themselves. They gambled with dice to decide which clothes each soldier would get.

25 It was nine o’clock in the morning when they nailed Jesus to the cross. 26 There was a sign with the charge against Jesus written on it. The sign said: “THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

27 They also put two robbers on crosses beside Jesus. They put one robber beside Jesus on the right, and they put the other robber beside Jesus on the left. 28 People walked by and said bad things to Jesus. They shook their heads and said, “You said you could destroy the temple and build it again in three days. So save yourself! Come down from that cross!”

29 The leading priests and the teachers of the law were also there. They teased Jesus the same as the other people did. They said to themselves, “He saved other people. But he can’t save himself. 30 If he is really the Christ,* the king of Israel (the Jews), then he should save himself by coming down from the cross now. We will see this, and then we will believe in him.” The robbers that were being killed on the crosses beside Jesus also said bad things to him.

myrrh Myrrh was mixed with wine, and this was used as a drug to help a person feel less pain.

Verse 28 Some Greek copies add verse 28: “And the Scripture happened that says, ‘They put him with criminals.’”

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
Jesus Dies
(Mt. 27:45–56; Lk. 23:44–49; Jn. 19:28–30)

33 At noon the whole country became dark. This darkness continued until three o’clock. 34 At three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani.” This means, “My God, my God, why have you left me alone?”

Some of the people standing there heard this. The people said, “Listen! He is calling Elijah.”

One man there ran and got a sponge. The man filled the sponge with vinegar and tied the sponge to a stick. Then he used the stick to give the sponge to Jesus to drink from it. The man said, “We should wait now and see if Elijah will come to take him down from the cross.”

Then Jesus cried with a loud voice and died.

When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple was torn into two pieces. The tear started at the top and tore all the way to the bottom. The army officer that was standing there before the cross saw what happened when Jesus died. The officer said, “This man really was the Son of God!”

Some women were standing away from the cross, watching. Some of these women were Mary from the town of Magdala, Salome, and Mary the mother of James and Joses. (James was her youngest son.) These were the women that followed Jesus in Galilee and cared for him. Many other women were also there. These women had come with Jesus to Jerusalem.

Jesus Is Buried
(Mt. 27:57–61; Lk. 23:50–56; Jn. 19:38–42)

This day was called Preparation day. (That means the day before the Sabbath day.)

It was becoming dark. A man named Joseph from Arimathea was brave enough to go to Pilate and ask for Jesus’ body. Joseph was an important member of the Jewish council. He was one of the people that wanted the kingdom of God to come. Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead. Pilate called the army officer* that guarded Jesus. Pilate asked the officer if Jesus was already dead. The officer told Pilate that Jesus was dead. So Pilate told Joseph he could have the body. Joseph bought some linen cloth. Joseph took the body from the cross and wrapped the body in the linen. Then Joseph put the body in a tomb (grave) that was dug in a wall of rock. Then Joseph closed the tomb by rolling a large stone to cover the entrance. Mary from Magdala and Mary the mother of Joses saw the place where Jesus was put.

News that Jesus Has Risen from Death
(Mt. 28:1–8; Lk. 24:1–12; Jn. 20:1–10)

The next day after the Sabbath day,* Mary from Magdala, Salome, and Mary the mother of James bought some sweet-smelling spices. They wanted to put the spices on Jesus’ body. Very early on that day, the first day of the week, the women were going to the tomb.* It was very early after sunrise. The women said to each other, “There is a large stone covering the entrance of the tomb. Who will move the stone for us?”

Then the women looked and saw that the stone was moved. The stone was very large, but it was moved away from the entrance. The women walked into the tomb.* They saw a young man there wearing a white robe. The man was sitting on the right side of the tomb. The women were afraid.

But the man said, “Don’t be afraid. You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, the one that was killed on a cross. He has risen from death! He is not here. Look, here is the place they put him when he was dead. Now go and tell his followers. And be sure to tell Peter. Tell them, ‘Jesus is going into Galilee. He will...”

“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani” is a quote from Psalm 22:1. “Elohim” is a name for God written in Hebrew. “Elohi” is a name for God written in Aramaic.

curtain in the temple A curtain divided the “Most Holy Place” from the other part of the temple, the special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.

tomb A grave dug in a wall of rock.
MARK 16:8–20

be there before you. You will see him there like he told you before."

8The women were very afraid and confused. They left the tomb* and ran away. The women did not tell about what happened, because they were afraid.

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[Some of the oldest Greek copies of Mark end the book here.]

Some Followers See Jesus
(Mt. 28:9–10; Jn. 20:11–18; Lk. 24:13–35)

9Jesus rose from death early on the first day of the week. Jesus showed himself first to Mary from Magdala. One time in the past, Jesus had forced seven demons* to leave Mary. 10After Mary saw Jesus, she went and told his followers. His followers were very sad and were crying. 11But Mary told them that Jesus was alive. Mary said that she had seen Jesus. But the followers did not believe her.

12Later, Jesus showed himself to two followers while they were walking in the country. But Jesus did not look the same as before he was killed. 13These followers went back to the other followers and told them what happened. Again, the followers did not believe them.

Jesus Goes Back to Heaven
(Lk. 24:50–53; Ac. 1:9–11)

19After the Lord Jesus said these things to the followers, he was carried up into heaven. There, Jesus sat at the right side of God. 20The followers went everywhere in the world and told the Good News* to people. And the Lord helped them. The Lord proved that the Good News they told people was true. He proved this by giving the followers power to do miracles.*

Jesus Talks to the Apostles
(Mt., 28:16–20; Lk. 24:36–49; Jn. 20:19–23; Ac. 1:6–8)

14Later Jesus showed himself to the eleven followers while they were eating. Jesus criticized the followers because they had little faith. They were stubborn and refused to believe the people that said Jesus had risen from death. 15Jesus said to the followers, "Go everywhere in the world. Tell the Good News* to every person. 16Any person that believes and is baptized* will be saved. But the person that does not believe will be judged guilty. 17And the people that believe will be able to do these things as proof: They will use my name to force demons* out of people. They will speak in languages they never learned. 18Those people will hold snakes without being hurt. And those people will drink poison without being hurt. Those people will touch sick people, and the sick people will be healed."

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

miracle(s) Amazing works done by God’s power.

tomb A grave dug in a wall of rock.

demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
Luke

Luke Writes About the Life of Jesus

Dear Theophilus, Many people have tried to give a history of the things that happened among us. They have written the same things that we learned from some other people—the people that saw those things from the beginning and served God by telling people his message. I myself studied everything carefully from the beginning, your Excellency. Then I thought I should write it for you. So I put it in order in a book. I write these things so that you can know that what you have been taught is true.

Zechariah and Elizabeth

During the time when Herod ruled Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah. Zechariah belonged to Abijah’s group. Zechariah’s wife came from the family of Aaron. Her name was Elizabeth. Zechariah and Elizabeth were truly good people before God. They did everything the Lord commanded and told people to do. They were without fault. But Zechariah and Elizabeth had no children. Elizabeth could not have a baby; and both of them were very old.

Zechariah was serving as a priest before God for his group. It was his group’s time to serve. The priests always chose one priest to offer the incense. Zechariah was chosen to do this. So Zechariah went into the temple of the Lord (God) to offer the incense. There were many, many people outside. They were praying at the time the incense was offered. Then, on the right side of the incense table, an angel of the Lord (God) came and stood before Zechariah. When he saw the angel, Zechariah was upset and very afraid. But the angel said to him, “Zechariah, don’t be afraid. Your prayer has been heard by God. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give birth to a baby boy. You must name him John. You will be very, very happy. Many people will be happy because of his birth. John will be a great man for the Lord (God). He will never drink wine or liquor. Even at the time when John is being born, he will be filled with the Holy Spirit.

John will help many Jews return to the Lord their God. John himself will go first before the Lord. John will be powerful like Elijah. He will have the same spirit Elijah had. He will make peace between fathers and their children. Many people are not obeying God. John will bring those people back to the right way that people should think. He will make people ready for the coming of the Lord.”

Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I know that what you say is true? I am an old man, and my wife is also old.”

The angel answered him, “I am Gabriel. I always stand ready before God. God sent me to talk to you and to tell you this good news. Now, listen! You will not be able to talk until the day when these things happen. You will lose your speech. Why? Because you did...
LUKE 1:21–49

not believe what I told you. But these things will really happen.”

21 Outside, the people were still waiting for Zechariah. They were surprised that he was staying so long in the temple. 22 Then Zechariah came outside, but he could not speak to them. So the people knew that Zechariah had seen a vision inside the temple. Zechariah could not speak. He could only make signs to the people. 23 When Zechariah’s time of service was finished, he went home.

24 Later, Zechariah’s wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant. So she did not go out of her house for five months. Elizabeth said, 25 “Look what the Lord has done for me! He decided to help me to have a baby. Now people will stop thinking there is something wrong with me.”

The Virgin Mary

26–27 During Elizabeth’s sixth month of pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin girl that lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. The girl was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David. Her name was Mary. 28 The angel came to her and said, “Greetings! The Lord (God) is with you. You are very special to him.”

29 But Mary was very confused about what the angel said. Mary wondered, “What does this mean?”

30 The angel said to her, “Don’t be afraid, Mary, because God is very pleased with you. Listen! You will become pregnant. You will give birth to a baby boy. And you will name him Jesus. He will be great (important). People will call him the Son of the Most High (God). The Lord God will make him king like his ancestor David. 33 Jesus will rule over the people of Jacob forever. Jesus’ kingdom will never end.”

34 Mary said to the angel, “How will this happen? I am still a virgin!”

35 The angel said to Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come to you and the power of the Most High (God) will cover you. The baby will be holy. He will be called the Son of God. 

36 Also, your relative Elizabeth is pregnant. She is very old, but she is going to have a son. Everyone thought she could not have a baby, but she has been pregnant now for six months!

37 God can do anything!”

38 Mary said, “I am the servant girl of the Lord (God). Let this thing you have said happen to me!” Then the angel went away.

Mary Visits Zechariah and Elizabeth

39 Mary got up and went quickly to a town in the hill country of Judea. 40 She went into Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the unborn baby inside Elizabeth jumped. Then Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

42 Elizabeth said with a loud voice, “God has blessed you (Mary) more than any other woman. And God has blessed the baby which you will give birth to. 43 You are the mother of my Lord, and you have come to me! Why has something so good happened to me? 44 When I heard your voice, the baby inside me jumped with joy. 45 What a blessing is yours because you believed what the Lord (God) said to you! You believed this would happen.”

Mary Praises God

46 Then Mary said,

47 “I praise the Lord (God) with all my heart. I am very happy because God is my Savior. 

48 I am not important. But God has shown his care for me, his servant girl. From now until the end of time, people will remember how much God blessed me.

49 Yes, the Powerful One (God) has done great things for me. His name is very holy.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
vision(s) Something like dreams that God used to speak to people.
virgin A girl that is not married and has never had sexual relations.
David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.
Jacob Father of twelve sons from whom the twelve family groups of Israel descended.

Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
LUKE 1:50–77

50 God always gives mercy to those people that worship him.
51 God reached out his arm and showed his power: He scattered those people that are proud and think great things about themselves.
52 God brought down rulers from their thrones, and he raised up the humble people.
53 God filled the hungry people with good things, but he sent the rich people away with nothing.
54 God has helped Israel—the people he chose to serve him. He did not forget his promise to give us his mercy.
55 God has done what he promised to our ancestors, to Abraham,* and to his children forever.”
56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months. Then Mary went home.

The Birth of John

57 When it was time for Elizabeth to give birth, she had a boy. 58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord (God) was very good to her. They were happy for her.
59 When the baby was eight days old, they came to circumcise him. They wanted to name him Zechariah because this was his father’s name. 60 But his mother said, “No! He will be named John.”
61 The people said to Elizabeth, “But no one in your family has this name (John)!“ 62 Then they made signs to his father, “What would you like to name him?”
63 Zechariah asked for something to write on. Then Zechariah wrote, “His name is John.”
64 All the people were surprised. 65 Then Zechariah could talk again. He began to praise God. 66 And all their neighbors became afraid. In all the hill country of Judea people continued talking about all these things. 67 All the people that heard about these things wondered about them. They thought, “What will this child (John) be?” They said this because the Lord (God) was with this child.

Zechariah Praises God

67 Then Zechariah, John’s father, was filled with the Holy Spirit.* He told the people what would happen:

68 “Praise to the Lord God of Israel (the Jews). God has come to help his people and has given them freedom.
69 God has given us a powerful Savior from the family of God’s servant, David.*
70 God said that he would do this. He said it through his holy prophets* that lived long ago.
71 God will save us from our enemies and from the power of all those that hate us.
72 God said he would give mercy to our fathers.* And he remembered his holy promise.
73 God made a promise to Abraham,* our father.
74 God promised to free us from the power of our enemies, so that we could serve him without fear.
75 Now we can serve God in a holy and right way as long as we live.
76 “Now you, little boy, will be called a prophet* of the Most High (God).
You will go first before the Lord to make the people ready for the Lord’s coming.
77 You will make his people know that they will be saved. They will be saved by having their sins forgiven.

Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.
prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.
fathers Important ancestors of the Jews, especially the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups.
prophet A person that spoke for God.

ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.
Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.
circumcise To cut off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement that God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.
LUKE 1:78–2:23

78 “With the loving mercy of our God, a new Day from heaven will shine on us.
79 God will help the people that live in darkness, in the fear of death. He will lead us in the way that goes toward peace.”

80 And so the little boy (John) was growing up and becoming stronger in spirit. John lived in a place away from other people, until the time when he came out to tell God’s message to Israel (the Jews).

The Birth of Jesus

(Mt. 1:18–25)

2 At that time, Augustus Caesar* sent out an order to all people in the countries that were under Roman rule. The order said that all people must write their name in a book (register). 2This was the first registration.* It happened while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 All people traveled to their own towns to be registered.

4 So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee. He went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea. This town was known as the town of David.* Joseph went there because he was from the family of David. 5Joseph registered with Mary because she was engaged to marry him. (Mary was now pregnant.) 6 While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to have the baby. 7 She gave birth to her first son (Jesus). There was not enough room for them in the house. So Mary wrapped the baby with pieces of cloth and laid the baby in a box where cattle are fed.

Some Shepherds Hear About Jesus

8 That night, some shepherds were in the fields there watching their sheep. 9 An angel of the Lord (God) stood before the shepherds. The glory of the Lord was shining around them. The shepherds became very afraid. 10 The angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid. I have some very good news for you. It will make all the people very happy. 11 Today your Savior was born in David’s town. He is Christ,* the Lord. 12 This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in pieces of cloth and lying in a feeding box.”

13 Then a very large group of angels from heaven joined the first angel. All the angels were praising God, saying:

14 “Praise God in heaven, and on earth let there be peace to the people that please God.”

15 The angels left the shepherds and went back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, “We will go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord (God) told us about.”

16 So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph. The baby was lying in the feeding box. 17 The shepherds saw the baby. Then they told what the angels said about this child. 18 Everyone was surprised when they heard what the shepherds told them. 19 Mary continued to think about these things. She was trying to understand them. 20 The shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.

21 When the baby was eight days old, he was circumcised,* and he was named Jesus. This name was given by the angel before the baby began to grow inside Mary.

Jesus Is Presented in the Temple

22 The time came for Mary and Joseph to do the things the law of Moses taught about being made pure.* Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to Jerusalem so they could present him to the Lord (God). 23 It is written in the law of the Lord (God): “When a mother’s first baby is a boy, he shall be called ‘special for the Lord.’” *

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.
registration Census. A counting of all the people and the things they own.
David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.
24 The law of the Lord also says that the people must give a sacrifice*: “You must sacrifice two doves or two young pigeons.”* So Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem to do this.

**Simeon Sees Jesus**

25 A man named Simeon lived in Jerusalem. He was a good man that truly worshiped God. Simeon was waiting for the time when God would come to help Israel *(the Jews)*. The Holy Spirit* was in him. 26 The Holy Spirit told Simeon that he would not die before he saw the Christ* from the Lord *(God)*. 27 The Spirit led Simeon to the temple.* Mary and Joseph went to the temple to do what the Jewish law said they must do. They brought the baby Jesus to the temple. 28 Simeon held the baby in his arms and thanked God:

29 “Now, Lord *(God)*, you can let me, your servant, die in peace like you said. 30 I have seen with my own eyes how you will save your people. 31 Now all people can see your plan. 32 He *(Jesus)* is a light to show your way to the non-Jewish people. He will bring honor to your people, Israel *(the Jews)*.”

33 Jesus’ father and mother were amazed at what Simeon said about him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, “Many Jews will fall and many will rise because of this boy. He will be a sign *(proof)* from God that some people will not accept. 35 The things that people think in secret will be made known. And the things that will happen will make your heart very sad.”

**Anna Sees Jesus**

36 Anna, a prophetess,* was there at the temple.* She was from the family of Phanuel in the Asher family group. Anna was very old. She had been married for seven years. 37 Then her husband died and she lived alone. She was now 84 years old. Anna was always at the temple; she never left. She worshiped God by fasting* and praying day and night.

38 Anna was there when Joseph and Mary came to the temple. She praised God and talked about Jesus to all the people who were waiting for God to free Jerusalem.

**Joseph and Mary Return Home**

39 Joseph and Mary finished doing all the things that the law of the Lord commanded. Then they went home to Nazareth, their own town in Galilee. 40 The little boy *(Jesus)* was growing. He became stronger and wiser. God’s blessings were with him.

**Jesus As a Boy**

41 Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover* festival. 42 When Jesus was twelve years old, they went to the feast like they always did. 43 When the feast days were finished, they went home. But the boy Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. His parents did not know about it. 44 Joseph and Mary traveled for a whole day. They thought that Jesus was with them in the group. They began to look for him among their family and close friends. 45 But Joseph and Mary did not find Jesus in the group. So they went back to Jerusalem to look for him there. 46 After three days they found him. Jesus was sitting in the temple* area with the religious teachers, listening and asking them questions. 47 Everyone heard him. They were amazed at his understanding and wise answers. 48 When Jesus’ parents saw him, they were amazed. His mother said to him, “Son, why did you do this to us? Your father and I were very worried about you. We have been looking for you.”

49 Jesus said to them, “Why did you have to look for me? You should have known that I must be where my Father’s *(God’s)* work is!” 50 But they did not understand the meaning of what he said to them.

*sacrifice* An offering or gift to God.

“You must ... pigeons” *Quote from Lev. 12:8.

*Holy Spirit* Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

*Christ* The “anointed one” *(Messiah)* or chosen one of God.

*temple* The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

*prophetess* A woman who spoke for God.

*Passover* An important Jewish holy day. The Jews ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.
LUKE 2:51–3:18

51 Jesus went with them to Nazareth. He obeyed everything his parents said. His mother was still thinking about all these things. 52 Jesus continued to learn more and more. He grew taller. People liked Jesus, and he pleased God.

The Work of John the Baptizer
(Mt. 3:1–12; Mk. 1:1–8; Jn 1:19–28)

3 It was the 15th year of the rule of Tiberius Caesar.* These men were under Caesar: Pontius Pilate, the ruler of Judea; Herod,* the ruler of Galilee; Philip, Herod’s brother, the ruler of Iturea and Trachonitis; Lysanias, the ruler of Abilene.

2 Anna and Caiaphas were the high priests.* At that time, a command from God came to John, the son of Zechariah. John was living in the desert. 3 John went through the whole area around the Jordan River. He told the people “God’s message.” John told them to be baptized* to show that they wanted to change their hearts and lives. Then their sins would be forgiven. 4 This is like the words written in the book of Isaiah the prophet*:

“There is a person shouting in the desert: Prepare the way for the Lord. Make his paths straight.

Every valley will be filled. And every mountain and hill will be made flat. Roads with turns will be made straight. And rough roads will be made smooth.

Every person will know about the salvation of God!” Isaiah 40:3–5

7 People came to be baptized* by John. John said to them, “You are like poisonous snakes! Who warned you to run away from God’s anger that is coming? 8 You must do the things that will show that you have really changed your hearts and lives. And don’t think that saying, ‘Abraham* is our father’ will help you. I tell you that God can make children for Abraham from these rocks here! 9 The ax is now ready to cut down the trees.* Every tree that does not make good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

10 The people asked John, “What should we do?”

11 John answered, “If you have two shirts, share with the person that does not have one. If you have food, share that too.”

12 Even the tax collectors* came to John. They wanted to be baptized.* They said to John, “Teacher, what should we do?”

13 John said to them, “Don’t take more taxes from people than you have been ordered to take.”

14 The soldiers asked John, “What about us? What should we do?”

John said to them, “Don’t use force or lies to make people give you money. Be happy with the pay you get.”

15 All the people were hoping* for the Christ* to come,* and they wondered about John. They thought, “Maybe he is the Christ.”

16 John answered everyone, “I baptize you in water, but there is a person coming later who can do more than I can. I am not good enough to untie his shoes for him. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit* and with fire. 17 He will come ready to clean the grain.* He will separate the good grain from the straw. He will put the good part of the grain into his barn. Then he will burn the part that is not good. He will burn it with a fire that cannot be stopped.” 18 And John continued to tell the Good News,* saying many other things to help the people.

Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.
trees The people that do not obey God. They are like “trees” that will be cut down.
tax collector(s) Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the other Jews hated them.
Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
clean the grain John means that Jesus will separate the good people from the bad people.
Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
How John's Work Later Ended

19 (John criticized Governor Herod.) John criticized Herod for the bad thing he did with Herodias, the wife of Herod's brother. John also criticized Herod for the many other bad things Herod did. 20 So Herod did another bad thing: He put John in jail. This was added to all the other bad things Herod did.)

Jesus Is Baptized by John

(Mt. 3:13–17; Mk. 1:9–11)

21 Before John was put into prison, all the people were being baptized by him. Then Jesus came and was baptized too. While Jesus was praying, the sky opened. 22 The Holy Spirit came down on him. The Spirit looked like a real dove. Then a voice came from heaven and said, “You are my Son and I love you. I am very pleased with you.”

The Family History of Joseph

(Mt. 1:1–17)

23 When Jesus began to teach, he was about 30 years old. People thought that Jesus was Joseph's son. Joseph was the son of Eli. 24 Eli was the son of Matthat. Matthat was the son of Levi. Levi was the son of Melchi. Melchi was the son of Jannai. Jannai was the son of Joseph. 25 Joseph was the son of Mattathias. Mattathias was the son of Amos. Amos was the son of Nahum. Nahum was the son of Esli. Esli was the son of Naggai. 26 Naggai was the son of Maath. Maath was the son of Mattathias. Mattathias was the son of Semein. Semein was the son of Josech. Josech was the son of Joda.

27 Joda was the son of Joanan. Joanan was the son of Rhesa. Rhesa was the son of Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel. Shealtiel was the son of Neri. 28 Neri was the son of Melchi. Melchi was the son of Addi. Addi was the son of Cosam. Cosam was the son of Elmadam. Elmadam was the son of Er. 29 Er was the son of Joshua. Joshua was the son of Eliezer. Eliezer was the son of Jorim. Jorim was the son of Matthat. Matthat was the son of Levi.

30 Levi was the son of Simeon. Simeon was the son of Judah. Judah was the son of Joseph. Joseph was the son of Onam. Onam was the son of Eliakim. 31 Eliakim was the son of Melea. Melea was the son of Menna. Menna was the son of Mattatha. Mattatha was the son of Nathan. Nathan was the son of David. 32 David was the son of Jesse. Jesse was the son of Obed. Obed was the son of Boaz. Boaz was the son of Salmon. Salmon was the son of Nahshon.

33 Nahshon was the son of Amminadab. Amminadab was the son of Admin. Admin was the son of Arni. Arni was the son of Hezron. Hezron was the son of Perez. Perez was the son of Judah. 34 Judah was the son of Jacob. Jacob was the son of Isaac. Isaac was the son of Abraham. Abraham was the son of Terah. Terah was the son of Nahor. 35 Nahor was the son of Serug. Serug was the son of Reu. Reu was the son of Peleg. Peleg was the son of Eber. Eber was the son of Shelah.

36 Shelah was the son of Cainan. Cainan was the son of Arphaxad. Arphaxad was the son of Shem. Shem was the son of Noah. Noah was the son of Lamech. 37 Lamech was the son of Methuselah. Methuselah was the son of Enoch. Enoch was the son of Jared. Jared was the son of Mahalaleel. Mahalaleel was the son of Cainan. 38 Cainan was the son of Enoch. Enoch was the son of Seth. Seth was the son of Adam. Adam was the son of God.

Jesus Is Tempted by the Devil

(Mt. 4:1–11; Mk. 1:12–13)

4 Jesus returned from the Jordan River. He was full of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit led Jesus into the desert. 2 There the devil tempted Jesus for 40 days. Jesus ate nothing during that time. When those days were finished, Jesus was very hungry.

3 The devil said to Jesus, “If you are the Son of God, tell this rock to become bread.”

4 Jesus answered, “It is written in the Scriptures:

Scriptures

Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
“It is not just food that keeps people alive.”

Deuteronomy 8:3

Then the devil took Jesus and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. The devil said to Jesus, “I will make you king over all these places. You will have power over them and will get all the glory. It has all been given to me. I can give it to any person I want. I will give it all to you, if you will only worship me.”

Jesus answered, “It is written in the Scriptures:

“You must worship the Lord your God.
Serve only him!”

Deuteronomy 6:13

Then the devil led Jesus to Jerusalem. The devil put Jesus on a very high place of the temple. He said to Jesus, “If you are the Son of God, jump off! It is written in the Scriptures:

‘God will command his angels
to take care of you.’

Psalm 91:11

It is also written:

‘Their hands will catch you
so that you will not hit your foot
on a rock.’

Psalm 91:12

Jesus answered, “But it also says in the Scriptures:

‘God will not test (doubt)
the Lord your God.’

Deuteronomy 6:16

The devil finished tempting Jesus in every way and went away to wait until a better time.

Jesus Teaches the People
(Mt. 4:12–17; Mk. 1:14–15)

Jesus went back to Galilee with the power of the Holy Spirit. Stories about Jesus spread all over the area around Galilee. Jesus began to teach in the synagogues. All the people praised him.

Jesus Goes to His Home Town
(Mt. 13:53–58; Mk. 6:1–6)

Jesus traveled to Nazareth, the town where he grew up. On the Sabbath day he went to the synagogue like he always did. Jesus stood up to read. The book of Isaiah the prophet was given to him. Jesus opened the book and found the place where this is written:

“The Spirit of the Lord (God) has come to me.
God chose me to tell good news to people that are poor.
God sent me to tell people who are prisoners that they are free,
and to tell the blind people that they can see again.
God sent me to free the weak people from their suffering
and to announce that the time has come for the Lord to show his kindness.”

Isaiah 61:1–2

Jesus closed the book. He gave the book back to the helper and sat down. Every person in the synagogue watched Jesus closely. Jesus began to speak to them. He said, “While you heard me reading these words just now, the words were coming true!”

All the people said good things about Jesus. They were amazed at the beautiful words Jesus spoke. The people said, “How can he speak like this? He is only Joseph’s son, isn’t he?”

Jesus said to them, “I know that you will tell me the old saying: ‘Doctor, heal yourself.’ You want to say, ‘We heard about some things that you did in Capernaum. Do those same things here in your own home town!’”

Then Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. A prophet is not accepted in his own home town. What I say is true. During the time of Elijah it did not rain in Israel for three and a half years. There was no food anywhere in the whole country. There were many widows in Israel during that

Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.

prophet A person that spoke for God. Sometimes a prophet told things that would happen in the future.

Elijah A prophet that lived about 850 B.C.

widows Women whose husbands have died.

Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

synagogue(S) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
time. 26But Elijah was sent to none of those widows in Israel. Elijah was sent only to a widow in Zarephath, a town in Sidon. 27And there were many people with leprosy living in Israel during the time of the prophet Elisha. But none of those people were healed; the only one was Naaman. And Naaman was from the country of Syria, not from Israel."

28All the people in the synagogue* heard these things. They became very, very angry. 29The people got up and forced Jesus to go out of town. Their town was built on a hill. They brought Jesus to the edge of the hill. The people wanted to throw him off. 30But Jesus walked through the middle of them and went away.

Jesus Heals a Man That Has an Evil Spirit
(Mk. 1:21–28)

31Jesus went to Capernaum, a city in Galilee. On the Sabbath day* Jesus taught the people. They were amazed at Jesus' teaching, because he spoke with authority (power). 32In the synagogue* there was a man that had an evil spirit from the devil inside him. The man shouted with a loud voice, 33"Jesus of Nazareth! What do you want with us? Did you come here to destroy us? I know who you are—God's Holy One!" 34But Jesus warned the evil spirit to stop. Jesus said, "Be quiet! Come out of the man!" The evil spirit threw the man down on the ground before all the people. Then the evil spirit left the man and did not hurt him. 35The people were amazed. They said to each other, "What does this mean? With authority and power he (Jesus) commands evil spirits and they come out." 36And so the news about Jesus spread to every place in the whole area.

Jesus Heals the Mother of Peter's Wife
(Mt. 8:14–17; Mk. 1:29–34)

38Jesus left the synagogue.* He went to Simon's* house. Simon's mother-in-law was very sick. She had a high fever. They asked Jesus to do something to help her. 39Jesus stood very close to her and commanded the sickness to leave her. The sickness left her. Then she got up and began serving them.

Jesus Heals Many Other People

40When the sun went down, the people brought their sick friends to Jesus. They had many different kinds of sickness. Jesus put his hands on each sick person and healed them. 41Demons* came out of many people. The demons shouted, "You are the Son of God." But Jesus gave a strong command for the demons not to speak, because they knew Jesus was the Christ.*

Jesus Goes to Other Towns
(Mk. 1:35–39)

42The next day Jesus went to a place to be alone. The people looked for Jesus. When the people found Jesus, they tried to stop him from leaving. 43But Jesus said to them, "I must tell the Good News about God's kingdom to other towns, too. This is why I was sent."

44Then Jesus told the Good News in the synagogues* in Judea.

Peter, James, and John Follow Jesus
(Mt. 4:18–22; Mk. 1:16–20)

5Jesus stood beside Lake Gennesaret (Galilee). Many people pushed to get all around him. They wanted to hear the teachings of God. Jesus saw two boats at the shore of the lake. The fishermen were washing their nets. Jesus got into the boat that belonged to Simon.* Jesus asked Simon to push off a little from the shore. Then Jesus sat down in the boat and taught the people on the shore.

4Jesus finished speaking. He said to Simon, * "Take the boat into the deep water. If all of you will put your nets into the water, you will catch some fish."

5Simon* answered, "Master, we worked hard all night trying to catch fish, but we caught nothing. But you say I should put the nets into the water; so I will." 6The fishermen put their nets into the water. Their nets became

leprosy A very bad skin disease.
Elisha A prophet that lived after Elijah's time.
synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.
Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.
Simon Simon's other name was Peter.

Demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
LUKE 5:7–29

Jesus Heals a Sick Man
(Mt. 8:1–4; Mk. 1:40–45)

Once time Jesus was in a town where a very sick man lived. This man was covered with leprosy. When the man saw Jesus, he bowed before Jesus and begged him, “Lord, you have the power to heal me if you want.”

Jesus said, “I want to heal you. Be healed!” Then Jesus touched the man. Immediately the leprosy disappeared. Then Jesus said, “Don’t tell anyone about what happened. But go show yourself to the priest. And offer a gift to God for your healing like Moses commanded. This will show people that you are healed.”

But the news about Jesus spread more and more. Many people came to hear Jesus and to be healed of their sicknesses. Jesus often went away to other places to be alone so that he could pray.

Jesus Heals a Crippled Man
(Mt. 9:1–8; Mk. 2:1–12)

One day Jesus was teaching the people. The Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there too. They had come from every town in Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem.

The Lord (God) was giving Jesus the power to heal people. There was a man that was paralyzed (crippled). Some men carried him on a mat. The men tried to bring him and put him down before Jesus. But there were so many people that the men could not find a way to Jesus. So the men went up on the roof and lowered the crippled man down through a hole in the ceiling. They lowered the mat into the room so that the crippled man was lying before Jesus. Jesus saw that these men believed. Jesus said to the sick man, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

The Jewish teachers of the law and the Pharisees thought to themselves, “Who is this man (Jesus)? He is saying things that are against God! Only God can forgive sins.”

But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said, “Why do you have these questions in your minds? The Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. But how can I prove this to you? Maybe you are thinking it was easy for me to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’ There is no proof that it really happened. But what if I say to the man, ‘Stand up and walk’? Then you will be able to see that I really have this power.” So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, stand up! Take your mat and go home!”

Then the man stood up before the people there. He picked up his mat and walked home, praising God. All the people were fully amazed. They began to praise God. The people were filled with much respect for God’s power.

Levi (Matthew) Follows Jesus
(Mt. 9:9–13; Mk. 2:13–17)

After this Jesus went out and saw a tax collector sitting at his place for collecting taxes. His name was Levi. Jesus said to him, “Follow me!” Levi got up, left everything, and followed Jesus.

Then Levi gave a big dinner for Jesus. The dinner was at Levi’s house. At the table there were many tax collectors and some

Simon Simon’s other name was Peter.
leprosy A very bad skin disease.
show yourself to the priest The law of Moses said a priest must say when a Jew with leprosy was well.
Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
tax collector(s) Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the other Jews hated them.
other people too. But the Pharisees and those men that taught the law for the Pharisees began to complain to the followers of Jesus, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and other bad people?”

Jesus answered them, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor. It is the sick people that need a doctor. I have not come to ask good people to change. I have come to ask bad people to change their hearts and lives!”

Jesus Is Not like Other Religious Leaders
(Mt. 9:14–17; Mk. 2:18–22)

They said to Jesus, “John’s followers often fast and pray, the same as the followers of the Pharisees. But your followers eat and drink all the time.”

Jesus said to them, “When there is a wedding, you cannot make the friends of the bridegroom fast while he is still with them. But the time will come when the groom will be taken away from them. Then his friends will fast.”

Jesus told them this story: “No person takes cloth off a new coat to cover a hole on an old coat. Why? Because he ruins the new coat, and the cloth from the new coat will not be the same as the old cloth. People never pour new wine into old wine bags. Why? Because the new wine will break the bags, and the wine will spill out and the wine bags will be ruined. People always put new wine into new wine bags. No person that drinks old wine wants new wine. Why? Because he says, ‘The old wine is fine.’”

Jesus Is Lord over the Sabbath Day
(Mt. 12:1–8; Mk. 2:23–28)

One time on a Sabbath day, Jesus was walking through some grain fields. His followers picked the grain, rubbed it in their hands, and ate it. Some Pharisees said, “Why are you doing that? It is against the law of Moses to do that on the Sabbath day.”

Jesus answered, “You have read about what David did when he and the people with him were hungry. David went into God’s house. David took the bread that was offered to God and ate it. And David gave some of the bread to the people with him. This was against the law of Moses. The law says that only the priests can eat that bread.” Then Jesus said to the Pharisees, “The Son of Man is Lord (Master) over the Sabbath day.”

Jesus Chooses His Twelve Apostles
(Mt. 10:1–4; Mk. 3:13–19)

At that time Jesus went out to a mountain to pray. He stayed there all night praying to God. The next morning, Jesus called his followers. He chose twelve of them. He named these men “apostles.” They were: Simon (Jesus named him Peter) and Andrew, Peter’s...
LUKE 6:15–36

Zealot
The Zealots were a group of Jewish patriots.
apostles
Men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers for telling his Good News to the world.
Tyre and Sidon
Towns in Lebanon where bad people lived.
Son of Man
A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
fathers
Important ancestors of the Jews, especially the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups.
prophets
People that spoke for God in Old Testament times.

17Jesus and the apostles* came down from the mountain. Jesus stood on a flat place. A large group of his followers were there. Also, there were many people from all around Judea, Jerusalem, and the seacoast cities of Tyre and Sidon.* 18They all came to hear Jesus teach and to be healed of their sicknesses. Jesus healed those people that were troubled by evil spirits {from the devil}. 19All the people were trying to touch Jesus, because power was coming out from him. Jesus healed them all! 20Jesus looked at his followers and said,

"What great blessings there are for you poor people!
God’s kingdom belongs to you.
What great blessings there are for you people that are hungry now!
You will be filled.
What great blessings there are for you people that are crying now!
You will be happy and laughing.
People will hate you because you belong to the Son of Man.* They will make you leave their group. They will insult you. They will think it is wrong even to say your name. When these things happen, know that God will bless you. 23At that time you can be happy and jump for joy, because you have a great reward in heaven. Their fathers* were mean to the prophets* in the same way that these people are mean to you.

24“But it will be bad for you, you rich people, because you had your easy life.
25It will be bad for you people that are full now, because you will be hungry.
It will be bad for you people that are laughing now, because you will be sad and cry.
26“It is bad when all people say good things about you. Their fathers* always said good things about the false prophets.*

Love Your Enemies
(Mt. 5:38–48; 7:12a)

27“I say to you people that are listening to me, love your enemies. Do good to those people that hate you. 28Ask God to bless those people that say bad things to you. Pray for those people that are mean to you. 29If a person hits you on the side of your face, let him hit the other side too. If a person takes your coat, don’t stop him from taking your shirt too. 30Give to every person that asks you. When a person takes something that is yours, don’t ask for it back. 31Do for other people what you want them to do for you.
32“If you love only those people that love you, should you get some special praise for doing that? No! Even sinners love the people that love them! 33If you do good only to those people that do good to you, should you get some special praise for doing that? No! Even sinners do that! 34If you loan things to people, always expecting to get something back, should you get some special praise for that? No! Even sinners lend to other sinners so that they can get back the same amount!
35“I’m telling you to love your enemies and do good to them. Lend to people without expecting to get anything back. If you do these things, you will have a great reward. You will be children of the Most High (God). Yes, because God is good even to the people that are full of sin and not thankful. 36Give love and mercy the same as your Father gives love and mercy.

false prophets
People that say they speak for God but do not really speak God’s truth.
Look at Yourselves  
(Mt. 7:1–5)

37“Don’t judge other people, and you will not be judged. Don’t condemn (find guilty) other people, and you will not be condemned. Forgive other people, and you will be forgiven. 38Give to other people, and you will receive. You will be given much. It will be poured into your hands—more than you can hold. You will be given so much that it will spill into your lap. The way you give to other people is the way God will give to you.”

39Jesus told them this story: “Can a blind man lead another blind man? No! Both of them will fall into a hole. 40A student is not better than his teacher. But when the student has fully learned, then he will be like his teacher.

41“Why do you notice the small piece of dust that is in your brother’s eye, but you don’t see the big piece of wood that is in your own eye? 42You say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take that little piece of dust out of your eye.’ Why do you say this? You can’t see that big piece of wood in your own eye! You are a hypocrite. First, take the piece of wood out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly to take the dust out of your brother’s eye.

Two Kinds of Fruit  
(Mt. 7:17–20; 12:34b–35)

43“A good tree does not give bad fruit. Also, a bad tree does not give good fruit. 44Each tree is known by the fruit it gives. People don’t gather figs from thorny weeds. And they don’t get grapes from bushes! 45A good person has good things saved in his heart. And so he brings good things out of his heart. But an evil person has evil things saved in his heart. So he brings out bad things. A person speaks the things that are in his heart.

Two Kinds of People  
(Mt. 7:24–27)

46“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but you are not doing what I say? 47Every person that comes to me and listens to my teachings and obeys—I will show you what he is like: 48He is like a man building a house. He digs deep and builds his house on rock. The floods come, and the water tries to wash the house away. But the flood cannot move the house, because the house was built well (strong).

49But the person that hears my words and does not obey is like a man that does not build his house on rock. When the floods come, the house falls down easily. And the house is completely destroyed.”

Jesus Heals a Servant  
(Mt. 8:5–13; Jn 4:43–54)

7Jesus finished saying all these things to the people. Then Jesus went into Capernaum.* 2In Capernaum there was an army officer.* The officer had a servant that was very sick; he was near death. The officer loved the servant very much. 3When the officer heard about Jesus, he sent some older Jewish leaders to him. The officer wanted the men to ask Jesus to come and save the life of his servant. 4The men went to Jesus. They begged Jesus to help the officer. They said, “This officer is worthy to have your help. 5He loves our people and he built the synagogue* for us.”

6So Jesus went with the men. Jesus was coming near the officer’s house when the officer sent friends to say, “Lord, you don’t need to do anything special for me. I am not good enough for you to come into my house. 7That is why I did not come to you myself. You only need to give the order and my servant boy will be healed. 8I understand your authority, I am a man under the authority (power) of other men. And I have soldiers under my authority. I tell one soldier, ‘Go,’ and he goes. And I tell another soldier, ‘Come,’ and he comes. And I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and my servant obeys me.”

9When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Jesus turned to the people that were following him. Jesus said, “I tell you, this is the most faith I have seen anywhere, even in Israel.”

Capernaum A town in Galilee where Jesus taught. 
army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers. 
synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.
Israel The Jewish nation (people).
LUKE 7:10–32

10 The group that was sent to Jesus went back to the house. There they found that the servant was healed.

Jesus Brings a Man Back to Life

11 The next day Jesus went to a town called Nain. Jesus’ followers and a large group of people were traveling with him. 12 When Jesus came near the town gates, he saw a funeral. A mother, who was a widow,* had lost her only son. Many people from the town were there with the mother while her son was being carried out. 13 When the Lord (Jesus) saw her, he felt very sorry for her. Jesus said to her, “Don’t cry.” 14 Jesus walked to the coffin* and touched it. The men that were carrying the coffin stopped. Jesus said to the dead son, “Young man, I tell you, get up!” 15 Then the son sat up and began to talk. Jesus gave him to his mother.

16 All the people were filled with fear. They began praising God and said, “A great prophet* has come to us!” And they said, “God is taking care of his people.” 17 This news about Jesus spread into all Judea and into all the places around there.

John Asks a Question
(Mt. 11:2–19)

18 John’s followers told John about all these things. John called for two of his followers. 19 John sent them to the Lord (Jesus) to ask, “Are you the One that is coming, or should we wait for another person?”

20 So the men came to Jesus. They said, “John the Baptizer sent us to you with this question: ‘Are you the One that is coming, or should we wait for another person?’”

21 At that time, Jesus healed many people of their sicknesses, diseases, and evil spirits [from the devil]. Jesus healed many blind people so that they could see again. 22 Then Jesus said to John’s followers, “Go tell John the things that you saw and heard here. Blind people are healed and can see. Crippled people are healed and can walk. People with leprosy* are healed.

Deaf people are healed and can hear. Dead people are given life. And the Good News* about God’s kingdom* is given to the poor people. 23 What great blessings there are for the person that can accept* me!*

24 When John’s followers left, Jesus began to tell the people about John: “What did you people go out into the desert to see? A weed* blown by the wind? 25 What did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No. Those people that have fine, nice clothes live in kings’ houses. 26 Really, what did you go out to see? A prophet*? Yes, and I tell you, John is more than a prophet. 27 This was written about John:

‘Listen! I (God) will send my helper* ahead of you. He will prepare the way for you.’

Malachi 3:1

28 I tell you, John is greater than any man ever born. But even the least important person in the kingdom of God is greater than John.”

29 (When the people heard this, they all agreed that God’s teaching was good. Even the tax collectors* agreed. These were the people that were baptized* by John. 30 But the Pharisees* and teachers of the law refused to accept God’s plan for themselves; they did not let John baptize them.)

31 “What shall I say about the people of this time? What can I compare them to? What are they like? 32 The people of this time are like children sitting in the market place. One group of children calls to the other children and says,

‘We played flute music for you, but you did not dance; we sang a sad song, but you did not cry.’

can accept Literally, “is not offended by.”
weed Literally, “reed.” Jesus means that John was not weak like a reed that is easily blown by the wind.
helper Literally, “messenger.”
tax collector(s) Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the other Jews hated them.
baptize(d) A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.
Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
33John the Baptist came and did not eat like other people, or drink wine. And you say, ‘He has a demon* inside him.’ 34The Son of Man* came eating like other people, and drinking wine. And you say, ‘Look at him! He eats too much and drinks too much wine! He is a friend of the tax collectors* and other bad people!’ 35But wisdom is shown to be right by the things it does.”

Simon the Pharisee

36One of the Pharisees* asked Jesus to eat with him. Jesus went into the Pharisee’s house and took a place at the table. 37There was a sinful woman in that town. She knew that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house. So the woman brought some perfume in an alabaster* jar. 38She stood at Jesus’ feet, crying. Then she began to wash his feet with her tears. She dried Jesus’ feet with her hair. She kissed his feet many times and rubbed them with perfume. 39The Pharisee that asked Jesus to come to his house saw this. He thought to himself, “If this man (Jesus) were a prophet,* he would know that the woman who is touching him is a sinner!”

40In response, Jesus said to the Pharisee,* “Simon, I have something to say to you.” Simon said, “Let me hear it, teacher.”

41Jesus said, “There were two men. Both men owed money to the same banker. One man owed the banker 500 silver coins.* The other man owed the banker 50 silver coins. 42The men had no money, so they could not pay their debt. But the banker told the men that they did not have to pay him. Which one of those two men will love the banker more?”

43Simon answered, “I think it would be the one that owed him the most money.”

44Then Jesus turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? When I came into your house, you gave me no water for my feet. But she washed my feet with her tears and dried my feet with her hair. 45You did not greet me with a kiss, but she has been kissing my feet since I came in! 46You did not honor me with oil for my head, but she rubbed my feet with her sweet-smelling oil. 47I tell you that her many sins are forgiven. This is clear, because she showed great love. But the person that feels only a little need to be forgiven will feel only a little love when he is forgiven.” 48Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

49The people sitting at the table began to think to themselves, “Who does this man (Jesus) think he is? How can he forgive sins?”

50Jesus said to the woman, “Because you believed, you are saved—from your sins. Go in peace.”

The Group with Jesus

8The next day, Jesus traveled through some cities and small towns. Jesus told the people a message from God, the Good News about God’s kingdom. The twelve apostles* were with him. 2There were also some women with him. Jesus had healed these women of sicknesses and evil spirits—from the devil.* One of the women was named Mary Magdalene.* Seven demons had come out of her. 3Also with these women were: Joanna, the wife of Chuza (Herod’s* helper), Suzanna, and many other women. These women used their own money to help Jesus and his apostles.

Jesus Uses a Story About Planting Seed

(Mt. 13:1–17; Mk. 4:1–12)

4Many people came together. People came to Jesus from every town. Jesus told the people this story:

5“A farmer went out to plant his seed. While the farmer was planting, some seed fell

Jesus said to Simon, “You are right.”

a demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
tax collector(s) Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the other Jews hated them.
Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
alabaster A beautiful kind of stone that can be carved.
prophet A person that spoke for God.
silver coins One coin, a Roman denarius, was the average pay for one day’s work.
beside the road. People walked on the seed, and the birds ate all this seed. Some seed fell on rock. This seed began to grow, but then died because the seed had no water. Some seed fell among thorny weeds. This seed grew, but later the weeds stopped the good plants from growing. And some seed fell on good ground. This seed grew and made 100 times more grain."

Jesus finished the story. Then Jesus called out, “You people that hear me, listen!”

9Jesus’ followers asked him, “What does this story mean?”

10Jesus said, “You have been chosen to know the secrets of the kingdom of God. But I use stories to speak to other people. I do this so that:

‘They will look, but they will not see; and they will listen, but they will not understand.’

Isaiah 6:9

Jesus Explains the Story About the Seed
(Mt. 13:18–23; Mk. 4:13–20)

11“This is what the story means: The seed is God’s teaching. What is the seed that fell beside the path? That is like the people that hear God’s teaching, but then the devil comes and makes them stop thinking about that teaching. So those people cannot believe the teaching and be saved. What is the seed that fell on rock? That is like the people that hear God’s teaching and accept it gladly. But these people don’t have deep roots. They believe for a while. But when trouble comes, they turn away from God. What is the seed that fell among the thorny weeds? That is like the people that hear God’s teaching, but they let the worries, riches, and pleasures of this life stop them from growing. So they never make good fruit. And what is the seed that fell on the good ground? That is like the people that hear God’s teaching with a good, honest heart. They obey God’s teaching and patiently make good fruit.

Use the Understanding You Have
(Mk. 4:21–25)

16“No person lights a lamp and then covers it with a bowl or hides it under a bed. Instead, that person puts the lamp on a lamp table so that the people that come in will have enough light to see. Everything that is hidden will become clear. Every secret thing will be made known, and everyone will see it. So be careful how you listen. The person that has some understanding will receive more. But the person that does not have understanding will lose even the understanding that he thinks he has.”

Jesus’ Followers Are His True Family
(Mt. 12:46–50; Mk. 3:31–35)

19Jesus’ mother and brothers came to visit him. There were so many people that Jesus’ mother and brothers could not get close to him. Someone said to Jesus, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside. They want to see you.”

21Jesus answered them, “My mother and my brothers are those people that listen to God’s teaching and obey it!”

The Followers See Jesus’ Power
(Mt. 8:23–27; Mk. 4:35–41)

22One day Jesus and his followers got into a boat. Jesus said to them, “Come with me across the lake.” And so they started across. While they were sailing, Jesus slept. A big storm blew down on the lake. The boat began to fill with water. They were in danger. The followers went to Jesus and woke him. They said, “Master! Master! We will drown!”

Jesus got up. He gave a command to the wind and the waves. The wind stopped, and the lake became calm. Jesus said, “Where is your faith?” The followers were afraid and amazed. They said to each other, “What kind of man is this? He commands the wind and the water, and they obey him!”

A Man with Demons Inside Him
(Mt. 8:28–34; Mk. 5:1–20)

26Jesus and his followers sailed on across the lake. They sailed to the area where the Gerasene people live, across from Galilee.
27When Jesus got out of the boat, a man from that town came to Jesus. This man had demons* inside him. For a long time he had worn no clothes. He lived in the caves where dead people are buried, not in a house.

28–29 The demon had often seized him. The man had been put in jail, and his hands and feet had been tied with chains. But the man would always break the chains, and the demon inside him would force him to go out to the places where no people lived. Then Jesus commanded the evil spirit (the demon) to come out of this man. The man fell down before Jesus and shouted with a loud voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Please, don’t punish me!”

30 Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” The man answered, “Legion.” (He said his name was “Legion” because many demons* had gone into him.)

31 The demons begged Jesus not to send them into eternal darkness.* On that hill there was a big herd of pigs eating. The demons begged Jesus to allow them to go into the pigs. So Jesus allowed the demons to do this. Then the demons came out of the man and went into the pigs. The herd of pigs ran down the hill and into the lake. All the pigs drowned.

34 The men that were caring for the pigs ran away. The men told the story in the fields and in the town. People went out to see what happened. The people came to Jesus and found the man sitting there at the feet of Jesus. The man had clothes on and was in his right mind again; the demons* were gone. The people became afraid. The men that saw these things happen told the other people all about how Jesus made the man well. All the people asked Jesus to go away. They were afraid.

So Jesus got into the boat to go back to Galilee. The man that Jesus healed begged to go with Jesus. But Jesus sent the man away, saying, “Go back home and tell people what God did for you.”

So the man went all over town telling what Jesus had done for him.

Jesus Gives Life to a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman
(Mt. 9:18–26; Mk. 5:21–43)

40When Jesus went back to Galilee, the people welcomed him. Everyone was waiting for him. 41–42 A man named Jairus came to Jesus. Jairus was a leader of the synagogue.* Jairus had only one daughter. She was twelve years old, and she was dying. So Jairus bowed down at the feet of Jesus and begged him to come to his house.

While Jesus was going to Jairus’ house, the people came around him. A woman was there who had been bleeding for twelve years. She had spent all her money on doctors, but no doctor was able to heal her. The woman came behind Jesus and touched the bottom of his coat. At that moment, her bleeding stopped.

45Then Jesus said, “Who touched me?” All the people said they had not touched Jesus. Peter said, “Master, the people are all around you and are pushing against you.”

46But Jesus said, “Someone touched me! I felt power go out from me.” When the woman saw that she could not hide, she came forward, shaking. She bowed down before Jesus. While all the people listened, she told why she touched Jesus. Then she said that she was healed immediately when she touched him. Jesus said to her, “My daughter, you are made well because you believed. Go in peace.”

49While Jesus was still speaking, a person came from the house of the synagogue* leader (Jairus) and said, “Your daughter has died! Don’t bother the teacher (Jesus) now.”

50 Jesus heard this. He said to Jairus, “Don’t be afraid! Just believe and your daughter will be well.”

51 Jesus went to the house. Jesus let only Peter, John, James, and the girl’s father and mother go inside with him. Jesus did not let any other person go inside. All the people were crying and feeling sad because the girl

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demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
Legion The name Legion means very many. A legion was about 5,000 men in the Roman army.
eternal darkness Literally, “the abyss,” something like a pit or a hole that has no end.
synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.
was dead. But Jesus said, “Don’t cry. She is not dead; she is only sleeping.”

53The people laughed at Jesus, because they knew that the girl was dead. 54But Jesus held her hand and called to her, “Little girl, stand up!” 55Her spirit came back into her and she stood up immediately. Jesus said, “Give her something to eat.” 56The girl’s parents were amazed. Jesus told them not to tell any person about what happened.

Jesus Sends His Apostles on a Mission
(Mt. 10:5-15; Mk. 6:7-13)

Jesus called the twelve apostles* together. He gave the apostles power to heal sicknesses and power to force demons* out of people. 2Jesus sent the apostles to tell about God’s kingdom and to heal the sick. 3He said to the apostles, “When you travel, don’t take a walking stick. Also, don’t carry a bag, food, or money. Take for your trip only the clothes you are wearing. 4When you go into a house, stay there until it is time to leave. 5If the people in the town will not welcome you, go outside the town and shake their dust off of your feet.* This will be a warning to them.”

6So the apostles went out. They traveled through all the towns. They told the Good News* and healed people everywhere.

Herod Is Confused About Jesus
(Mt. 14:1-12; Mk. 6:14-29)

7Governor Herod* heard about all these things that were happening. He was confused because some people said, “John the Baptizer is risen from death.” 8Other people said, “Elijah* has come to us.” And some other people said, “One of the prophets* from long ago has risen from death.” 9Herod said, “I cut off John’s head. So who is this man I hear these things about?” Herod continued trying to see Jesus.

Jesus Feeds More than 5,000 People
(Mt. 14:13-21; Mk. 6:30-44; Jn 6:1-14)

10When the apostles* came back, they told Jesus the things they had done on their trip. Then Jesus took them away to a town called Bethsaida. There, Jesus and his apostles could be alone together. 11But the people learned where Jesus went. They followed him. Jesus welcomed them and talked with them about God’s kingdom. He healed the people that were sick.

12Late in the afternoon, the twelve apostles* came to Jesus and said, “No people live in this place. Send the people away. They need to find food and places to sleep in the farms and towns around here.”

13But Jesus said to the apostles, “You give them something to eat.”

The apostles said, “We have only five loaves and two fish. Do you want us to go buy food for all these people?” (There are too many!) 14(There were about 5,000 men there.) Jesus said to his followers, “Tell the people to sit in groups of about 50 people.”

15So the followers did this and all the people sat down. 16Then Jesus took the five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus looked up into the sky and thanked God for the food. Then Jesus divided the food and gave it to the followers. Jesus told the followers to give the food to the people. 17All the people ate and were filled. And there was much food left. Twelve baskets were filled with the pieces of food that were not eaten.

Peter Says that Jesus Is the Christ
(Mt. 16:13-19; Mk. 8:27-29)

18One time Jesus was praying alone. His followers came together there. Jesus asked them, “Who do the people say I am?”

19The followers answered, “Some people say you are John the Baptizer. Other people say you are Elijah.* And some people say you are one of the prophets* from long ago that has come back to life.”

20Then Jesus said to his followers, “And who do you say I am?”

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**Notes:**
- apostles: Men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers for telling his Good News to the world.
- demon(s): Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
- shake their dust off of your feet: A warning. It would show that they were finished talking to these people.
- Good News: The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
- Herod: Herod Antipas, tetrarch (ruler) of Galilee and Perea, son of Herod the Great.
- Elijah: A prophet that lived about 850 B.C.
- prophets: People that spoke for God in Old Testament times.
Peter answered, “You are the Christ” from God.”

21 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone.

**Jesus Says that He Must Die**
(Mt. 16:21–28; Mk. 8:30–9:1)

22 Then Jesus said, “The Son of Man* must suffer many things. He will be rejected by the older Jewish leaders, the leading priests, and teachers of the law. The Son of Man will be killed. But after three days he will be raised from death.”

23 Jesus continued to say to all of them, “If any person wants to follow me, he must say ‘No’ to the things he wants. That person must accept the cross*suffering* that is given to him every day, and he must follow me. 24 The person that wants to save his life will lose it. And every person that gives his life for me will save it. 25 It is worth nothing for a person to have the whole world, if he himself is destroyed or lost. 26 If any person is ashamed of me and my teaching, then I will be ashamed of that person. I will be ashamed of that person at the time I come with my glory and with the glory of the Father and the holy angels. 27 I tell you the truth. Some of you people standing here will see the kingdom of God before you die.”

**Moses, Elijah, and Jesus**
(Mt. 17:1–8; Mk. 9:2–8)

28 About eight days after Jesus said these things, he took Peter, James, and John and went up on a mountain to pray. 29 While Jesus was praying, his face began to change. His clothes became shining white. 30 Then two men were talking with Jesus. The men were Moses and Elijah.* 31 Moses and Elijah were shining bright too. They were talking with Jesus about his death that would happen in Jerusalem. 32 Peter and the others were asleep. But they woke up and saw the glory of Jesus. They also saw the two men that were standing with Jesus. 33 When Moses and Elijah were leaving, Peter said, “Master, it is good that we are here. We will put three tents here—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” (Peter did not know what he was saying.)

34 While Peter was saying these things, a cloud came all around them. Peter, James, and John became afraid when the cloud covered them. 35 A voice came from the cloud. The voice said, “This is my Son. He is the One I have chosen. Obey him.”

36 When the voice finished, only Jesus was there. Peter, James, and John said nothing. At that time they told no person about what they had seen.

**Jesus Heals a Boy That Has an Evil Spirit**
(Mt. 17:14–18; Mk. 9:14–27)

37 The next day, Jesus, Peter, James, and John came down from the mountain. A large group of people met Jesus. 38 A man in the group shouted to Jesus, “Teacher, please come and look at my son. He is the only child I have. 39 An evil spirit from the devil, comes into my son, and then he shouts. He loses control of himself and he foams from the mouth. The evil spirit continues to hurt him and almost never leaves him. 40 I begged your followers to make the evil spirit leave my son, but they could not do it.”

41 Jesus answered, “You people that live now have no faith. Your lives are all wrong. How long must I be with you and be patient with you?” Then Jesus said to the man, “Bring your son here.”

42 While the boy was coming, the demon* threw the boy to the ground. The boy lost control of himself. But Jesus gave a strong command to the evil spirit. Then the boy was healed. And Jesus gave the boy back to his father. 43 All the people were amazed at the great power of God.

**Jesus Talks About His Death**
(Mt. 17:22–23; Mk. 9:30–32)

The people were still amazed about all the things Jesus did. Jesus said to his followers, “Don’t forget the things I will tell you now: The Son of Man* will soon be given into the control of some men.” But the followers did

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**Terms and Concepts**

- **Christ** The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
- **Son of Man** A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
- **Moses and Elijah** Two very important Jewish leaders during the time of the Old Testament.
- **Demon(s)** Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
not understand what Jesus meant. The meaning was hidden from them so that they could not understand it. But the followers were afraid to ask Jesus about what he said.

The Most Important Person
(Mt. 18:1–5; Mk. 9:33–37)

46Jesus’ followers began to have an argument about which one of them was the greatest (most important). 47Jesus knew what they were thinking. So Jesus took a little child and stood the child beside him. 48Then Jesus said to the followers, “If a person accepts a little child like this in my name, then that person accepts me. And when a person accepts me, that person accepts the One (God) that sent me. The person among you that is the most humble—that person is a great (important) person.”

Any Person Not Against You Is for You
(Mt. 10:38–40)

49John answered, “Master, we saw a person using your name to force demons* out of people. We told him to stop because he does not belong to our group.” 50Jesus said to John, “Don’t stop him. If a person is not against you, then he is for you.”

A Samaritan Town

51The time was coming near when Jesus would leave and go back to heaven. He decided to go to Jerusalem. 52Jesus sent some men ahead of him. The men went into a town in Samaria to make everything ready for Jesus. 53But the people there would not welcome Jesus because he was going toward Jerusalem. 54James and John, the followers of Jesus, saw this. They said, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven and destroy those people?”* 55But Jesus turned and scolded them.* 56Then Jesus and his followers went to another town.

Following Jesus
(Mt. 8:19–22)

57They were all traveling along the road. Someone said to Jesus, “I will follow you any place you go.” 58Jesus answered, “The foxes have holes to live in. The birds have nests to live in. But the Son of Man* has no place where he can rest his head.” 59Jesus said to another man, “Follow me!” But the man said, “Lord, let me go and bury my father first.” 60But Jesus said to him, “Let the people that are dead bury their own dead! You must go and tell about the kingdom of God.” 61Another man said, “I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go and say good-bye to my family.” 62Jesus said, “If any person begins to plow a field, but looks back, he is not prepared for the kingdom of God.”

Jesus Sends the 72 Men

10After this, the Lord (Jesus) chose 72 more men. Jesus sent the men out in groups of two. He sent them ahead of him into every town and place where he planned to go. 2Jesus said to them, “There are many, many people to harvest (save). But there are only a few workers to help harvest them. God owns the harvest (people). Pray to God that he will send more workers to help gather his harvest. 3You can go now. But listen! I am sending you, and you will be like sheep among wolves. 4Don’t carry any money, a bag, or shoes. Don’t stop to talk with people on the road. 5Before you go into a house, say, ‘Peace be with this home.’ 6If a peaceful person lives there, your blessing of peace will stay with him. If the person is not peaceful, then your blessing of peace will come back to you. 7Stay in the peaceful house. Eat and drink what the people there give you. A worker should be given his pay. Don’t leave that house to stay in another house. 8If you go into a town and the people welcome you, eat the food they give you. 9Heal
demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
Verse 54 Some Greek copies add: “... like Elijah did?”
Verse 55 Some Greek copies add: “And Jesus said, ‘You don’t know what kind of spirit you belong to. 8The Son of Man did not come to destroy the souls of men but to save them.’”

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
72 Some Greek copies of Luke say 70.
the sick people that live there. Then tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is soon coming to you!’
10But if you go into a town, and the people don’t welcome you, then go out into the streets of that town and say, 11Even the dirt (dust) from your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. But remember that the kingdom of God is coming soon.’ 12I tell you, on the judgment day it will be worse for the people of that town than for the people of Sodom.*

Jesus Warns People That Don’t Believe
(Mt. 11:20–24)

13“It will be bad for you, Chorazin!* It will be bad for you, Bethsaida!* I did many miracles* in you. If those same miracles had happened in Tyre and Sidon,* then the people in those cities would have changed their lives and stopped sinning a long time ago. They would have worn sackcloth* and put ashes on themselves to show that they were sorry for their sins. 14But on the judgment day it will be worse for you than for Tyre and Sidon. 15And you, Capernaum,* will you be lifted up to heaven? No! You will be thrown down to the place of death!
16“When a person listens to you, that person is really listening to me. But when a person refuses to accept you, that person is really refusing to accept me. And when a person refuses to accept me, he is refusing to accept the One (God) that sent me.”

Satan Falls

17When the 72* men came back from their trip, they were very happy. They said, “Lord, even the demons* obeyed us when we used your name!” 18Jesus said to the men, “I saw Satan (the devil) falling like lightning from the sky. 19Listen! I gave you power to walk on snakes and scorpions.* I gave you more power than the Enemy (the devil) has. Nothing will hurt you. 20Yes, the spirits obey you. And be happy. Why? Not because you have this power, but be happy because your names are written in heaven.”

Jesus Prays to the Father
(Mt. 11:25–27; 13:16–17)

21Then the Holy Spirit* made Jesus feel very happy. Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. I praise you because you have hidden these things from the wise and smart people. But you have shown these things to people that are like little children. Yes, Father, you did this because this is what you really wanted to do.
22“My Father has given me all things. No person knows who the Son is—only the Father knows. And only the Son knows who the Father is. The only people that will know about the Father are those people the Son chooses to tell.”
23Then Jesus turned to his followers. They were there alone with him. Jesus said, “You are blessed to see the things you now see! 24I tell you, many prophets* and kings wanted to see the things that you now see. But they did not see these things. And many prophets and kings wanted to hear the things that you now hear. But they did not hear these things.”

Story About the Good Samaritan

25Then a teacher of the law stood up. He was trying to test Jesus. He said, “Teacher, what must I do to get life forever?” 26Jesus said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you understand from it?” 27The man answered, “‘You must love the Lord your God. You must love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’* Also, ‘You must love other people the same as you love yourself.’*”

Sodom A town where very bad people lived. God punished them by destroying their city.
Chorazin, Bethsaida Towns by Lake Galilee where Jesus preached to the people.
miracle(s) Amazing works done by God’s power.
Tyre and Sidon Towns in Lebanon where bad people lived.
sackcloth A rough cloth made from animal hair. People sometimes wore it to show sadness.
Capernaum A town in Galilee where Jesus taught.
72 Many Greek copies of Luke say 70.
demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

scorpions A scorpion is an insect with a poison sting.
Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
prophets People that spoke for God.
*You must … mind’ Quote from Deut. 6:5.
*You must … yourself’ Quote from Lev. 19:18.
LUKE 10:28–11:8

28Jesus said to him, “Your answer is right. Do this and you will have life forever.”

29But the man wanted to show that the way he was living was right. So he said to Jesus, “But who are these other people I must love?”

30To answer this question, Jesus said, “A man was going down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Some robbers surrounded him. They tore off his clothes and beat him. Then the robbers left the man lying there on the ground. He was almost dead. It happened that a Jewish priest was going down that road. When the priest saw the man, he did not stop to help him; he walked away. 32Next, a Levite* came near. The Levite saw the hurt man, but he went around him. He would not stop to help him either; he just walked away. 33Then a Samaritan* man traveled down that road. He came to the place where the hurt man was lying. The Samaritan saw the man. He felt very sorry for the hurt man. The Samaritan went to him and poured olive oil and wine* on his wounds. Then he covered the man’s wounds with cloth. The Samaritan had a donkey. He put the hurt man on his donkey, and he took him to an inn. At the inn, the Samaritan cared for him. 35The next day, the Samaritan brought out two silver coins* and gave them to the man that worked at the inn. The Samaritan said, “Take care of this hurt man. If you spend more money on him, I will pay it back to you when I come again.”

36Then Jesus said, “Which one of these three men (the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan) do you think showed love to the man that was hurt by the robbers?”

37The teacher of the law answered, “The one that helped him.”

Jesus said to him, “Then you go and do the same [for other people]!”

Mary and Martha

38While Jesus and his followers were traveling, Jesus went into a town. A woman named Martha let Jesus stay at her house. 39Martha had a sister named Mary. Mary was sitting at Jesus’ feet and listening to him teach. 40But her sister Martha was busy doing all the work that had to be done. Martha went in and said, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”

41But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are getting worried and upset about too many things. Only one thing is important. Mary has made the right choice; and it will never be taken away from her.”

Jesus Teaches About Prayer
(Mt. 6:9–15)

1One time Jesus was praying in a place. When Jesus finished praying, one of his followers said to him, “John* taught his followers how to pray. Lord, teach us how to pray too.”

2Jesus said to the followers, “When you pray, pray like this:

‘Father, we pray that your name will always be kept holy. We pray that your kingdom will come. Give us the food we need for each day. Forgive us the sins we have done, because we forgive every person that has done wrong to us. And don’t let us be tempted (tested).’”

Continue to Ask
(Mt. 7:7–11)

5–6Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose one of you went to your friend’s house very late at night and said to him, ‘A friend of mine has come into town to visit me. But I have nothing for him to eat. Please give me three loaves of bread.’ Your friend inside the house answers, ‘Go away! Don’t bother me! The door is already locked. My children and I are in bed. I cannot get up and give you the bread now.’

John John the Baptizer; he told people about Christ’s coming. Read Mt. 3; Lk. 3.

Levite Levites were men from the family group of Levi who helped the Jewish priests in the temple.

Samaritan From Samaria. Samaritans were part Jewish, but some Jews did not accept them as pure Jews.

olive oil and wine Oil and wine were used like medicine to soften and clean wounds.

silver coins One coin, a Roman denarius, was the average pay for one day’s work.
tell you, maybe friendship is not enough to make him get up to give you the bread. But he will surely get up to give you what you need if you continue to ask. So I tell you, continue to ask, and God will give to you. Continue to search, and you will find. Continue to knock, and the door will open for you. Yes, if a person continues asking, that person will receive. If a person continues looking, that person will find. And if a person continues knocking, the door will open for that person. Does any of you have a son? What would you do if your son asked you for a fish? Would any father give his son a snake? No! You would give him a fish. Or, if your son asks for an egg, would you give him a scorpion? No! You are like all other people—you are evil. But you know how to give good things to your children. So surely your heavenly Father knows how to give the Holy Spirit to those people that ask him.”

**Jesus’ Power Is from God**

*(Mt. 12:22–30; Mk. 3:20–27)*

One time Jesus was sending a demon out of a man that could not talk. When the demon came out, the man was able to speak. The people were amazed. But some of the people said, “He uses the power of Beelzebul (the devil) to force demons out of people. Beelzebul is the ruler of demons.”

Other people wanted to test Jesus. They asked Jesus to show them a sign from heaven. But Jesus knew the things they were thinking. So Jesus said to the people, “Every kingdom that is divided and fights against itself will be destroyed. And a family that fights against itself will break apart. So if Satan (the devil) is fighting against himself, then how will his kingdom continue? You say that I use the power of Beelzebul (the devil) to force out demons. But if I use the power of Beelzebul to force out demons, then what power do your people use when they force out demons? So your own people will prove that you are wrong. But I use the power of God to force out demons. This shows that the kingdom of God has come to you!

“When a strong man with many weapons guards his own house, then the things in his house are safe. But suppose a stronger man comes and defeats him. The stronger man will take away the weapons that the first man trusted to keep his house safe. Then the stronger man will do what he wants with the other man’s things.

“But if Jesus said, “The people that hear the teaching of God and obey it—they are the people that are truly happy!”

**The Empty Person**

*(Mt. 12:43–45)*

“When an evil spirit comes out of a person, that spirit travels through dry places, looking for a place to rest. But that spirit finds no place to rest. So the spirit says, ‘I will go back to the home (person) I left.’ When the spirit comes back to that person, the spirit finds that home swept clean and made neat. Then the evil spirit goes out and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself. Then all the evil spirits go into that person and live there. And that person has even more trouble than he had before.”

**The People That Are Truly Happy**

*When Jesus said these things, a woman with the people there began to speak. She said to Jesus, “What a great blessing God gave your mother, because she gave birth to you and fed you.”

But Jesus said, “The people that hear the teaching of God and obey it—they are the people that are truly happy!”

**Give Us Proof!**

*(Mt. 12:38–42; Mk. 8:12)*

The group of people grew larger and larger. Jesus said, “The people that live today are evil. They ask for a miracle as a sign from God. But no miracle will be given as a sign to them. The only sign will be the

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**scorpion** A scorpion is an insect that has a poison sting.

**Holy Spirit** Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

**demon(s)** Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

**miracle(s)** Amazing works done by God’s power.
30 Jonah was a sign for those people that lived in Nineveh. It is the same with the Son of Man. The Son of Man will be a sign for the people of this time.

31 On the judgment day, you people that live now will be compared with the Queen of the South, and she will be a witness to show that you are wrong. Why? Because she traveled from far, far away to listen to Solomon’s wise teaching. And I tell you that someone greater than Solomon is right here, but you won’t listen to me!

32 On the judgment day, you people that live now will also be compared with the people from Nineveh, and they will be witnesses to show that you are wrong. Why? Because when Jonah preached to those people, they changed their hearts and lives. And you are listening to someone greater than Jonah, but you refuse to change.

**Be a Light for the World**

(Mt. 5:15; 6:22–23)

33 “No person takes a light and puts it under a bowl or hides it. Instead, a person puts the light on a lamp table so that the people that come in can see.

34 Your eye is a light for the body. If your eyes are good, then your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, then your whole body will be full of darkness. So be careful! Don’t let the light in you become dark.

35 If your whole body is full of light, and none of it is dark, then it will be all bright. It will be like you have the light of a lamp shining on you.”

**Jesus Criticizes the Religious Leaders**

(Mt. 23:1–36; Mk. 12:38–40; Lk. 20:45–47)

37 After Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee asked Jesus to eat with him. So Jesus came and took a place at the table.

38 But the Pharisee was surprised when he saw that Jesus did not wash his hands first before the meal.

39 The Lord said to him, “You Pharisees think that washing the outside of the body is so important. That’s like, cleaning only the outside of a cup or a dish! The inside is more important. And what is inside you? You want only to cheat and hurt people.

40 You are foolish! The same One that made what is outside also made what is inside. So pay attention to what is inside. Give to the people that need help. Then you will be fully clean.

41 But it will be bad for you Pharisees! You give God one-tenth of everything you own—even your mint, your rue, and every other little plant in your garden. But you forget to be fair to other people and to love God. These are the things you should do. And you should also continue to do those other things—like giving one-tenth.

42 It will be bad for you Pharisees because you love to get the most important seats in the synagogues. And you love for people to show respect to you in the market places.

43 It will be bad for you, because you are like hidden graves. People walk on them without knowing it.”

45 One of the teachers of the law said to Jesus, “Teacher, when you say these things about the Pharisees, you are criticizing our group too.”

46 Jesus answered, “It will be bad for you, you teachers of the law! You make strict rules that are very hard for people to obey. You try to force other people to obey those rules. But you yourselves don’t even try to follow any of those rules.

47 It will be bad for you, because you build tombs for the prophets. But these are the same prophets that your fathers killed!

48 And now you show all people that you agree to wash your hands. Washing the hands was a Jewish religious custom that the Pharisees thought was very important.

Synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

You make ... obey Literally, “You put heavy burdens on people that are hard for them to carry.”

Tombs Small buildings made to show respect for important persons that had died.

Prophets People that spoke for God in Old Testament times.

Fathers Important ancestors of the Jews, especially the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups.
with what your fathers did. They killed the prophets, and you build tombs for the prophets! 49This is why the Wisdom of God said, ‘I will send prophets and apostles* to them. Some of my prophets and apostles will be killed by evil men. Others will be treated badly.’ 50So you people that live now will be punished for the deaths of all the prophets that were killed since the beginning of the world. 51You will be punished for the killing of Abel.* And you will be punished for the killing of Zechariah.* Zechariah was killed between the altar and the temple.* Yes, I tell you that you people that live now will be punished for them all.

52“IT will be bad for you, you teachers of the law. You have taken away the key to learning about God. You yourselves would not learn, and you stopped others from learning, too.”

53When Jesus was leaving, the teachers of the law and the Pharisees* began to give him much trouble. They tried to make Jesus answer questions about many things. 54They were trying to find a way to catch Jesus saying something wrong.

Don’t Be Like the Pharisees

12 Many thousands of people came together. There were so many people that they were stepping on each other. Before Jesus spoke to the people, he said to his followers, “Be careful of the yeast* of the Pharisees.* I mean that they are hypocrites.* 2Everything that is hidden will be shown. Everything that is secret will be made known. 3The things you say in the dark (secretly) will be told in the light (openly). The things you whisper in a private room will be shouted from the top of the house.”

Fear Only God
(Mt. 10:28–31)

4Then Jesus said to the people, “I tell you, my friends, don’t be afraid of people. People can kill the body, but after that they can do nothing more to hurt you. 5I will show you the One to fear. You should fear him (God) who has the power to kill you and also to throw you into hell. Yes, he is the One you should fear.

6“When birds are sold, five small birds cost only two pennies. But God does not forget any of them. 7Yes, God even knows how many hairs you have on your head. Don’t be afraid. You are worth much more than many birds.

Don’t Be Ashamed of Jesus
(Mt. 10:32–33; 12:32; 10:19–20)

8“I tell you, if any person stands before other people and is willing to say that he believes in me, then I* will say that person belongs to me. I will say this before the angels of God. 9But if any person stands before people and says he does not believe in me, then I will say that person does not belong to me. I will say this before the angels of God.

10“If a person says something against the Son of Man,* he can be forgiven. But a person that says bad things against (refuses to accept) the Holy Spirit* will not be forgiven.

11“When men bring you into the synagogues* before the leaders and other important men, don’t worry about what you will say. 12At that time the Holy Spirit* will teach you what you must say.”

Jesus Warns Against Selfishness

13One of the men in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, our father just died. Tell my brother to share with me the things our father owned.”

prophets and apostles  People chosen by God to tell his Good News to the world.
Abel, Zechariah  In the Hebrew Old Testament, the first and last men to be murdered.
altar … temple  This altar was the place where sacrifices were offered to God outside the temple, the building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
Pharisees  The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
yeast  Used here as a symbol of bad influence. Like yeast, the hypocrisy of the Jewish religious leaders could not be seen. But their wrong teaching influenced many people.
hypocrites  Bad people that act like they are good.

I Literally, “the Son of Man” (Jesus).
Son of Man  A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
Holy Spirit  Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
synagogue(s)  Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.
LUKE 12:14–42

14But Jesus said to him, “Who said that I should be your judge or decide how to divide your father’s things between you two?” 15Then Jesus said to them, “Be careful and guard against all kinds of greed. A person does not get life from the many things he owns.”

16Then Jesus used this story: “There was a rich man that had some land. His land grew a very good crop of food. 17 The rich man thought to himself, ‘What will I do? I have no place to keep all my crops.’ 18 Then the rich man said, ‘I know what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger barns! I will put all my wheat and good things together in my new barns. 19 Then I can say to myself, I have many good things stored. I have saved enough for many years. Rest, eat, drink, and enjoy life!’ 20 But God said to that man, ‘Foolish man! Tonight you will die. So what about the things you prepared for yourself? Who will get those things now?’

21“This is how it will be for the person that saves things only for himself. To God that person is not rich.”

Putting God’s Kingdom First

(Mt. 6:25–34; 19–21)

22Jesus said to his followers, “So I tell you, don’t worry about the food you need to live. Don’t worry about the clothes you need for your body. 23 Life is more important than food. And the body is more important than clothes. 24 Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest. Birds don’t save food in houses or barns. But God takes care of them. And you are worth much more than birds. 25 None of you can add any time to your life by worrying about it. 26 If you cannot do the little things, then why worry about the big things? 27 Look at the wild flowers. See how they grow. They don’t work or make clothes for themselves. But I tell you that even Solomon, the great and rich king, was not dressed as beautifully as one of these flowers. 28 God clothes the grass in the field like that. That grass is living today, but tomorrow it will be thrown into the fire to be burned. So you know that God will clothe you much more. Don’t have so little faith! 29 So don’t always think about what you will eat or what you will drink. Don’t worry about it.

30 All the people that don’t know God try to get those things. Your Father (God) knows that you need those things. 31 The thing you should want is God’s kingdom. Then all these other things you need will be given to you.

Don’t Trust in Money

32“Don’t fear, little flock (group). Your Father (God) wants to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell the things you have and give that money to people that need it. The riches of this world don’t continue. So get the kind of riches that continue. Get the treasure of heaven. That treasure continues forever. Thieves can’t steal your treasure in heaven, and moths can’t destroy it. 34 Your heart will be where your treasure is.

Always Be Ready

(Mt. 24:45–51)

35“Be ready! Be fully dressed and have your lights shining. 36 Be like servants that are waiting for their master to come home from a wedding party. The master comes and knocks. The servants open the door for the master. 37 Those servants will be blessed when their master comes home, because he sees that his servants are ready and waiting for him. I tell you the truth. The master will dress himself for work and tell the servants to sit at the table. Then the master will serve them. 38 Those servants might have to wait until midnight or later for their master. But they will be happy when their master comes in and finds them still waiting. 39 Remember this: If the owner of the house knew what time a thief was coming, then the owner would not allow the thief to enter his house. 40 So you also must be ready! The Son of Man* will come at a time when you don’t expect him!”

Who Is the Trusted Servant?

41 Peter said, “Lord, did you tell this story for us or for all people?” 42 The Lord said, “Who is the wise and trusted servant? The master trusts one servant to give the other servants their food at the

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
right time. Who is the servant that the master trusts to do that work? 43When the master comes and finds that servant doing the work he gave him, that servant will be very happy. 44I tell you the truth. The master will choose that servant to take care of everything the master owns. 45But what will happen if that servant is evil and thinks that his master will not come back soon? That servant will begin to beat the other servants, men and women. He will eat and drink and get drunk. 46Then the master of that servant will come when that servant is not ready. It will be a time when that servant is not expecting the master. Then the master will punish that servant. The master will send him away to be with the other people that don’t obey.

47“That servant knew what his master wanted him to do. But that servant did not make himself ready or try to do what his master wanted. So that servant will be punished very much! 48But what about the servant that does not know what his master wants? The servant does things that deserve punishment. But he will get less punishment than the servant that knew what he should do. Any person that has been given much will be responsible for much. Much more will be expected from the person that has been given more.”

People Will Not Agree About Jesus
(Mt. 10:34–36)

49Jesus continued speaking: “I came to bring fire to the world. I wish it were already burning! 50I must be baptized with a different kind of baptism.* I feel very troubled until it is finished. 51Do you think that I came to give peace to the world? No! I came to divide the world! 52From now on, a family with five people will be divided, three against two, and two against three.

53A father and son will be divided:
The son will be against his father.
The father will be against his son.
A mother and her daughter will be divided:
The daughter will be against her mother.
The mother will be against her daughter.

baptized ... baptism These words have a special meaning here—being “baptized” or “buried” in troubles.

A mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law will be divided:
The daughter-in-law will be against her mother-in-law.
The mother-in-law will be against her daughter-in-law.”

Understanding the Times
(Mt. 16:2–3)

54Then Jesus said to the people, “When you see clouds growing bigger in the west, you say, ‘A rainstorm is coming.’ And soon it begins to rain. 55When you feel the wind begin to blow from the south, you say, ‘It will be a hot day.’ And you are right. 56You hypocrites!* You can understand the weather. Why don’t you understand what is happening now?

Settle Your Problems
(Mt. 5:25–26)

57“Why can’t you decide for yourselves what is right? 58Suppose a person is suing you, and you are going with him to court. You should try hard to settle it on the way. If you don’t settle it, he may take you to the judge. And the judge will throw you into jail. 59You will not get out of there until you have paid every cent of what you owe.”

Change Your Hearts

13At that time some people were there with Jesus. These people told Jesus about what happened to some people from Galilee. Pilate* killed those people while they were worshiping. Pilate mixed their blood with the blood of the animals they were sacrificing* to God. 2Jesus answered, “Do you think this happened to those people because they were more sinful than all other people from Galilee? 3No, they were not! But if all of you don’t change your hearts and lives, then you will be destroyed like those people were! 4What about those 18 people that died when the tower of Siloam fell on them? Do you think those people were more sinful than all the people that live in Jerusalem? 5They were not! But I

hypocrites Bad people that act like they are good.
Pilate Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea from 26 A.D. to 36 A.D.
sacrificing Killing an animal as an offering to God.
tell you if you don’t change your hearts and lives, then you will all be destroyed too!”

The Useless Tree

6Jesus told this story: “A man had a fig tree. He planted the tree in his garden. The man came looking for some fruit on the tree, but he found none. 7The man had a servant that took care of his garden. So the man said to his servant, ‘I have been looking for fruit on this tree for three years, but I never find any. Cut it down! Why should it waste the ground?’ 8But the servant answered, ‘Master, let the tree have one more year to make fruit. Let me dig up the dirt around it and put on some plant food. 9Maybe the tree will make fruit next year. If the tree still does not make fruit, then you can cut it down.’”

Jesus Heals a Woman on the Sabbath

10Jesus taught in one of the synagogues* on the Sabbath day. 11In that synagogue there was a woman that had a spirit {from the devil} inside her. This spirit had made the woman crippled for 18 years. Her back was always bent; she could not stand up straight. 12When Jesus saw her, he called to her, “Woman, your sickness has gone away from you!” 13Jesus put his hands on her. Then she was able to stand up straight. She praised God.

14The synagogue* leader was angry because Jesus healed on the Sabbath day. 15The leader said to the people, “There are six days for work. So come to be healed on one of those days. Don’t come for healing on the Sabbath day.” 16The Lord (Jesus) answered, “You people are hypocrites! All of you untie your work animals and lead them to drink water every day—even on the Sabbath day!* 17This woman that I healed is our Jewish sister.* But Satan (the devil) has held her for 18 years. Surely it is not wrong for her to be made free from her sickness on a Sabbath day!” 18When Jesus said this, all the men that were criticizing him felt ashamed of themselves. And all the people were happy for the wonderful things Jesus was doing.

What Is God’s Kingdom Like?

(Mt. 13:31–33; Mk. 4:30–32)

18Then Jesus said, “What is God’s kingdom like? What can I compare it with? 19God’s kingdom is like the seed of the mustard plant.* A person plants this seed in his garden. The seed grows and becomes a tree. The birds build nests on its branches.” 20Jesus said again, “What can I compare God’s kingdom with? 21It is like yeast* that a woman mixes into a big bowl of flour to make bread. The yeast makes all the dough (bread) rise.”

The Narrow Door

(Mt. 7:13–14, 21–23)

22Jesus was teaching in every town and village. He continued to travel toward Jerusalem. 23Someone said to Jesus, “Lord, how many people will be saved? Only a few?” 24Jesus said, “Try hard to enter through the narrow door {that opens the way to heaven}! Many people will try to enter there, but they will not be able to enter. 25If a man locks the door of his house, then you can stand outside and knock on the door, but he won’t open it. You can say, ‘Sir, open the door for us!’ But the man will answer, ‘I don’t know you! Where did you come from?’ 26Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with you. You taught in the streets of our town.’ 27Then he will say to you, ‘I don’t know you! Where did you come from? Go away from me! You are all people that do wrong!’ 28You will see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,* and all the prophets* in God’s kingdom. But you will be left outside. Then you will cry with fear and anger. 29People will come from the east, west, north, and south. They will sit down at the table in the kingdom of God. 30People that have the lowest place in life now will have the highest
place in God’s kingdom. And people that have the highest place now will have the lowest place in God’s kingdom.”

Jesus Will Die in Jerusalem
(Mt. 23:37–39)

31 At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said, “Go away from here and hide! Herod wants to kill you!”

32 Jesus said to them, “Go tell that fox, 'Today and tomorrow I am forcing demons out of people and finishing my work of healing. Then, the next day, the work will be finished.' After that, I must go, because all prophets should die in Jerusalem.

34 ‘O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets. You kill with rocks the people God has sent to you. Many, many times I wanted to help your people. I wanted to gather your people together like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you did not let me.

35 Now your home will be left completely empty. I tell you, you will not see me again until that time when you will say, ‘Welcome! God bless the One that comes in the name of the Lord (God).’”

Don’t Make Yourself Important

7 Then Jesus noticed that some of the guests were choosing the best places to sit. So Jesus told this story: 8 “When a person invites you to a wedding, don’t sit in the most important seat. The person may have invited someone more important than you. 9 And if you are sitting in the most important seat, then the person that invited you will come to you and say, ‘Give this man your seat!’ Then you will begin to move down to the last place. And you will be very embarrassed. So when a person invites you, go sit in the seat that is not important. Then the person that invited you will come to you and say, ‘Friend, move up here to this better place!’ What an honor this will be for you in front of all the other guests! Every person that makes himself important will be made humble. But the person that makes himself humble will be made important.”

Is It Right to Heal on the Sabbath Day?

14 On a Sabbath day, Jesus went to the home of a leading Pharisee to eat with him. The people there were all watching Jesus very closely. A man with a bad disease was put before Jesus. Jesus said to the Pharisees and teachers of the law, “Is it right or wrong to heal on the Sabbath day?” But they would not answer his question. So Jesus took the man and healed him. Then Jesus sent the man away. Jesus said to the Pharisees and teachers of the law, “If your son or work animal falls into a well on the Sabbath day, you know you would pull him out quickly.” The Pharisees and teachers of the law could say nothing against what Jesus said.

You Will Be Rewarded

12 Then Jesus said to the Pharisee that had invited him, “When you give a lunch or a dinner, don’t invite only your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. At another time they will pay you back by inviting you to eat with them. Instead, when you give a feast, invite the poor people, the crippled, and the blind. Then you will have great blessings, because these people cannot pay you back. They have nothing. But God will reward you at the time when good people rise from death.”

Story About a Big Dinner Party
(Mt. 22:1–10)

15 One of the men sitting at the table with Jesus heard these things. The man said to Jesus, “What a great blessing it will be for a person to eat a meal in God’s kingdom!”

16 Jesus said to him, “A man gave a big dinner. The man invited many people. When it was time to eat, the man sent his servant to tell the guests, ‘Come! The food is ready!’
LUKE 14:18–15:10

18But all the guests said they could not come. Each man made an excuse. The first man said, ‘I have just bought a field, so I must go look at it. Please excuse me.’ 19Another man said, ‘I have just bought five pairs of work animals; I must go and try them. Please excuse me.’ 20A third man said, ‘I just got married; I can’t come.’ 21So the servant returned. He told his master what had happened. Then the master became angry and said, ‘Hurry! Go into the streets and alleys of the town. Bring me the poor people, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’ 22Later the servant said to him, ‘Master, I did what you told me to do, but we still have places for more people.’ 23The master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and country roads. Tell the people there to come. I want my house to be full! 24None of those people that I invited first will ever eat with me!’

Decide If You Are Able to Follow Me
(Mt. 10:37–38)

25Many people were traveling with Jesus. Jesus said to the people, 26“If a person comes to me, but will not leave his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, or sisters, then that person cannot be my follower. A person must love me more than he loves anything—even his own life! 27If a person will not carry the cross (suffering) that is given to him when he follows me, then that person cannot be my follower. 28If you wanted to build a building, you would first sit down and decide how much it would cost. You must see if you have enough money to finish the job. 29If you don’t do that, you might begin the work, but you would not be able to finish. And if you could not finish it, then all the people watching would laugh at you. 30They would say, ‘This man began to build, but he was not able to finish!’ 31“If a king is going to fight against another king, first he will sit down and plan. If the king has only 10,000 men, he will plan to see if he is able to defeat the other king that has 20,000 men. 32If he cannot defeat the other king, then he will send some men to speak to the other king and ask for peace. 33It is the same for each of you. You must decide if you can leave everything you have to follow me. If not, you cannot be my follower!

Don’t Lose Your Influence
(Mt. 5:13; Mk. 9:50)

34“Salt is a good thing. But if the salt loses its salty taste, then you can’t make it salty again. 35It is worth nothing. You can’t even use it for soil or for plant food. People throw it away. “You people that hear me, listen!”

Joy in Heaven
(Mt. 18:12–14)

15Many tax collectors* and bad people came to listen to Jesus. 2Then the Pharisees* and the teachers of the law began to complain, “Look! This man (Jesus) welcomes bad people and even eats with them!” 3Then Jesus told them this story: 4“Suppose one of you has 100 sheep, but he loses one of them. Then he will leave the other 99 sheep alone and go out and look for the lost sheep. The man will continue to search for the lost sheep until he finds it. 5And when he finds the sheep, the man is very happy. The man carries the sheep 6to his home. He goes to his friends and neighbors and says to them, ‘Be happy with me because I found my lost sheep!’ 7In the same way, I tell you, heaven is a happy place when one sinner changes his heart. There is more joy for that one sinner than there is for 99 good people that don’t need to change their hearts. 8“Suppose a woman has ten silver coins,* but she loses one of them. The woman will take a light and clean the house. She will look carefully for the coin until she finds it. 9And when she finds the lost coin, she will call her friends and neighbors and say to them, ‘Be happy with me because I have found the coin that I lost!’ 10In the same way, the angels of God are very happy when one sinner changes his heart.”

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tax collector(s) Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the other Jews hated them.  
Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.  
silver coins One coin, a Roman denarius, was the average pay for one day’s work.
The Son That Left Home

11 Then Jesus said, “A man had two sons. 12 The younger son said to his father, ‘Give me my part of all the things we own!’ So the father divided the wealth with his two sons. 13 Then the younger son gathered up all that he had and left. He traveled far away to another country. There the son wasted his money living like a fool. 14 He spent everything that he had. Soon after that, the land became very dry, and there was no rain. There was not enough food to eat anywhere in that country. The son was hungry and needed money. 15 So he went and got a job with one of the people of that country. The man sent the son into the fields to feed pigs. 16 The son was so hungry that he wanted to eat the food that the pigs were eating. But no person gave him anything. 17 The boy realized that he had been very foolish. He thought, ‘All of my father’s servants have plenty of food. But I am here, almost dead because I have nothing to eat. 18 I will leave and go to my father. I will say to him: Father, I sinned against God and have done wrong to you. I am not good enough to be called your son. But let me be like one of your servants.’ 20 So the son left and went to his father.

The Son Returns

“While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. The father felt sorry for his son. So the father ran to him. He hugged and kissed his son. 21 The son said, ‘Father, I sinned against God and have done wrong to you. I am not good enough to be called your son.’ 22 But the father said to his servants, ‘Hurry! Bring the best clothes and dress him. Also, put a ring on his finger and good shoes on his feet. 23 Bring our fat calf. We will kill it and have plenty to eat. Then we can have a party!’ 24 My son was dead, but now he is alive again! He was lost, but now he is found!’ So they began to have a party.

The Older Son Comes

25 The older son was in the field. He came closer to the house. He heard the sound of music and dancing. 26 So the older son called to one of the servant boys and asked, ‘What does all this mean?’ 27 The servant said, ‘Your brother has come back. Your father killed the fat calf to eat. Your father is happy because your brother came home safely!’ 28 The older son was angry and would not go in to the party. So his father went out to ask him to come in. 29 The son said to his father, ‘I have served you like a slave for many years! I have always obeyed your commands. But you never killed even a goat for me! You never gave a party for me and my friends. 30 But your other son has wasted all your money on prostitutes.” Then he comes home, and you kill the fat calf for him!” 31 But the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me. All that I have is yours too. 32 We must be happy and have a party; because your brother was dead, but now he is alive. He was lost, but now he is found.’”

True Wealth

16 Jesus said to his followers, “Once there was a rich man. This rich man hired a manager to take care of his business. Later, the rich man learned that his manager was cheating him. 2 So he called the manager in and said to him, ‘I have heard bad things about you. Give me a report of what you have done with my money. You can’t be my manager now!’ 3 Later, the manager thought to himself, ‘What will I do? My master is taking my job away from me! I am not strong enough to dig ditches. I am too proud to beg. 4 I know what I will do! I will do something so that when I lose my job, other people will welcome me into their homes.’ 5 So the manager called in each person that owed the master some money. He said to the first man, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ 6 The man answered, ‘I owe him 8,000 pounds of olive oil.’ The manager said to him, ‘Here is your bill. Hurry! Sit down and make the bill less. Write 4,000 pounds.’ 7 Then the manager said to another man, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ The man answered, ‘I owe him 60,000 pounds of wheat.’ Then the manager said to him, ‘Here is your bill; you can make it less. Write

Prostitutes Women that are paid by men for sexual sin.
LUKE 16:8–31

50,000 pounds.’ 8Later, the master told the dishonest manager that he had done a smart thing. Yes, worldly people are smarter in their business with the people of their time than spiritual people are.

9“I tell you, use the things you have here in this world to make friends with God. Then, when those things are gone, you will be welcomed in that home that continues forever. 10If a person can be trusted with small things, then he can also be trusted with big things. If a person is dishonest in little things, then he will be dishonest in big things too. 11If you cannot be trusted with worldly riches, then you will not be trusted with the true (heavenly) riches. 12And if you cannot be trusted with the things that belong to someone else, then you will not be given things of your own.

13“No servant can serve two masters at the same time. The servant will hate one master and love the other. Or he will be loyal to one and not care about the other. You cannot serve God and Money* at the same time.”

God’s Law Cannot Be Changed
(Mt. 11:12–13)

14The Pharisees* were listening to all these things. The Pharisees criticized Jesus because they all loved money. 15Jesus said to the Pharisees, “You make yourselves look good in front of people. But God knows what is really in your hearts. The things that people think are important are worth nothing to God.

16“Before John the Baptizer came, God wanted the people to live by the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets. But since the time of John, the Good News about the kingdom of God is being told. Many people are trying hard to get into the kingdom of God. 17Even the smallest part of a letter in the law cannot be changed. It would be easier for heaven and earth to pass away.

18“If a man divorces his wife and marries another woman, he is guilty of the sin of adultery.* And the man that marries a divorced woman is also guilty of adultery.”

The Rich Man and Lazarus

19Jesus said, “There was a rich man that always dressed in the finest clothes. He was so rich that he was able to enjoy all the best things every day. 20There was also a very poor man named Lazarus. Lazarus’ body was covered with sores. Lazarus was often put at the rich man’s gate. 21Lazarus wanted only to eat the small pieces of food left from the rich man’s table. And the dogs came and licked his sores! 22Later, Lazarus died. The angels took Lazarus and placed him in the arms of Abraham.* The rich man also died and was buried. 23He was sent to the place of death* and had much pain. The rich man saw Abraham far away with Lazarus in his arms. 24He called, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me! Send Lazarus to me so that he can dip his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am suffering in this fire!’ 25But Abraham said, ‘My child, remember when you lived? You had all the good things in life. But all the bad things happened to Lazarus. Now he is comforted here, and you are suffering. 26Also, there is a big pit (hole) between you and us. No person can cross over to help you. And no person can leave there and come here.’ 27The rich man said, ‘Then please, father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father’s house on earth! I have five brothers. Lazarus could warn my brothers so that they will not come to this place of pain.’ 28But Abraham said, ‘They have the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets* to read; let them learn from that!’ 29But the rich man said, ‘No, father Abraham! But if someone came to them from the dead, then they would change their hearts and lives.’ 30But Abraham said to him, ‘No! If your brothers won’t listen to Moses and the
adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.
Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.
place of death Literally, “Hades.”
Luke 17:1–24

Don’t Cause Sin and Be Ready to Forgive
(Mt. 18:6–7; 21:21–22; Mk. 9:42)

17 Jesus said to his followers, “Things will surely happen that will make people sin. But it will be very bad for the person that makes this happen. It will be very bad for a person if he makes one of these weak persons sin. It would be better for him to have a millstone* tied around his neck and be drowned in the sea. So be careful!

“If your brother sins, tell him he is wrong. If he is sorry* and stops sinning,* forgive him. If your brother does something wrong to you seven times in one day, but he says that he is sorry each time, then you should forgive him.”

How Big Is Your Faith?

5 The apostles* said to the Lord (Jesus), “Give us more faith!”

6 The Lord said, “If your faith is as big as a mustard seed,* then you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Dig yourself up and plant yourself in the ocean!’ And the tree will obey you.

Be Good Servants

7 “Suppose one of you has a servant that has been working in the field. The servant has been plowing the ground or caring for the sheep. When he comes in from work, what would you say to him? Would you say, ‘Come in and sit down to eat’? No! You would say to your servant, ‘Prepare something for me to eat. Then get dressed and serve me. When I finish eating and drinking, then you can eat.’

The servant should not get any special thanks for doing his job. He is only doing what his master told him to do. It is the same with you. When you do all the things you are told to do, you should say, ‘We are not worthy of any special thanks. We have only done the work we should do.’”

Be Thankful

11 Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem. He went from Galilee to Samaria. 12 He came into a small town. Ten men met him there. These men did not come close to Jesus, because they all had leprosy,* 13 But the men yelled to Jesus, “Jesus! Master! Please help us!”

14 When Jesus saw the men, he said, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.”

While the ten men were going to the priests, they were healed. 15 When one of the men saw that he was healed, he went back to Jesus. He praised God loudly. 16 He bowed down at Jesus’ feet. The man thanked Jesus. (This man was a Samaritan.*) 17 Jesus said, “Ten men were healed; where are the other nine? 18 This man is not even a Jew! Is he the only one that came back to give praise to God?” 19 Then Jesus said to the man, “Stand up! You can go. You were healed because you believed.”

God’s Kingdom Is Inside You
(Mt. 24:23–28, 37–41)

20 Some of the Pharisees* asked Jesus, “When will the kingdom of God come?”

Jesus answered, “God’s kingdom is coming, but not in a way that you will be able to see with your eyes. 21 People will not say, ‘Look, God’s kingdom is here!’ Or, ‘There it is!’ No, God’s kingdom is inside you.”

22 Then Jesus said to his followers, “The time will come when you will want very much to see one of the days of the Son of Man,* but you will not be able. 23 People will say to you, ‘Look, there it is!’ or, ‘Look, here it is!’ Stay where you are; don’t go away and search.

When Jesus Comes Again

24 “You will know it, when the Son of Man* comes again. On the day when he comes he

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

show yourselves to the priests The law of Moses said a priest must decide when a Jew with leprosy was well.

Samaritan From Samaria. Samaritans were part Jewish, but some Jews did not accept them as pure Jews.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

inside you Or, “here with you.”

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

millstone A large, round stone used for grinding grain.

apostles Men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers for telling his Good News to the world.

mustard seed The very small seed of the mustard plant.
LUKE 17:25–18:14

1218

will shine like lightning flashes across the sky. 25But first, the Son of Man must suffer many things and be killed by the people of this time. 26It will be the same when the Son of Man comes again as it was when Noah lived. 27In the time of Noah, people were eating, drinking, and getting married even on the day when Noah entered the boat. Then the flood came and killed all the people. 28It will be the same as during the time of Lot when God destroyed Sodom. 29Those people were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building houses for themselves. 30The people were doing these things even on the day when Lot left town. Then fire and sulphur rained down from the sky and killed them all. 31This is exactly how it will be when the Son of Man comes again.

32“On that day, if a man is on his roof, he will not have time to go inside and get his things. If a man is in the field, he cannot go back home. 33Remember what happened to Lot’s wife? 34The person that tries to save his life will lose it. But the person that gives his life away will save it. 35At the time when I come again, there may be two people sleeping in one room. One person will be taken and the other person will be left. 36There may be two women working together. One woman will be taken and the other woman will be left.” 37The followers asked Jesus, “Where will this be, Lord?” Jesus answered, “People can always find a dead body by looking for the vultures.”

God Will Answer His People

Then Jesus taught the followers that they should always pray and never lose hope. Jesus used this story to teach them: 2“Once there was a judge in a town. He did not care about God. The judge also did not care what people thought about him. 3In that same town there was a woman. Her husband was dead. The woman came many times to this judge and said, ‘There is a man that is doing bad things to me. Give me my rights!’ 4But the judge did not want to help the woman. After a long time, the judge thought to himself, ‘I don’t care about God. And I don’t care about what people think. 5But this woman is bothering me. If I give her what she wants, then she will leave me alone. But if I don’t give her what she wants, she will bother me until I am sick!’”

6The Lord (Jesus) said, “Listen! [There is meaning in what the bad judge said. 7God’s people shout to him night and day. God will always give his people what is right. God will not be slow to answer his people. 8I tell you, God will help his people quickly! But when the Son of Man comes again, will he find people on earth who believe in him?”

Being Right with God

9There were some people that thought that they were very good. These people acted like they were better than other people. Jesus used this story to teach them: 10“One time there was a Pharisee and a tax collector. One day they both went to the temple to pray. 11The Pharisee stood alone, away from the tax collector. When the Pharisee prayed, he said, ‘O God, I thank you that I am not as bad as other people. I am not like men that steal, cheat, or do the sin of adultery. I thank you that I am better than this tax collector. 12I am good; I fast twice a week, and I give one-tenth of everything I earn!’ 13The tax collector stood alone too. But when he prayed, he would not even look up to heaven. The tax collector felt very humble before God. He said, ‘O God, have mercy on me. I am a sinner!’” 14I tell you, when this man finished his prayer and went home, he was right with God. But the Pharisee, who felt that he...
Who Will Enter God’s Kingdom?
(Mt. 19:13–15; Mk. 10:13–16)

15Some people brought their small children to Jesus so that Jesus could touch them. But when the followers saw this, they told the people not to do this. 16But Jesus called the little children to him and said to his followers, “Let the little children come to me. Don’t stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to people that are like these little children. 17I tell you the truth. You must accept God’s kingdom like a little child accepts things, or you will never enter it!”

A Rich Man Asks Jesus a Question
(Mt. 19:16–30; Mk. 10:17–31)

18A {Jewish} leader asked Jesus, “Good teacher, what must I do to get the life that continues forever?” 19Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? Only God is good. 20But I will answer your question. You know God’s commands: ‘You must not do the sin of adultery,* you must not murder anyone, you must not steal anything, you must not tell lies about other people, you must honor (respect) your father and mother…. ’” 21But the leader said, “I have obeyed all these commands since I was a boy!” 22When Jesus heard this, he said to the leader, “But there is still one more thing you need to do. Sell everything you have and give the money to the poor people. You will have a reward in heaven. Then come and follow me!” 23But when the man heard this, he was very sad. The man was very rich and wanted to keep his money. 24When Jesus saw that the man was sad, he said, “It will be very hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of God! 25It would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God!”

Who Can Be Saved?

26When the people heard this, they said, “Then who can be saved?” 27Jesus answered, “God can do things that are not possible for people to do!” 28Peter said, “Look, we left everything we had and followed you!” 29Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. Every person that has left his home, wife, brothers, parents, or children for God’s kingdom will get much more than he left. That person will get many times more in this life. And after that person dies, he will live with God forever.”

Jesus Will Rise from Death
(Mt. 20:17–19; Mk. 10:32–34)

31Then Jesus talked to the twelve apostles* alone. Jesus said to them, “Listen! We are going to Jerusalem. Everything that God told the prophets* to write about the Son of Man* will happen! 32His people will turn against him and give him to the non-Jewish people.* The non-Jews will laugh at him, insult him, and spit on him. 33They will beat him with whips and then kill him! But on the third day after his death, he will rise to life again.” 34The apostles tried to understand this, but they could not; the meaning was hidden from them.

Jesus Heals a Blind Man
(Mt. 20:29–34; Mk. 10:46–52)

35Jesus came near the city of Jericho. There was a blind man sitting beside the road. The blind man was begging people for money. 36When this man heard the people coming down the road, he asked, “What is happening?” 37The people told him, “Jesus, the one from Nazareth, is coming here.” 38The blind man was excited and said, “Jesus, Son of David! Please help me!”

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.
‘You must not ... mother’ Quote from Ex. 20:12–16; Deut. 5:16–20.

*   *   *

apostles Men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers for telling his Good News to the world.
prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.
Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
non-Jewish people Literally, “nations” (Gentiles).
Son of David Name for the Christ, who was from the family of David, king of Israel.
LUKE 18:39–19:25

The people that were in front, leading the group, criticized the blind man. They told him not to speak. But the blind man shouted more and more, “Son of David, please help me!”

Jesus stopped there and said, “Bring that blind man to me!” When the blind man came near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?”

The blind man said, “Lord, I want to see again.”

Jesus said to him, “You can see now! You are healed because you believed.”

Then the man was able to see. The man followed Jesus, thanking God. All the people that saw this praised God for what happened.

Zacchaeus

Jesus was going through the city of Jericho. 2In Jericho there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a wealthy, very important tax collector. *He wanted to see who Jesus was. There were many other people that wanted to see Jesus too. Zacchaeus was too short to see above the people. So he ran to a place where he knew Jesus would come. Then Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus. When Jesus came to that place, Jesus looked up and saw Zacchaeus in the tree. Jesus said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry! Come down! I must stay at your house today.”

Then Zacchaeus came down quickly. He was happy to have Jesus in his house. All the people saw this. They began to complain, “Look at the kind of man Jesus stays with. Zacchaeus is a sinner!”

Zacchaeus said to the Lord (Jesus), “I want to do good. I will give half of my money to the poor. If I have cheated any person, I will pay that person back four times more!”

Jesus said, “Today is the day for this family to be saved from sin. Yes, even this tax collector is one of God’s chosen people!” The Son of Man came to find lost people and save them.”

Use the Things God Gives You

(Mt. 25:14–30)

Jesus traveled closer to Jerusalem. Some of the people thought that God’s kingdom would come soon. Jesus knew the people thought this, so he told them this story: “A very important man was preparing to go to a country far away to be made a king. Then the man planned to return home and rule his people. *So he called ten of his servants together. He gave a bag of money to each servant. The man said, ‘Do business with this money until I come back.’ But the people in the kingdom hated the man. So the people sent a group to follow the man to the other country. In the other country, this group said, ‘We don’t want that man to be our king!’

But the man became king. When he came home, he said, ‘Call those servants that have my money. I want to know how much more money they earned with it.’ The first servant came and said, ‘Sir, I earned ten bags of money with the one bag you gave me!’ The king said to the servant, ‘Fine! You are a good servant. I see that I can trust you with small things. So now I will let you rule over ten of my cities!’ The second servant said, ‘Sir, with your one bag of money I earned five bags!’ The king said to this servant, ‘You can rule over five cities!’ Then another servant came in. The servant said to the king, ‘Sir, here is your bag of money. I wrapped it in a piece of cloth and hid it. I was afraid of you because you are a hard man. You even take money that you didn’t earn and gather food that you didn’t grow!’ Then the king said to the servant, ‘You bad servant! I will use your own words to condemn you. You said that I am a hard man. You said that I even take money that I didn’t earn and gather food that I didn’t grow. If that is true, you should have put my money in the bank. Then, when I came back, my money would have earned some interest.’ Then the king said to the men that were watching, ‘Take the bag of money away from this servant and give it to the servant that earned ten bags of money.’

*One bag of money was a Greek ‘mina,’ enough to pay a person for working three months.

tax collector(s) Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the other Jews hated them.
one of God’s chosen people Literally, “a son of Abraham.”
Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

bag(s) of money One bag of money was a Greek “mina,” enough to pay a person for working three months.
men said to the king, ‘But sir, that servant already has ten bags of money!’ 26The king said, ‘The person that uses what he has will get more. But the person that does not use what he has will have everything taken away from him. 27Now where are my enemies? Where are the people that did not want me to be king? Bring my enemies here and kill them. I will watch them die!’”

Jesus Enters Jerusalem
(Mt. 21:1–11; Mk. 11:1–11; Jn 12:12–19)

28After Jesus said these things, he continued traveling toward Jerusalem. 29Jesus came near Bethphage and Bethany, towns near the hill called the Mount of Olives.* Jesus sent out two of his followers. 30He said, “Go into the town you can see there. When you enter the town, you will find a young donkey tied there. No person has ever ridden this donkey. Untie the donkey, and bring it here to me.

31If anyone asks you why you are taking the donkey, you should say, ‘The Master needs this donkey.’”

32The two followers went into town. They found the donkey exactly like Jesus told them. 33The followers untied the donkey. But the owners of the donkey came out. They said to the followers, “Why are you untying our donkey?” 34The followers answered, “The Master needs it.” 35So the followers brought the donkey to Jesus. The followers put their coats on the donkey’s back. Then they put Jesus on the donkey. 36Jesus rode along the road toward Jerusalem. The followers spread their coats on the road before Jesus.

37Jesus was coming close to Jerusalem. He was already near the bottom of the Mount of Olives,* The whole group of followers were happy. They were very excited and praised God. They thanked God for all the powerful things they had seen. 38They said, “‘Welcome! God bless the king that comes in the name of the Lord.’ Psalm 118:26

Peace in heaven and glory to God!”

Jesus Cries for Jerusalem

41Jesus came near Jerusalem. He saw the city and began to cry for it. 42Jesus spoke to Jerusalem. He said, “I wish you knew today what would bring you peace! But you can’t know it, because it is hidden from you. 43A time is coming when your enemies will build a wall around you. Your enemies will hold you on all sides. 44They will destroy you and all your people. Not one stone of your buildings will stay on top of another. All this will happen because you did not know the time when God came to save you.”

Jesus Goes to the Temple
(Mt. 21:12–17; Mk. 11:15–19; Jn 2:13–22)

45Jesus went into the temple* area. He began to throw out the people that were selling things there. 46Jesus said, “It is written in the Scriptures*, ‘My house will be a house of prayer.’ But you have changed it into a ‘hiding place for thieves.’” 47Jesus taught the people in the temple* area every day. The leading priests, the teachers of the law, and some of the leaders of the people wanted to kill Jesus. 48But all the people were listening closely to Jesus. They were very interested in the things Jesus said. So the leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the leaders did not know how they could kill Jesus.

The Jewish Leaders Ask Jesus a Question
(Mt. 21:23–27; Mk. 11:27–33)

20One day Jesus was in the temple* area. He was teaching the people. Jesus told the people the Good News about the kingdom of God. The leading priests, teachers of the

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
‘My house … prayer’ Quote from Isa. 56:7.
‘hiding place for thieves’ Quote from Jer. 7:11.
John the Baptizer; he told people about Christ’s coming.

Read Mt. 3; Lk. 3.

baptize(d) A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

prophet A person that spoke for God.
The men were amazed at his wise answer. They could say nothing. The men were not able to trick Jesus before the people. Jesus said nothing they could use against him.

Some Sadducees Try to Trick Jesus
(Mt. 22:23–33; Mk. 12:18–27)

27 Some Sadducees* came to Jesus. (Sadducees believe that people will not rise from death.) They asked Jesus, 28 “Teacher, Moses wrote that if a married man dies and had no children, then his brother must marry the woman. Then they will have children for the dead brother.* 29 One time there were seven brothers. The first brother married a woman, but died. 30 Then the second brother married the woman, and he died. 31 And the third brother married the woman, and he died. The same thing happened with all the other brothers. They all died and had no children. 32 The woman was the last to die. 33 But all seven brothers married her. So when people rise from death, whose wife will this woman be?”

34 Jesus said to the Sadducees,* “On earth, people marry each other. 35 Some people will be worthy to be raised from death and live again after this life. In that life they will not marry. 36 In that life people are like angels and cannot die. They are children of God, because they have been raised from death. 37 Moses clearly showed that people are raised from death. When Moses wrote about the burning bush,* he said that the Lord is ‘the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’* 38 If God said he is their God, then these men are not really dead. He is God only of living people. All people that belong to God are alive.”

39 Some of the teachers of the law said, “Teacher, your answer was very good.” 40 No person was brave enough to ask him another question.

Is the Christ the Son of David?
(Mt. 22:41–46; Mk. 12:35–37)

41 Then Jesus said, “Why do people say that the Christ* is the Son of David? 42 In the book of Psalms, David* himself says:

‘The Lord (God) said to my Lord (Christ):
Sit by me at my right side,
and I will put your enemies
under your power.’” Psalm 110:1

44 David calls the Christ ‘Lord.’ But the Christ is also the son of David. How can both these things be true?”

Warning Against the Teachers of the Law
(Mt. 23:1–36; Mk. 12:38–40; Lk. 11:37–54)

45 All the people listened to Jesus. Jesus said to his followers, 46 “Be careful of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around wearing clothes that look important. And they love for people to show respect to them in the market places. They love to get the most important seats in the synagogues.* And they love to get the most important seats at the feasts. 47 But they are mean to widows* and steal their homes. Then they try to make themselves look good by saying long prayers. God will punish these people very much.”

True Giving
(Mk. 12:41–44)

21 Jesus saw some rich people putting their gifts for God into the temple money box.* 2 Then Jesus saw a poor widow.* She put two small copper coins into the box. 3 Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. This poor widow gave only two small coins. But she really gave more than all those rich people. 4 The rich people have plenty; they gave only what they did not need. This woman is very
LUKE 21:5–31

poor. But she gave all she had. And she needed that money to help her live.”

The Destruction of the Temple
(Mt. 24:1–14, Mk. 13:1–13)

5Some of the followers were talking about the temple. They said, “This is a beautiful temple, built with the best stones. Look at the many good gifts that have been offered to God!”

6But Jesus said, “The time will come when all that you see here will be destroyed. Every stone of these buildings will be thrown down to the ground. Not one stone will be left on another!”

7Some followers asked Jesus, “Teacher, when will these things happen? What will show us that it is time for these things to happen?”

8Jesus said, “Be careful! Don’t be fooled. Many people will come using my name. They will say, ‘I am the Christ,’ and, ‘The right time has come!’ But don’t follow them.

9When you hear about wars and riots, don’t be afraid. These things must happen first. Then the end will come later.”

10Then Jesus said to them, “Nations will fight against other nations. Kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. 11There will be great earthquakes, sicknesses, and other bad things in many places. In some places there will be no food for the people to eat. Terrible things will happen, and amazing things will come from heaven to warn people.

12“Before all these things happen, people will arrest you and do bad things to you. People will judge you in your synagogues* and put you in jail. You will be forced to stand before kings and governors. People will do all these things to you because you follow me. 13But this will give you an opportunity to tell about me. 14Don’t worry about what you will say. 15I will give you the wisdom to say things that none of your enemies can answer. 16Even your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends will turn against you. They will kill some of you. 17All people will hate you because you follow me.

18But none of these things can really harm you. 19You will save yourselves by continuing strong in your faith through all these things.

The Destruction of Jerusalem
(Mt. 24:15–21; Mk. 13:14–19)

20“You will see armies all around Jerusalem. Then you will know that the time for the destruction of Jerusalem has come. 21At that time, the people in Judea should run away to the mountains. The people in Jerusalem must leave quickly. If you are near the city, don’t go in! 22The prophets* wrote many things about the time when God will punish his people. The time I am telling you about is the time when all these things must happen. 23At that time, it will be bad for women that are pregnant or have small babies. Why? Because very bad times will come to this land. God will be angry with these people (the Jews). 24Some of the people will be killed by soldiers. Other people will be made prisoners and taken to every country. The holy city of Jerusalem will be walked on by non-Jewish people until their time is finished.

Don’t Fear
(Mt. 24: 29–31; Mk. 13:24–27)

25“Amazing things will happen with the sun, moon, and stars. The people on earth will feel trapped. The oceans will be upset, and the people will not know why. 26People will become afraid. They will be very worried about what will happen to the world. Everything in the sky will be changed. 27Then people will see the Son of Man* coming on a cloud with power and great glory. 28When these things begin to happen, don’t fear. Look up and be happy! Don’t worry. Be happy, because you know that the time when God will free you is near!”

My Words Will Live Forever
(Mt. 24:32–35; Mk. 13:28–31)

29Then Jesus told this story: “Look at all the trees. The fig tree is a good example. 30When it becomes green (grows buds), you know that summer is near. 31It is the same with these

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temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.
prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.
Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
things I told you would happen. When you see all these things happen, then you will know that God’s kingdom is coming very soon.

32“I tell you the truth. All these things will happen while people of this time are still living! 33The whole world, earth and sky, will be destroyed; but the words I have said will never be destroyed!

Be Ready All the Time

34“Be careful! Don’t spend your time drinking and getting drunk. Or don’t be too busy with worldly things. If you do that, you will not be able to think right. And then the end might come when you are not ready. 35It will come like a surprise to all people on earth. 36So be ready all the time. Pray that you will be strong enough to continue safely through all these things that will happen. And pray that you will be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

37During the day, Jesus taught the people in the temple area. At night he went out of the city and stayed all night on the Mount of Olives.

Preparation of the Passover Meal

7The Day of Unleavened Bread came. This was the day when the Jews always killed the lambs for the Passover.* 9Jesus said to Peter and John, “Go and prepare the Passover meal for us to eat.”

9Peter and John said to Jesus, “Where do you want us to prepare the meal?” Jesus said to them, 10“Listen! After you go into the city (Jerusalem), you will see a man carrying a jar of water. Follow him. He will go into a house. You go with him. 11Tell the person that owns that house, ‘The Teacher asks that you please show us the room where he and his followers can eat the Passover meal.’ 12Then the man who owns the house will show you a large room upstairs. This room is ready for us. Prepare the Passover meal there.”

13So Peter and John left. Everything happened the way Jesus said. So they prepared the Passover meal.

The Lord’s Supper

14The time came for them to eat the Passover meal. Jesus and the apostles* were together at the table. 15Jesus said to them, “I wanted very much to eat this Passover meal with you before I die. 16I will never eat another Passover meal until God’s kingdom comes.”

Judas Makes Plans Against Jesus

3One of Jesus’ twelve apostles* was named Judas Iscariot. Satan (the devil) went into Judas and made him do a bad thing. 4Judas went and talked with the leading priests and some of the soldiers who guarded the temple.* 5Judas talked to them about a way to give Jesus to them. 6The priests were very happy about this. They promised to give Judas money if he would give Jesus to them. Judas agreed. Then Judas waited for the best time to give Jesus to them. Judas wanted to do it when there were no people around to see him do it.

The Jewish Leaders Want to Kill Jesus

22It was almost time for the Jewish Festival of Unleavened Bread,* called the Passover.* 2The leading priests and teachers of the law were trying to find a quiet way to kill Jesus. They were afraid of what the people would do to them.

Day of Unleavened Bread Same as Passover.
LUKE 22:19–43

19 Then Jesus took some bread. He thanked God for the bread and divided it. He gave it to the apostles. * Then Jesus said, “This bread is my body that I am giving for you. Eat this to remember me.” * In the same way, after supper, Jesus took the cup of wine and said, “This wine shows the new agreement from God to his people. This new agreement begins with my blood (death) that I am giving for you.” *

Who Will Turn Against Jesus?

21 Jesus said, “One of you will soon be against me. His hand is by my hand on the table. 22 The Son of Man * will do what God has planned. But it will be very bad for that person who gives the Son of Man to be killed. ” *

23 Then the apostles * asked each other, “Which one of us would do that to Jesus?”

Be Like a Servant

24 Later the apostles * began to argue about which one of them was the most important. 25 But Jesus said to them, “The kings of the world rule over their people. Men who have authority over other people make the people call them ‘great helpers’ of the people.” 26 But you must not be like that. The greatest person should become like the youngest person! Leaders should be like servants. 27 Who is more important: the person sitting at the table or the person serving him? You think the person sitting at the table is more important. But I am like a servant among you!

28 “You men have stayed with me through many struggles. 29 My Father has given me a kingdom. I also give you authority to rule with me. 30 You will eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. You will sit on thrones and judge the twelve tribes (family groups) of Israel.” *

don’t Lose Your Faith!

(Mt. 26:31–35; Mk. 14:27–31; Jn 13:36–38)

31 “Satan (the devil) has asked to test you men like a farmer tests his wheat. O Simon, Simon (Peter), I have prayed that you will not lose your faith! Help your brothers be stronger when you come back to me.”

33 But Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, I am ready to go to jail with you. I will even die with you!”

34 But Jesus said, “Peter, before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will say you don’t know me. You will say this three times!”

Be Ready for Trouble

35 Then Jesus said to the apostles, * “I sent you to tell people about God. I sent you without money, a bag, or shoes. But did you need anything?”

The apostles said, “No.”

36 Jesus said to them, “But now if you have money or a bag, carry that with you. If you don’t have a sword, sell your coat and buy one. 37 The Scripture * says:

‘People said he was a criminal.’

Isaiah 53:12

This Scripture must happen. It was written about me, and it is happening now.”

38 The followers said, “Look, Lord, here are two swords!”

39 Jesus said to them, “That’s enough!”

Jesus Tells the Apostles to Pray

(Mt. 26:36–46; Mk. 14:32–42)

39–40 Jesus left the city (Jerusalem) and went to the Mount of Olives. * His followers went with him. (Jesus went there often.) Jesus said to his followers, “Pray for strength against temptation.”

41 Then Jesus went about 50 steps away from them. He knelt down and prayed,

42 “Father, if it is what you want, then let me not have this cup (of suffering). But do what you want, not what I want.” *

Then an angel

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Mount of Olives A hill east of the city of Jerusalem where a person could look down into the temple area.

cup Jesus is talking about the bad things that will happen to him.

Accepting these things will be hard, like drinking a cup full of something that tastes very bad.
from heaven appeared. The angel was sent to help Jesus. Jesus was full of pain; he struggled hard in prayer. Sweat dripped from his face like he was bleeding.* When Jesus finished praying, he went to his followers. They were asleep. (Their sadness had made them very tired.) Jesus said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray for strength against temptation.”

**Jesus Is Arrested**  
(Mt. 26:47–56; Mk. 14:43–50; Jn 18:3–11)

47 While Jesus was speaking, a group of people came. One of the twelve apostles* was leading the group. He was Judas. Judas came close to Jesus so that he could kiss Jesus.

48 But Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you using the kiss of friendship to give the Son of Man to his enemies?” The followers of Jesus were standing there too. They saw what was happening. The followers said to Jesus, “Lord, should we use our swords?” And one of the followers did use his sword. He cut off the right ear of the servant of the high priest.*

51 Jesus said, “Stop!” Then Jesus touched the servant’s ear and healed him.

52 The group that came to arrest Jesus were the leading priests, the older Jewish leaders, and the Jewish soldiers. Jesus said to them, “Why did you come out here with swords and sticks? Do you think I am a criminal? I was with you every day in the temple area. Why didn’t you try to arrest me there? But this is your time—the time when darkness (sin) rules.”

**Peter Is Afraid to Say He Knows Jesus**  
(Mt. 26:57–58, 69–75; Mk. 14:53–54, 66–72; Jn 18:12–18, 25–27)

54 They arrested Jesus and took him away. They brought Jesus into the house of the high priest.* Peter followed them, but he did not come near Jesus. The soldiers started a fire in the middle of the yard and sat together. Peter sat with them. A servant girl saw Peter sitting there. She could see because of the light from the fire. The girl looked closely at Peter’s face. Then she said, “This man was also with him (Jesus)!"

57 But Peter said this was not true. He said, “Lady, I don’t know him.” A short time later, another person saw Peter and said, “You are also one of those people that follow him (Jesus).” But Peter said, “Man, I am not one of his followers!”

59 About an hour later, another man said, “It is true! This man was with him (Jesus). He is from Galilee!” The man said he was sure about this.

60 But Peter said, “Man, I don’t know what you are talking about!” Immediately, while Peter was still speaking, a rooster crowed. Then the Lord (Jesus) turned and looked into Peter’s eyes. And Peter remembered what the Lord had said: “Before the rooster crows in the morning, you will say three times that you don’t know me.” Then Peter went outside and cried bitterly.

**The People Laugh at Jesus**  
(Mt. 26:67–68; Mk. 14:65)

62 Some men were holding (guarding) Jesus. They made fun of Jesus and beat him. They covered his eyes so that he could not see them. Then they hit him and said, “Be a prophet and tell us who hit you!” And they said many very bad things to Jesus.

**Jesus Before the Jewish Leaders**  
(Mt. 26:59–66; Mk. 14:55–64; Jn 18:19–24)

66 The next morning, the older leaders of the people, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law came together. They led Jesus away to their highest court. They said, “If you are the Christ,” then tell us that you are!” Jesus said to them, “If I tell you I am the Christ, you will not believe me. And if I ask you, you will not answer. But beginning now, the Son of Man* will sit at the right side of God’s throne.”

Verses 43–44 Some Greek copies do not have verses 43 and 44.

**apostles** Men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers for telling his Good News to the world.

**Son of Man** A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

**high priest** The most important Jewish priest and leader.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
They all said, “Then are you the Son of God?” Jesus said to them, “Yes, you are right when you say that I am.”

They said, “Why do we need witnesses now? We ourselves heard him say this!”

Governor Pilate Questions Jesus
(Mt. 27:1–2, 11–14; Mk. 15:1–5; Jn 18:28–38)

Then the whole group stood up and led Jesus to Pilate.* They began to accuse Jesus. They told Pilate, “We caught this man trying to change the thinking of our people. He says we should not pay taxes to Caesar.* He calls himself the Christ,* a king.”

Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

Jesus answered, “Yes, that is right.”

Pilate said to the leading priests and the people, “I find nothing wrong with this man.”

They said again and again, “But Jesus is making trouble with the people! He teaches all around Judea. He began in Galilee, and now he is here!”

Pilate Sends Jesus to Herod

Pilate heard this and asked if Jesus was from Galilee. * Pilate learned that Jesus was under Herod’s* authority. Herod was in Jerusalem at that time, so Pilate sent Jesus to him. * When Herod saw Jesus, he was very happy. Herod had heard all about Jesus. So he had wanted to meet Jesus for a long time. Herod wanted to see a miracle.* So he hoped that Jesus would do a miracle. * Herod asked Jesus many questions, but Jesus said nothing.

The leading priests and teachers of the law were standing there. They were shouting things against Jesus. * Then Herod and his soldiers laughed at Jesus. They made fun of Jesus by dressing him in clothes like kings wear. Then Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate. * In the past, Pilate and Herod had always been enemies. But on that day Herod and Pilate became friends.

Jesus Must Die
(Mt. 27:15–26; Mk. 15:6–15; Jn 18:39–19:16)

Pilate called all the people together with the leading priests and the * Jewish leaders. Pilate said to them, “You brought this man (Jesus) to me. You said that he was trying to change the people. But I judged him before you all. I found no wrong that he had done. Jesus is not guilty of the things you say. Also, Herod* found nothing wrong with him; Herod sent Jesus back to us. Look, Jesus has done nothing wrong. He should not be killed. * So, after I punish him a little, I will let him go free.”

But all the people shouted, “Kill him! Let Barabbas go free!” * (Barabbas was a man that was in jail because he started a riot in the city. He had also killed some people.)

Pilate wanted to let Jesus go free. So again Pilate told them that he would let Jesus go. * But they shouted again, “Kill him! Kill him on a cross!”

A third time Pilate said to the people, “Why? What wrong has he done? He is not guilty. I can find no reason to kill him. So I will let him go free after I punish him a little.”

But the people continued to shout. They demanded that Jesus be killed on the cross. Their shouting became so loud that Pilate decided to give them what they wanted. * The people wanted Barabbas to go free. Barabbas was in jail for starting a riot and for killing people. Pilate let Barabbas go free. And Pilate gave Jesus to the people to be killed. This is what the people wanted.

Jesus Is Killed on a Cross
(Mt. 27:32–44; Mk. 15:21–32; Jn 19:17–19)

The soldiers led Jesus away to be killed. At that same time, there was a man coming into the city from the fields. His name was Simon. Simon was from the city of Cyrene. The soldiers forced Simon to carry Jesus’ cross and walk behind Jesus.

Many, many people followed Jesus. Some of the women were sad and crying. They felt

Verse 17 A few Greek copies of Luke add verse 17: “Every year at the Passover festival, Pilate had to release one prisoner to the people.”
sorries for Jesus. 28But Jesus turned and said to the women, “Women of Jerusalem, don’t cry for me. Cry for yourselves and for your children too! 29The time is coming when people will say, ‘Happy are the women that cannot have babies! Happy are the women that have no children to care for.’ 30Then the people will say to the mountain, ‘Fall on us!’ The people will say to the hills, ‘Cover us!* 31If people act like this now when life is good, what will happen when bad times come?”

32There were also two criminals led out with Jesus to be killed. 33Jesus and the two criminals were led to a place called “The Skull.” There the soldiers nailed Jesus to his cross. They also nailed the criminals to their crosses. They put one criminal beside Jesus on the right, and they put the other criminal beside Jesus on the left. 34Jesus said, “Father, forgive these people [that are killing me]. They don’t know what they are doing.”

The soldiers gambled with dice to decide who would get Jesus’ clothes. 35The people stood there watching Jesus. They said, “If he is God’s Chosen One, the Christ,* then let him save himself. He saved other people, didn’t he?”

36Even the soldiers laughed at Jesus and teased him. They came to Jesus and offered him some wine. 37The soldiers said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!” 38(At the top of the cross these words were written: “THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”)

39One of the criminals began to shout very bad things at Jesus: “Aren’t you the Christ? Then save yourself! And save us too!”

40But the other criminal stopped him. He said, “You should fear God! All of us will die soon! 41You and I are guilty; we should be killed because we did wrong. But this man (Jesus) has done nothing wrong!” 42Then this criminal said to Jesus, “Jesus, remember me when you begin ruling as king!”

43Then Jesus said to him, “Listen! What I say is true: Today you will be with me in Paradise!*”

Jesus Dies
(Mt. 27:45–56; Mk. 15:33–41; Jn 19:28–30)

44It was about noon, but the whole area became dark until three o’clock in the afternoon. 45There was no sun! The curtain in the temple* was torn into two pieces. 46Jesus shouted, “Father, I give you my life.”* After Jesus said this, he died.

47The army officer* there saw what happened. He praised God, saying, “I know this man was a good man!”

48Many people had come out of the city to see this thing. When the people saw it, they felt very sorry and left. 49The people who were close friends of Jesus were there. Also, there were some women that had followed Jesus from Galilee. They all stood far away from the cross and watched these things.

Joseph of Arimathea
(Mt. 27:57–61; Mk. 15:42–47; Jn 19:38–42)

50–51A man was there from the Jewish town of Arimathea. His name was Joseph. He was a good man, who lived the way God wanted. He was waiting for God’s kingdom to come. Joseph was a member of the Jewish council. But he did not agree when the other Jewish leaders decided to kill Jesus. 52Joseph went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. [Pilate let Joseph have the body.] 53So Joseph took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in cloth. Then he put Jesus’ body in a tomb (grave) that was dug in a wall of rock. This tomb had never been used before. 54This was late on Preparation day.* When the sun went down, the Sabbath day* would begin.

55The women that had come from Galilee with Jesus followed Joseph. They saw the

Paradise Place where good people go when they die.
curtain in the temple A curtain divided the “Most Holy Place” from the other part of the temple, the special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
“Father ... life” Literally, “I put my spirit in your hands.” Quote from Ps. 31:5.
army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.
Preparation day Friday, the day before the Sabbath.
Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.
On the Sabbath day they rested. The law of Moses commanded all people to do this.

**News That Jesus Has Risen from Death**

(Mt. 28:1–10; Mk. 16:1–8; Jn 20:1–10)

24 Very early Sunday morning, the women came to the tomb (grave) where Jesus’ body was laid. They brought the sweet-smelling spices they had prepared. A heavy stone had been put in the doorway to close the tomb. But the women found that the stone was rolled away. They went in, but they did not find the Lord Jesus’ body. The women did not understand this. While they were wondering about it, two men (angels) in shining clothes stood beside them. The women were very afraid; they bowed their heads down. The two men said to the women, “Why are you looking for a living person here? This is a place for dead people! Jesus is not here. He has risen from death! Do you remember what he said in Galilee? Jesus said that the Son of Man must be given to evil men, be killed on a cross, and rise from death on the third day.” Then the women remembered the things that Jesus said.

9 The women left the tomb (grave) and went to the eleven apostles* and the other followers. The women told them everything that happened at the tomb. These women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, the mother of James, and some other women. These women told the apostles everything that happened. But the apostles did not believe what the women said. It sounded like crazy talk. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb to see. He looked in, but he saw only the cloth that Jesus’ body had been wrapped in. The cloth was lying there alone. Jesus was gone. Peter went away to be alone, wondering what had happened.

**On The Road to Emmaus**

(Mk. 16:12–13)

13 That same day two of Jesus’ followers were going to a town named Emmaus. It is about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking about everything that had happened. While they were discussing these things, Jesus himself came near and walked with them. (But the two men were not allowed to recognize Jesus.) Then Jesus said, “What are these things you are talking about while you walk?”

The two men stopped. Their faces looked very sad. The one named Cleopas answered, “You must be the only person in Jerusalem that does not know what has just happened there.”

19 Jesus said to them, “What are you talking about?”

The men said to him, “It’s about Jesus, the one from Nazareth. To God and to all the people he was a great prophet. He said and did many powerful things. But our leaders and the leading priests gave him away to be judged and killed. They nailed Jesus to a cross. We were hoping that Jesus would be the one to free Israel (the Jews). But then all this happened. And now something else: It has been three days since Jesus was killed, but today some of our women told us an amazing thing. Early this morning the women went to the tomb (grave) where the body of Jesus was laid. But they did not find his body there. They came and told us that they had seen some angels in a vision. The angels said that Jesus was alive! So some of our group went to the tomb, too. It was just like the women said—the tomb was empty. They saw the tomb, but they did not see him (Jesus).”

25 Then Jesus said to the two men, “You are foolish and slow to realize what is true. You should believe everything the prophets said. The prophets said that the Christ must suffer these things before he enters his glory.”

27 Then Jesus began to explain everything that had been written about himself in the Scriptures. Jesus started with the books of

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**Terms and Definitions**

- **Sabbath day** Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.
- **Son of Man** A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
- **apostles** Men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers for telling his Good News to the world.
- **prophet** A person that spoke for God.
- **vision(s)** Something like dreams that God used to speak to people.
- **prophets** People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.
- **Christ** The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
- **Scriptures** Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
Moses and then he talked about what the prophets had said about him.

28 They came near the town of Emmaus and Jesus acted like he did not plan to stop there. 29 But they wanted him to stay. They begged him, “Stay with us. It is late; it is almost night.” So he went in to stay with them. 30 Jesus got ready to eat with them and took some bread. He gave thanks for the food and divided it. Then he gave it to them. 31 At that time, the men were allowed to recognize Jesus. But when they saw who he was, he disappeared. 32 The two men said to each other, “When Jesus talked to us on the road, it felt like a fire burning in us. It was exciting when he explained to us the true meaning of the Scriptures.”

33 So the two men got up then and went back to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem they found the followers of Jesus meeting together. The eleven apostles* and those people that were with them 34 said, “The Lord (Jesus) really has risen from death! He showed himself to Simon (Peter).”

35 Then the two men told the things that had happened on the road. They talked about how they recognized Jesus when he divided the bread.

Jesus Appears to His Followers
(Mt. 28:16–20; Mk. 16:14–18; Jn 20:19–23; Ac. 1:6–8)

36 While the two men were saying these things, Jesus himself stood among the group of followers. Jesus said to them, “Peace be with you.”

37 This surprised the followers. They became afraid. They thought they were seeing a ghost. 38 But Jesus said, “Why are you troubled? Why do you doubt what you see? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It’s really me! Touch me. You can see that I have a living body; a ghost does not have a body like this.”

40 After Jesus told them this, he showed them the holes in his hands and feet. 41 The followers were amazed and very, very happy to see that Jesus was alive. They still could not believe what they saw. Jesus said to them, “Do you have any food here?” 42 They gave him a piece of cooked fish. 43 While the followers watched, Jesus took the fish and ate it.

44 Jesus said to them, “Remember when I was with you before? I said that everything written about me must happen—everything written in the law of Moses, the books of the prophets,* and the Psalms.”

45 Then Jesus helped the followers understand these Scriptures* written about him. 46 Jesus said to them, “It is written that the Christ* would be killed and rise from death on the third day. 47–48 You saw these things happen—you are witnesses. You must go and tell people that their sins can be forgiven. Tell them that they must change their hearts and be sorry for their sins. If they will do this, then God will forgive them. You must start from Jerusalem and tell people these things in my name. This Good News* must be told to all people in the world. 49 Listen! My Father has promised you something; I will send it to you. But you must stay in Jerusalem until you have received that power from heaven.”

Jesus Goes Back to Heaven
(Mk. 16:19–20; Ac. 1:9–11)

50 Jesus led his followers out of Jerusalem almost to Bethany. Jesus raised his hands and blessed his followers. 

51 While Jesus was blessing them, he was separated from them and carried into heaven. 52 The followers worshiped him there. Then they went back to Jerusalem. They were very happy. 53 They stayed at the temple* all the time, praising God.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
apostles Men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers for telling his Good News to the world.

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.
Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
Christ Comes to the World

Before the world began, the Word\textsuperscript{a} was there. The Word was there with God. The Word was God.\textsuperscript{2} He was there with God in the beginning.\textsuperscript{3} All things were made through him (the Word). Nothing was made without him.\textsuperscript{4} In him there was life. That life was light (understanding, goodness) for the people of the world.\textsuperscript{5} The Light shines in the darkness. The darkness has not defeated\textsuperscript{6} the Light.

There was a man named John.\textsuperscript{7} He was sent by God. John came to tell people about the Light (Christ). Through John all people could hear about the Light and believe.\textsuperscript{8} John was not the Light. But John came to tell people about the Light.\textsuperscript{9} The True Light was coming into the world. This is the true Light that gives light to all people.

The Word\textsuperscript{a} was already in the world. The world was made through him. But the world (people) did not know him.\textsuperscript{10} He came to the world that was his own. But his own people did not accept him.\textsuperscript{11} Some people did accept him. They believed in him. He gave something to those people who believed. He gave them the right to become children of God.\textsuperscript{12} These children were not born like little babies are born. They were not born from the wish or plan of a mother and father. These children were born from God.

The Word\textsuperscript{a} became a man and lived among us. We saw his glory—the glory that belongs to the only Son of the Father. The Word was full of grace (kindness) and truth.\textsuperscript{13} John told people about him. John said, “This is the One I was talking about. I said, ‘The One who comes after me is more important than I am. He was living before me.’”

The Word\textsuperscript{a} (Christ) was full of grace and truth. From him we all received more and more blessings.\textsuperscript{16} The law was given through Moses. But grace and the way of truth came through Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{17} No man has ever seen God. But the only Son (Jesus) is God. He is very close to the Father.\textsuperscript{18} And the Son has shown us what God is like.

John Tells People About Jesus
(Mt. 3:1–12; Mk. 1:2–8; Lk. 3:15–17)

The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent some priests and Levites\textsuperscript{a} to John.\textsuperscript{19} The Jews sent them to ask, “Who are you?”


The Jews asked John, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?”

John answered, “No, I am not Elijah.”

The Jews asked, “Are you the Prophet?”

John answered, “No, I am not the Prophet.”

Then the Jews said, “Who are you? Tell us about yourself. Give us an answer to tell

But the only Son ... Father Or, “But the only Son is very close to the Father.” Some Greek copies say, “But the only Son is very close to the Father.”

Levites Levites were men from the family group of Levi who helped the Jewish priests in the temple.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

Elijah A man that spoke for God about 850 B.C. The Jews thought Elijah would come before the Messiah. See Mal. 4:5–6.

Prophet They probably meant the prophet that God told Moses he would send. See Deut. 18:15–19.
The people who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

23 John told them the words of the prophet* Isaiah:

“I am the voice of a person shouting in the desert:

‘Make a straight road ready for the Lord.’”

Isaiah 40:3

24 These Jews were sent from the Pharisees.* 25 These men said to John: “You say you are not the Christ.* You say you are not Elijah* or the Prophet.* Then why do you baptize* people?”

26 John answered, “I baptize* people with water. But there is a person here with you that you don’t know. 27 That person is the One who comes after me. I am not good enough to untie the strings on his shoes.”

28 These things all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan River. This is where John was baptizing* people.

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him. John said, “Look, the Lamb of God.* He takes away the sins of the world! 30 This is the One I was talking about. I said, ‘A man will come after me, but he is greater than I am, because he was living before me—he has always lived.’ 31 Even I did not know who he was. But God sent me to baptize* people with water so that Israel (the Jews) could know that Jesus is† the Christ.*”

32–33 Then John said, “I also did not know who the Christ was. But God sent me to baptize* people with water. And God told me, ‘You will see the Spirit.*’ come down and rest on a man. That man is the One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.” John said, “I have seen this happen. I saw the Spirit come down from heaven. The Spirit looked like a dove and sat on him (Jesus). 34 So this is what I tell people: ‘He (Jesus) is the Son of God.’”

The First Followers of Jesus

35 The next day John was there again. John had two of his followers with him. 36 John saw Jesus walking by. John said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”

37 The two followers heard John say this, so they followed Jesus. 38 Jesus turned and saw the two men following him. Jesus asked, “What do you want?”

The two men said, “Rabbi, where are you staying?” (“Rabbi” means “Teacher.”)

39 Jesus answered, “Come with me and you will see.” So the two men went with Jesus. They saw the place where Jesus stayed. They stayed there with Jesus that day. It was about four o’clock.

40 These two men followed Jesus after they heard about Jesus from John. One of these two men was named Andrew. Andrew was Simon Peter’s brother. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to go find his brother, Simon. Andrew said to Simon, “We have found the Messiah.” (“Messiah” means “Christ.”)

42 Then Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at Simon and said, “You are Simon, the son of John. You will be called Cephas.” (“Cephas” means “Peter.”)

43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. Jesus found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” 44 Philip was from the town of Bethsaida, the same as Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, “Remember what Moses wrote in the law. Moses wrote about a man that was coming. The prophets* wrote about him too. We have found him. His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph. He is from Nazareth.”

46 But Nathanael said to Philip, “Nazareth! Can anything good come from Nazareth?”

Philip answered, “Come and see.”

prophet(s) People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

Elijah A man that spoke for God about 850 B.C. The Jews thought Elijah would come before the Messiah. See Mal. 4:5–6.

Prophet They probably meant the prophet that God told Moses he would send. See Deut. 18:15–19.

baptize(d), baptizing Greeek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

Lamb of God Name for Jesus. It means that Jesus is like the lambs that were offered for a sacrifice to God.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

Peter The Greek name “Peter,” like the Aramaic name “Cephas,” means “rock.”
JOHN 1:47–2:17

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him. Jesus said, “This man coming is truly one of God’s people. There is nothing false in him.”

48 Nathanael asked, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered, “I saw you when you were under the fig tree. That was before Philip told you about me.”

49 Then Nathanael said to Jesus, “Teacher, you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel (God’s people).”

50 Jesus said to Nathanael, “I told you that I saw you under the fig tree. That is why you believe in me. But you will see much greater things than that!” 51 Jesus also said, “I tell you the truth. You will all see heaven open. You will see ‘angels of God going up and coming down’ on the Son of Man.”

The Wedding at Cana

2 Two days later there was a wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there. 2 Jesus and his followers were also invited to the wedding. 3 At the wedding there was not enough wine. After the wine was all gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.”

4 Jesus answered, “Dear woman, you should not tell me what to do. It is not yet time for me to begin my work.”

5 Jesus’ mother said to the servants, “Do what Jesus tells you to do.”

6 In that place there were six large waterpots made of stone. The Jews used waterpots like these in their washing ceremonies. Each waterpot held about 20 or 30 gallons.

7 Jesus said to the servants, “Fill those waterpots with water.” So the servants filled the pots to the top.

8 Then Jesus said to the servants, “Now take out some water. Carry the water to the master of the feast.”

So the servants brought the water to the master. 9 Then the man in charge of the wedding feast tasted it, but the water had become wine. The man did not know where the wine came from. But the servants that brought the water knew where it came from. The master of the wedding called the bridegroom.* 10 He said to the bridegroom, “People always serve the best wine first. Later, after the guests have become drunk, people serve the cheaper wine. But you have saved the best wine until now.”

11 This was the first miracle* that Jesus did. Jesus did this miracle in the town of Cana in Galilee. So Jesus showed his greatness. And his followers believed in him.

12 Then Jesus went to the town of Capernaum.* Jesus’ mother and brothers and his followers went with him. They all stayed in Capernaum a few days.

Jesus at the Temple

(Mt. 21:12–13; Mk. 11:15–17; Lk. 19:45–46)

13 It was almost time for the Jewish Passover.* So Jesus went to Jerusalem. 14 In Jerusalem Jesus went to the temple.* In the temple area Jesus saw men selling cattle, sheep, and doves. Jesus saw other men sitting at tables. These men were exchanging and trading people’s money. 15 Jesus made a whip with some pieces of rope. Then Jesus forced all these men and the sheep and cattle to leave the temple area. Jesus turned over the tables and scattered the money of the men who trade money. 16 Then Jesus said to the men that were selling pigeons, “Take these things out of here! Don’t make my Father’s house a place for buying and selling!”

17 When this happened the followers of Jesus remembered what was written in the Scriptures:

“My excitement for your house will destroy me.” Psalm 69:9

one of God’s people Literally, “an Israelite.”

‘angels . . . coming down’ Quote from Gen. 28:12.

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

washing ceremonies The Jews had religious rules about washing in special ways before eating, before worshiping in the temple, and at other special times.

bridegroom A man that is getting married.
miracle(s) Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.
capernaum A town in Galilee where Jesus taught.
Passover An important Jewish holy day. The Jews ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.
temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
18Some Jews said to Jesus, “Show us a miracle* for a sign. Prove that you have the right to do these things.”
19Jesus answered, “Destroy this temple and I will build it again in three days.”
20The Jews answered, “People worked 46 years to build this temple! Do you really believe you can build it again in three days?”
21(But the temple Jesus meant was his own body. 22After Jesus was raised from death, his followers remembered that Jesus had said this. So his followers believed the Scripture* {about him}, and they believed the words Jesus said.)
23Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Passover* festival. Many people believed in Jesus because they saw the miracles* he did. 24But Jesus did not trust them. Why? Because Jesus knew the things people were thinking. 25Jesus did not need any person to tell him about people. Jesus knew what was in a person’s mind.

Jesus and Nicodemus

3There was a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was one of the Pharisees.* He was an important Jewish leader. 2One night Nicodemus came to Jesus. Nicodemus said, “Teacher, we know that you are a teacher sent from God. No person can do these miracles* that you do without God’s help.”
3Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth. A person must be born again. If a person is not born again, then that person cannot be in God’s kingdom.”
4Nicodemus said, “But if a person is already old, how can he be born again? A person cannot enter his mother’s body again! So a person cannot be born a second time!”
5But Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth. A person must be born from water and the Spirit.* If a person is not born from water and the Spirit, then he cannot enter God’s kingdom. 6A person’s body is born from his human parents. But a person’s spiritual life is born from the Spirit. 7Don’t be surprised that I told you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8The wind blows where it wants to go. You hear the wind blow. But you don’t know where the wind comes from or where the wind is going. It is the same with every person that is born from the Spirit.”
9Nicodemus asked, “How can all this be possible?”
10Jesus said, “You are an important teacher of Israel (the Jews). But you still don’t understand these things? 11I tell you the truth. We talk about what we know. We tell about what we have seen. But you people don’t accept what we tell you. 12I have told you about things here on earth. But you do not believe me. So surely you will not believe me if I tell you about the things of heaven! 13The only one that has ever gone up to heaven is the One that came down from heaven—the Son of Man.*
14“Moses lifted up the snake in the desert.* It is the same with the Son of Man. The Son of Man must be lifted up too. 15Then every person that believes in the Son of Man can have life forever.”
16Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son. God gave his Son so that every person that believes in him would not be lost, but have life forever. 17God sent his Son into the world. God did not send his Son to judge the world guilty. God sent his Son so that the world could be saved through his Son. 18The person that believes in God’s Son is not judged (condemned). But the person that does not believe is already judged. Why? Because that person has not believed in God’s only Son. 19People are judged by this fact: The Light (goodness) has come into the world. But people did not want light. They wanted darkness (sin). Why? Because they were doing evil things. 20Every person that does evil hates the light. That person will not come to the Light.
light. Why? Because then the light will show all the bad things he has done. 21But the person that follows the true way comes to the light. Then the light will show that the things that person has done were done through God.^

Jesus and John the Baptizer

22After this, Jesus and his followers went into the area of Judea. There Jesus stayed with his followers and baptized* people. 23John was also baptizing people in Aenon. Aenon is near Salim. John was baptizing there because there was plenty of water. People were going there to be baptized. 24(This happened before John was put into prison.)

25Some of John’s followers had an argument with another Jew. They were arguing about religious washing.* 26So the followers came to John. They said, “Teacher, remember the man that was with you on the other side of the Jordan River? He is the man you were telling people about. That man is baptizing* people, and many people are going to him.”

27John answered, “A man can get only what God gives him. 28You yourselves heard me say, ‘I am not the Christ.* I am only the one that God sent to prepare the way for him.’

29The bride always belongs to the bridegroom.* The friend that helps the bridegroom just waits and listens. He’s happy just to hear the bridegroom talk. That’s how I feel now. I’m so happy that he (Jesus) is here. 30He must become more and more important. And I must become less important.

The One That Comes from Heaven

31“The One (Jesus) that comes from above is greater than all other people. The person that is from the earth belongs to the earth. That person talks about things that are on the earth. But the One (Jesus) that comes from heaven is greater than all other people. 32He (Jesus) tells what he has seen and heard. But people don’t accept what he says. 33The person that accepts what he (Jesus) says has given proof that God speaks the truth. 34God sent him (Jesus). And he tells the things that God says. God gives him, the Spirit* fully.

35The Father loves the Son. The Father has given the Son power over everything. 36The person that believes in the Son has life forever. But the person that does not obey the Son will never have that life. God’s anger stays with that person.”

Jesus Talks to a Woman in Samaria

4The Pharisees* heard that Jesus was making and baptizing* more followers than John. 2(But really Jesus himself did not baptize people. His followers baptized people for him.) Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard about him. 3So Jesus left Judea and went back to Galilee. 4On the way to Galilee Jesus had to go through the country of Samaria.

5In Samaria Jesus came to the town called Sichar. This town is near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6Jacob’s well was there. Jesus was tired from his long trip. So Jesus sat down beside the well. It was about noon. 7A Samaritan* woman came to that well to get some water. Jesus said to her, “Please give me a drink of water.” 8(This happened while Jesus’ followers went to town to buy some food.)

9The Samaritan* woman answered, “I am surprised that you ask me for a drink! You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman!” (Jews are not friends with Samaritans.*

10Jesus answered, “You don’t know about the thing God gives. And you don’t know who I am that asked you for a drink. If you knew these things, you would have asked me and I would have given you living water.”

Verses 16-21 Some scholars think verses 16-21 are Jesus’ words. Others think John wrote them.
nbaptize(d), baptizing Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

religious washing The Jews had religious rules about washing in special ways before eating, before worshiping in the temple, and at other special times.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

bridegroom A man that is getting married.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Samaritan(s) From Samaria. Samaritans were part Jewish, but some Jews did not accept them as pure Jews.

Jews are not friends with Samaritans Or, “Jews don’t use things that Samaritans have used.”
11The woman said, "Sir, where will you get that living water? The well is very deep, and you have nothing to get water with. 12Are you greater than Jacob our father? Jacob is the one that gave us this well. He drank from it himself. Also, his sons and all his animals drank water from this well."

13Jesus answered, "Every person that drinks this water will be thirsty again. 14But the person that drinks the water I give will never be thirsty again. That water I give will become like a spring of water flowing inside that person. That water will bring that person life forever."

15The woman said to Jesus, "Sir, give me this water. Then I will never be thirsty again. And I will not have to come back here to get more water."

16Jesus told her, "Go get your husband and come back here."

17The woman answered, "But I have no husband."

Jesus said to her, "You are right to say you have no husband. 18Really you have had five husbands. But the man you live with now is not your husband. You told me the truth."

19The woman said, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain. But you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where people must worship."

20Jesus said, "Believe me, woman! The time is coming when you will not have to be in Jerusalem or on that mountain to worship the Father (God). 21You Samaritans worship something that you don't understand. We Jews understand what we worship. Salvation comes from the Jews. 22The time is coming when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. That time is now here. And those are the kind of people the Father wants to be his worshipers. 23God is spirit. So the people that worship God must worship in spirit and truth."

25The woman said, "I know that the Messiah is coming." (Messiah is the One called Christ.) "When the Messiah comes, he will explain everything to us."

26Then Jesus said, "That person is talking to you now. I am the Messiah."

27At that time Jesus' followers came back from town. They were surprised because they saw Jesus talking with a woman. But none of them asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

28Then the woman left her water jar and went back to town. She told the people in town, 29"A man told me everything I have ever done. Come see him. Maybe he is the Christ." So the people left the town and went to see Jesus.

30While the woman was in town, Jesus' followers were begging him, "Teacher, eat something!"

32But Jesus answered, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."

33So the followers asked themselves, "Did somebody already bring Jesus some food?"

34Jesus said, "My food is to do what the One (God) who sent me wants me to do. My food is to finish the work that he gave me to do. 35When you plant, you always say, 'Four more months to wait before we gather the grain.' But I tell you, open your eyes. Look at the people. They are like fields ready for harvesting now. Even now, the person that harvests the crop is being paid. He is gathering crops for eternal life. So now the person that plants can be happy together with the person that harvests. 37It is true when we say, 'One person plants, but another person harvests the crop.' 38I sent you to harvest a crop that you did not work for. Other people did the work, and you get the profit from their work."

39Many of the Samaritan people in that town believed in Jesus. They believed because of the things Jesus said.
42 The people said to the woman, “First we believed in Jesus because of what you told us. But now we believe because we heard him ourselves. We know now that he really is the one that will save the world.”

Jesus Heals an Official’s Son
(Mt. 8:5–13; Lk. 7:1–10)

43 Two days later Jesus left and went to Galilee. 44 (Jesus had said before that a prophet is not respected in his own country.) 45 When Jesus arrived in Galilee, the people there welcomed him. These people had seen all the things Jesus did at the Passover festival in Jerusalem. These people had been at the festival too.

46 Jesus went to visit Cana in Galilee again. Cana is where Jesus had changed the water into wine. One of the king’s important officials lived in the city of Capernaum. This man’s son was sick. 47 The man heard that Jesus had come from Judea and was now in Galilee. So the man went to Jesus in Cana. He begged Jesus to come to Capernaum and heal his son. His son was almost dead. 48 Jesus said to him, “You people must see miracles and wonderful works before you will believe in me.”

49 The king’s official said, “Sir, come to my house before my little son dies.” 50 Jesus answered, “Go. Your son will live.”

51 The man believed what Jesus told him and went home. 52 On the way home the man’s servants came and met him. They told him, “Your son is well.”

53 The man asked, “What time did my son begin to get well?”

The servants answered, “It was about one o’clock yesterday when the fever left him.”

54 The man knew that one o’clock was the same time that Jesus had said, “Your son will live.” So the man and all the people in his home believed in Jesus.

55 That was the second miracle that Jesus did after coming from Judea to Galilee.

John 4:42–5:14

Jesus Heals a Man at a Pool

5 Later Jesus went to Jerusalem for a special Jewish festival. 2 In Jerusalem there is a pool with five covered porches. In the Jewish language it is called Bethzatha. 3 This pool is near the Sheep Gate. 4 Many sick people were lying on the porches beside the pool. Some of the people were blind, some were crippled, and some were paralyzed. 5 There was a man lying there who had been sick for 38 years. 6 Jesus saw the man lying there. Jesus knew that the man had been sick for a very long time. So Jesus asked the man, “Do you want to be well?”

7 The sick man answered, “Sir, there is no person to help me get into the water when the water starts moving. I try to be the first person into the water. But when I try, another person always goes in before I can.”

8 Then Jesus said, “Stand up! Pick up your bed and walk.” 9 Then immediately the man was well. The man picked up his bed and started walking.

The day all this happened was a Sabbath day. 10 So some Jews said to the man that had been healed, “Today is the Sabbath. It is against our law for you to carry your bed on the Sabbath day.”

11 But the man answered, “The person (Jesus) that made me well told me, ‘Pick up your bed and walk.’”

12 The Jews asked the man, “Who is the person that told you to pick up your bed and walk?”

13 But the man that had been healed did not know who the person was. There were many people in that place, and Jesus had left.

14 Later Jesus found the man at the temple. Jesus said to him, “See, you are well now. But

Jewish language Hebrew or Aramaic, a language like Hebrew that was spoken by many Jews in the first century.

Bethzatha Also called Bethsaida or Bethesda, a pool of water north of the temple in Jerusalem.

Verses 3 and 4 At the end of verse 3 some Greek copies add “and they waited for the water to move.” A few later copies add verse 4: “Sometimes an angel of the Lord came down to the pool and shook the water. After the angel did this, the first person to go into the pool was healed from any sickness he had.”

Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.

Temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

prophet A person that spoke for God.

Passover An important Jewish holy day. The Jews ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

miracle(s) Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.
Then the man left and went back to those Jews. The man told them that Jesus was the one that made him well.

Jesus was doing these things (healing) on the Sabbath day. So the Jews began to do bad things to Jesus. But Jesus said to the Jews, “My Father never stops working. And so I work too.”

This made these Jews try harder to kill him. The Jews said, “First this man (Jesus) was breaking the law about the Sabbath day. Then he said that God is his Father! He is making himself equal with God!”

Jesus Has God’s Authority

But Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth. The Son can do nothing alone. The Son does only what he sees his Father doing. The Son does the same things that the Father does. The Father loves the Son, and the Father shows the Son all the things he does. But the Father will show the Son greater things than this to do. Then you will all be amazed. The Father raises dead people and gives them life. In the same way, the Son gives life to the people he wants to.

Also, the Father judges no one. But the Father has given the Son power to do all the judging. God did this so that all people will respect the Son the same as they respect the Father. If a person does not respect the Son, then that person does not respect the Father. The Father is the One who sent the Son.

“I tell you the truth. If a person hears what I say and believes in the One (God) who sent me, then people cannot accept those things I say about myself. But there is another person that tells people about me. And I know that the things he says about me are true.

You have sent men to John. And he has told you about the truth. I don’t need a man to tell people about me. But I tell you these things so that you can be saved. John was like a lamp that burned and gave light. And you were happy to enjoy his light for a while.

But I have a proof about myself that is greater than John. The things I do are my proof. These are the things my Father gave me to do. These things show that the Father sent me. And the Father that sent me has given proof about me himself. But you have never heard his voice. You have never seen what he looks like.

The Father’s teaching does not live in you. Why? Because you don’t believe in the One the Father sent. You carefully study the Scriptures. You think that those Scriptures give you life forever. Those same Scriptures tell about me! But you refuse to come to me to have that life you want.

“I don’t want praise from you or any other human. But I know you—I know that you don’t have God’s love in you. I have come from my Father—I speak for him. But you don’t accept me. But when another person comes speaking only for himself, you will stop sinning or something worse may happen to you!”

Then the man left and went back to those Jews. The man told them that Jesus was the one that made him well.

16 Jesus was doing these things (healing) on the Sabbath day. So the Jews began to do bad things to Jesus. 17 But Jesus said to the Jews, “My Father never stops working. And so I work too.”

18 This made these Jews try harder to kill him. The Jews said, “First this man (Jesus) was breaking the law about the Sabbath day. Then he said that God is his Father! He is making himself equal with God!”

Jesus Continues Talking to the Jewish Leaders

If I tell people about myself, then people cannot accept those things I say about myself. But there is another person that tells people about me. And I know that the things he says about me are true.

You have sent men to John. And he has told you about the truth. I don’t need a man to tell people about me. But I tell you these things so that you can be saved. John was like a lamp that burned and gave light. And you were happy to enjoy his light for a while.

But I have a proof about myself that is greater than John. The things I do are my proof. These are the things my Father gave me to do. These things show that the Father sent me. And the Father that sent me has given proof about me himself. But you have never heard his voice. You have never seen what he looks like.

The Father’s teaching does not live in you. Why? Because you don’t believe in the One the Father sent. You carefully study the Scriptures. You think that those Scriptures give you life forever. Those same Scriptures tell about me! But you refuse to come to me to have that life you want.

“I don’t want praise from you or any other human. But I know you—I know that you don’t have God’s love in you. I have come from my Father—I speak for him. But you don’t accept me. But when another person comes speaking only for himself, you will

Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13-14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
accept him. 44 You like to have praise from each other. But you never try to get the praise that comes from the only God. So how can you believe? 45 Don’t think that I will stand before the Father and say that you are wrong. Moses is the person that says that you are wrong. And Moses is the one that you hoped would save you. 46 If you really believed Moses, you would believe me. Why? Because Moses wrote about me. 47 But you don’t believe what Moses wrote. So you cannot believe the things I say.”

Jesus Feeds More than 5,000 People
(Mt. 14:13–21; Mk. 6:30–44; Lk. 9:10–17)

Later, Jesus went across Lake Galilee (Lake Tiberias). 2 Many people followed Jesus. They followed him because they saw the ways Jesus showed his power by healing the sick people. 3 Jesus went up on the side of the hill. He sat there with his followers. 4 It was almost the time for the Jewish Passover* festival. 5 Jesus looked up and saw many people coming toward him. Jesus said to Philip, “Where can we buy enough bread for all these people to eat?” 6 (Jesus asked Philip this question to test him. Jesus already knew what he planned to do.) 7 Philip answered, “We would all have to work a month to buy enough bread for each person here to have only a little piece!” 8 Another follower there was Andrew. Andrew was Simon Peter’s brother. Andrew said, 9 “Here is a boy with five loaves of barley bread and two little fish. But that is not enough for so many people.” 10 Jesus said, “Tell the people to sit down.” This was a very grassy place. There were about 5,000 men that sat down there. 11 Then Jesus held the loaves of bread. Jesus thanked God for the bread and gave it to the people that were waiting to eat. He did the same with the fish. Jesus gave the people as much as they wanted. 12 All the people had enough to eat. When they finished, Jesus said to his followers, “Gather the pieces of fish and bread that were not eaten. Don’t waste anything.” 13 So the followers gathered up the pieces that were left. The people had started eating with only five loaves of barley bread. But the followers filled twelve large baskets with the pieces of food that were left. 14 The people saw this miracle* that Jesus did. The people said, “He must truly be the Prophet* that is coming into the world.” 15 Jesus knew that the people wanted him to become king. The people planned to come get Jesus and make him their king. So Jesus left and went into the hills alone.

Jesus Walks on the Water
(Mt. 14:22–27; Mk. 6:45–52)

16 That evening Jesus’ followers went down to the lake (Lake Galilee). 17 It was dark now and Jesus had not yet come back to them. The followers got into a boat and started going across the lake to Capernaum. 18 The wind was blowing very hard. The waves on the lake were becoming bigger. 19 They rowed the boat about three or four miles. Then they saw Jesus. He was walking on the water. He was coming to the boat. The followers were afraid. 20 But Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid. It’s me.” 21 After Jesus said this, the followers were happy to take Jesus into the boat. Then the boat came to land at the place where they wanted to go.

The People Seek Jesus

22 The next day came. Some people had stayed on the other side of the lake. These people knew that Jesus did not go with his followers in the boat. The people knew that Jesus’ followers had left in the boat alone. And they knew that it was the only boat that was there. 23 But then some boats from Tiberias came. The boats landed near the place where they had eaten the day before. This was where they had eaten the bread after the Lord (Jesus) gave thanks. 24 The people saw that Jesus and his followers were not there now. So the people got into the boats and went to Capernaum. They wanted to find Jesus.

*Passover* An important Jewish holy day. The Jews ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

*miracle(s)* Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.

*Prophet* They probably meant the prophet that God told Moses he would send. See Deut. 18:15–19,
Jesus, the Bread of Life

25The people found Jesus on the other side of the lake. They asked Jesus, “Teacher, when did you come here?”

26Jesus answered, “Why are you looking for me? Are you looking for me because you saw me do miracles that prove my power? No! I tell you the truth. You are looking for me because you ate the bread and you were satisfied.* Earthly food spoils and ruins. So don’t work to get that kind of food. But work to get the food that stays good always and gives you life forever. The Son of Man* will give you that food. God the Father showed that he is with the Son of Man.”

27The people asked Jesus, “What are the things God wants us to do?”

28Jesus answered, “The work God wants you to do is this: to believe in the One that God sent.”

29So the people asked, “What miracle* will you do to prove that you are the One God sent? If we can see you do a miracle, then we will believe you. What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna (food) God gave them in the desert. This is written in the Scriptures*: ‘God gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

30Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. Moses was not the one that gave your people bread from heaven. But my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. What is the bread of God? God’s bread is the One that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

31The people said, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

32Then Jesus said, “I am the bread that gives life. The person that comes to me will never be hungry. The person that believes in me will never be thirsty. I told you before that you have seen me, and still you don’t believe. The Father gives me my people. Every one of those people will come to me. I will always accept every person that comes to me. I came down from heaven to do what God wants me to do. I did not come to do what I want to do. I must not lose any person that God has given me. But I must raise up those people on the last day. This is what the One who sent me wants me to do. Every person that sees the Son and believes in him has life forever. I will raise up that person on the last day. This is what my Father wants.”

33Some Jews began to complain about Jesus. They complained because Jesus said, “I am the bread that comes down from heaven.”

34The Jews said, “This is Jesus. We know his father and mother. Jesus is only Joseph’s son. How can he say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

35But Jesus said, “Stop complaining to each other. The Father is the One who sent me. And the Father is the One who brings people to me. I will raise up those people on the last day. If the Father does not bring a person to me, then that person cannot come to me. It is written in the prophets*: ‘God will teach all the people.’ People listen to the Father and learn from him. Those people come to me. I don’t mean that anyone has seen the Father. The only person that has ever seen the Father is the One that came from God. That person has seen the Father. I tell you the truth. If a person believes, then that person has life forever. I am the bread that gives life. Your ancestors* ate the manna (food) God gave them in the desert. But it didn’t keep them from dying. Here is the bread that comes down from heaven. If a person eats this bread, he will never die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If a person eats this bread, then that person will live forever. This bread is my body. I will give my body so that the people in the world can have life.”

36Then the Jews began to argue among themselves. They said, “How can this man give us his body to eat?”

37Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. You must eat the body of the Son of Man.* And you must drink his blood. If you don’t do this,
then you don’t have real life in you. \( ^{54} \) The person that eats my body and drinks my blood has eternal life. I will raise up that person on the last day. \( ^{55} \) My body is true food. My blood is true drink. \( ^{56} \) If a person eats my body and drinks my blood, then that person lives in me, and I live in that person. 

\( ^{57} \) The Father sent me. The Father lives, and I live because of the Father. So the person that eats me will live because of me. \( ^{58} \) I am not like the bread that our ancestors* ate in the desert. They ate that bread. But, \( ^{59} \) like all people, they died. I am the bread that came down from heaven. The person that eats this bread will live forever.” \( ^{60} \) Jesus said all these things while he was teaching in the synagogue* in the city of Capernaum.

### Many Followers Leave Jesus

\( ^{60} \) The followers of Jesus heard this. Many of the followers said, “This teaching is hard to accept. Who can accept this teaching?” 

\( ^{61} \) Jesus knew that his followers were complaining about this. So Jesus said, “Is this teaching a problem for you? \( ^{62} \) Then will it also be a problem for you to see the Son of Man* going back to the place where he came from? 

\( ^{63} \) It is not the body that gives a person life. It is the spirit that gives life. The things I told you are spirit. And so these things give life. \( ^{64} \) But some of you don’t believe.” (Jesus knew the people that did not believe. Jesus knew this from the beginning. And Jesus knew the person that would turn against him.) \( ^{65} \) Jesus said, “That is why I said, ‘If the Father does not let a person come to me, then that person cannot come.’” 

\( ^{66} \) After Jesus said these things, many of his followers left him. They stopped following Jesus. 

\( ^{67} \) Jesus asked the twelve apostles,* “Do you want to leave too?” 

\( ^{68} \) Simon Peter answered Jesus, “Lord, where would we go? You have the things that give life forever. \( ^{69} \) We believe in you. We know that you are the Holy One from God.” 

\( ^{70} \) Then Jesus answered, “I chose all twelve of you. But one of you is a devil.” \( ^{71} \) Jesus was talking about Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Judas was one of the twelve apostles. But later Judas would turn against Jesus.

### Jesus and His Brothers

\( ^{7} \) After this, Jesus traveled around the country of Galilee. Jesus did not want to travel in Judea, because the Jewish leaders there wanted to kill him. \( ^{2} \) It was time for the Jewish Festival of Shelters.* \( ^{3} \) So Jesus’ brothers said to him, “You should leave here and go to the festival in Judea. Then your followers there can see the miracles* you do. 

\( ^{4} \) If a person wants the people to know him, then that person must not hide the things he does. Show yourself to the world. Let them see these things (miracles) you do.” \( ^{5} \) (Even Jesus’ brothers did not believe in him.) \( ^{6} \) Jesus said to his brothers, “The right time for me has not yet come. But any time is right for you to go. 

\( ^{7} \) The world cannot hate you. But the world hates me. Why? Because I tell the people in the world that they do evil things. \( ^{8} \) So you go to the festival. I will not go to the festival now. The right time for me has not yet come.” 

\( ^{9} \) After Jesus said this, he stayed in Galilee. 

\( ^{10} \) So Jesus’ brothers left to go to the festival. After they left, Jesus went too. But Jesus did not let people see him. \( ^{11} \) At the festival the Jewish leaders were looking for Jesus. The Jews said, “Where is that man?” 

\( ^{12} \) There was a large group of people there. Many of these people were talking secretly to each other about Jesus. Some people said, “He is a good man.” But other people said, “No, he fools the people.” \( ^{13} \) But none of the people were brave enough to talk about Jesus openly. The people were afraid of the Jewish leaders.
Jesus Teaches in Jerusalem

14 The festival was about half finished. Then Jesus went to the temple area and began to teach. 15 The Jews were amazed. They said, “This man has never studied in school. How did he learn so much?”

16 Jesus answered, “The things I teach are not my own. My teaching comes from him (God) who sent me. 17 If a person wants to do what God wants, then that person will know that my teaching comes from God. That person will know that this teaching is not my own. 18 Any person that teaches his own ideas is trying to get honor for himself. But a person that tries to bring honor to the one that sent him—that person speaks the truth. There is nothing false in him. 19 Moses gave you the law. Right? But none of you obey that law. Why are you trying to kill me?”

20 The people answered, “A demon is making you crazy! We are not trying to kill you.”

21 Jesus said to them, “I did one miracle on a Sabbath day and you were all surprised. 22 But you obey the law Moses gave you about circumcision—and sometimes you do it on a Sabbath day. (Really, Moses is not the one that gave you circumcision. Circumcision came from our people that lived before Moses.) Yes, you often circumcise babies on a Sabbath day. 23 This shows that a person can be circumcised on a Sabbath day to obey the law of Moses. So why are you angry at me for healing a person’s whole body on the Sabbath day? 24 Stop judging by the way things look. Be fair and judge by what is really right.”

The People Wonder If Jesus Is the Christ

25 Then some of the people that lived in Jerusalem said, “This is the man they are trying to kill. 26 But he is teaching where everyone can see and hear him. And no person is trying to stop him from teaching. Maybe the leaders have decided that he really is the Christ. 27 But we know where this man’s home is. And when the real Christ comes, no person will know where he comes from.”

28 Jesus was still teaching in the temple area. Jesus said, “Yes, you know me and you know where I am from. But I have not come by my own authority. I was sent by the One (God) who is true. You don’t know him. 29 But I know him and I am from him. He sent me.”

30 When Jesus said this, the people tried to get him. But no person was able to touch Jesus. It was not yet the right time for Jesus to be killed. 31 But many of the people believed in Jesus. The people said, “We are waiting for the Christ to come. When the Christ comes, will he do more miracles than this man (Jesus) has done? No! So this man must be the Christ.”

The Jewish Leaders Try to Arrest Jesus

32 The Pharisees heard these things the people were saying about Jesus. So the leading priests and the Pharisees sent some temple police to arrest Jesus. 33 Then Jesus said, “I will be with you people a little while longer. Then I will go back to the One who sent me. 34 You will look for me, but you will not find me. And you cannot come where I am.”

35 These Jews said to each other, “Where will this man go that we cannot find him? Will he go to the Greek cities where our people live? Will he teach the Greek people there? 36 This man says, ‘You will look for me but you will not find me.’ He also says, ‘You cannot come where I am.’ What does this mean?”

Jesus Talks About the Holy Spirit

37 The last day of the festival came. It was the most important day. On that day Jesus stood and said with a loud voice, “If a person is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 If a person believes in me, rivers of living water will flow out from his heart. That is what the

festival The Festival of Shelters. See verse 2.
temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
law Moses gave God’s people the law that God gave him on Mount Sinai. Read Ex. 34:29–32.
demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
miracle(s) Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.
Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.
circumcision Cutting off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
The People Argue About Jesus

40 The people heard these things that Jesus said. Some of the people said, “This man really is the Prophet.”
41 Other people said, “He is the Christ.”

Other people said, “The Christ will not come from Galilee. 42 The Scriptures say that the Christ will come from the family of David. And the Scriptures say that the Christ will come from Bethlehem, the town where David lived.” 43 So the people did not agree with each other about Jesus. 44 Some of the people wanted to arrest Jesus. But no person tried to do this.

The Jewish Leaders Refuse to Believe

45 The temple police went back to the leading priests and the Pharisees. The priests and the Pharisees asked, “Why did you not bring Jesus?”
46 The temple police answered, “The things he says are greater than the words of any person we’ve ever heard!”
47 The Pharisees answered, “So Jesus has fooled you too! 48 Have any of the leaders believed in Jesus? No! Have any of us Pharisees believed in him? No! But those people out there know nothing about the law. They are under God’s curse!”
50 But Nicodemus was there in that group. Nicodemus was the one that had gone to see Jesus before. Nicodemus said, “Our law will not let us judge a person without hearing him. We cannot judge him until we know what he has done.”

52 The Jewish leaders answered, “Are you from Galilee too? Study the Scriptures. You will learn that no prophet comes from Galilee.”

The Woman Caught in Adultery

53 All the Jewish leaders left and went home. 8 Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning Jesus went back to the temple area. All the people came to Jesus. Jesus sat and taught the people. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought a woman there. The woman had been caught doing the sin of adultery. These Jews forced the woman to stand before the people. 4 They said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught having sex with a man that is not her husband. 5 The law of Moses commands that we kill with rocks every woman that does this. What do you say we should do?”
6 They were using this question to trick Jesus. They wanted to catch Jesus saying something wrong. Then they could have a charge against him. But Jesus kneeled down and started writing on the ground with his finger. 7 The Jewish leaders continued to ask Jesus their question. So Jesus stood up and said, “Is there any person here that has never sinned? That person without sin can throw the first rock at this woman.”
8 Then Jesus knelt down again and wrote on the ground.

9 The people that heard Jesus began to leave one by one. The older men left first, and then the others. Jesus was left there alone with the woman. She was standing before him. 10 Jesus looked up again and asked her, “Woman, all of those people are gone. None of them judged you guilty?”

Nicodemus was the one ... before The story about Nicodemus going and talking to Jesus is in Jn. 3:1-21.
11The woman answered, “None of them judged me, sir.”

Then Jesus said, “So I also don’t judge you. You can go now, but don’t sin again.”

Jesus Is the Light of the World

12Later, Jesus talked to the people again. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. The person that follows me will never live in darkness. That person will have the light that gives life.”

13But the Pharisees* said to Jesus, “When you talk about yourself, you are the only one to say that these things are true. So we cannot accept these things you say.”

14Jesus answered, “Yes, I am saying these things about myself. But people can believe these things I say. Why? Because I know where I came from. And I know where I am going. 15You judge me the way people judge other people. I don’t judge any person. But if I judge, my judging is true. Why? Because when I judge I am not alone. The Father who sent me is with me. 16But if I judge, my judging is true. Why? Because when I judge I am not alone. The Father who sent me is with me. 17Your own law says that when two witnesses say the same thing, then you must accept what they say. 18I am one of the witnesses that speaks about myself. And the Father who sent me is my other witness.”

19The people asked, “Where is your father?”

Jesus answered, “You don’t know me or my Father. But if you knew me, then you would know my Father too.” 20Jesus said these things while he was teaching in the temple* area. He was near the place where all the people came to give money. But no person arrested him. The right time for Jesus had not yet come.

The Jewish Leaders Don’t Understand Jesus

21Again, Jesus said to the people, “I will leave you. You will look for me, but you will die with your sin. You cannot come where I am going.”

22So the Jewish leaders asked themselves, “Will Jesus kill himself? Is that why he said, ‘You cannot come where I am going?’”

23But Jesus said to those Jews, “You people are from here below. But I am from above. You belong to this world, but I don’t belong to this world. 24I told you that you would die with your sins. Yes, you will die with your sins, if you don’t believe that I AM.”

25The Jews asked, “Then who are you?”

Jesus answered, “I am what I have told you from the beginning. 26I have many things I could say to judge you. But I tell people only the things I have heard from the One that sent me. And he speaks the truth.”

27These Jews did not understand who Jesus was talking about. Jesus was telling them about the Father (God). 28So Jesus said to them, “You will lift up (kill) the Son of Man.* Then you will know that I AM.* You will know that these things I do are not by my own authority (power). You will know that I say only the things that the Father has taught me. 29The One (God) who sent me is with me. I always do what pleases him. So he has not left me alone.” 30While Jesus was saying these things, many people believed in him.

Jesus Talks About Freedom from Sin

31So Jesus said to the Jews that believed in him, “If you continue to obey my teaching, then you are truly my followers. 32Then you will know the truth. And the truth will make you free.”

33The Jews answered, “We are Abraham’s* people. And we have never been slaves. So why do you say that we will be free?”

34Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth. Every person that sins is a slave. Sin is his master. 35A slave does not stay with a family forever. But a son belongs to the family forever. 36So if the Son makes you free, then you will be truly free. 37I know you are Abraham’s* people. But you want to kill me. Why? Because you don’t want to accept my teaching. 38I am telling you what my Father has shown me. But you do the things that your father has told you.”

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

I AM This is like the name of God used in Ex. 3:14, but it can also mean “I am he (the Christ).”

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.
39 The Jews said, “Our father is Abraham.”
Jesus said, “If you were really Abraham’s children, then you would do the things Abraham did. I am a man who has told you the truth I heard from God. But you are trying to kill me. Abraham did nothing like that. So you are doing the things your own father did.”
But the Jews said, “We are not like children that never knew who their father was. God is our Father. He is the only Father we have.”
42 Jesus said to those Jews, “If God were really your Father, then you would love me. I came from God, and now I am here. I did not come by my own authority. God sent me. You don’t understand these things I say. Why? Because you cannot accept my teaching. Your father is the devil. You belong to him. You want to do what he wants. The devil was a murderer from the beginning. He was always against the truth. There is no truth in him. He is like the lies he tells. Yes, the devil is a liar. He is the father of lies. I speak the truth. That is why you don’t believe me. Can any of you prove that I am guilty of sin? If I tell the truth, then why don’t you believe me? The person that belongs to God accepts what God says. But you don’t accept what God says, because you don’t belong to God.”

Jesus Talks About Himself and Abraham
48 The Jews answered, “We say you are a Samaritan. We say a demon is making you crazy! Are we not right when we say these things?”
49 Jesus answered, “I have no demon in me. I give honor to my Father. But you give no honor to me. I am not trying to get honor for myself. There is One who wants this honor for me. He is the judge. I tell you the truth. If a person continues to obey my teaching, then that person will never die.”
52 The Jews said to Jesus, “Now we know that you have a demon in you! Even Abraham and the prophets died. But you say, ‘The person that obeys my teaching will never die.’ Do you think you are greater than our father Abraham? Abraham died. And the prophets died too. Who do you think you are?”
54 Jesus answered, “If I give honor to myself, then that honor is worth nothing. The One that gives me honor is my Father. And you say that he is your God. But you don’t really know him. I know him. If I said I did not know him, then I would be a liar like you are liars. But I do know him. And I obey what he says. Your father Abraham was very happy that he would see the day when I came. He saw that day and was happy.”
57 The Jews said to Jesus, “What? You have never seen Abraham! You are not even 50 years old!”
58 Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth. Before Abraham was born, I AM.”
59 When Jesus said this, the people picked up rocks to throw at him. But Jesus hid, and then he left the temple area.

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind
9 While Jesus was walking, he saw a blind man. This man had been blind since the time he was born. Jesus’ followers asked him, “Teacher, this man was born blind. But whose sin made him be born blind? His own sin, or his parents’ sin?”
3 Jesus answered, “It is not this man’s sin or his parents’ sin that made him be blind. This man was born blind so that God could use him to show what great things God can do. While it is daytime, we must continue doing the work of the One that sent me. The night is coming. And no person can work at night. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”
6 After Jesus said this, Jesus spit on the dirt and made some mud with it. Jesus put the mud on the man’s eyes. Jesus told the man, “Go and wash in the pool Siloam.” (Siloam means “Sent.”) So the man went to the pool. He

father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews, especially the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups.
Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.
Samaritan(s) From Samaria. Samaritans were part Jewish, but some Jews did not accept them as pure Jews.
demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
prophet(s) People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.
I AM This is like the name of God used in Ex. 3:14.
temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
washed and came back. Now he was able to
see.
8 Some people had seen this man begging
before. These people and the man’s neighbors
said, “Look! Is this the same man that always
sits and begs?”
9 Some people said, “Yes! He is the one.”
But other people said, “No, he is not the same
man. He only looks like him.”
So the man himself said, “I am the man that
was blind before.”
10 The people asked, “What happened? How
did you get your sight?”
11 The man answered, “The man that people
call Jesus made some mud. He put the mud on
my eyes. Then Jesus told me to go to Siloam
and wash. So I went to Siloam and washed.
And then I could see.”
12 The people asked the man, “Where is this
man (Jesus)?”
The man answered, “I don’t know.”

Some Pharisees Question the Man Jesus Healed
13 Then the people brought the man to the
Pharisees. This was the man that had been
blind. Jesus had made mud and healed the
man’s eyes. The day Jesus did this was a
Sabbath day. 14 So now the Pharisees asked
the man, “How did you get your sight?”
The man answered, “He put mud on my
eyes. I washed, and now I can see.”
16 Some of the Pharisees said, “This man
(Jesus) does not obey the law about the
Sabbath day. So he is not from God.”
Other men said, “But a person that is a
sinner cannot do miracles like these.” These
Jews could not agree with each other.
17 The Jewish leaders asked the man again,
“This man (Jesus) healed you, and you can see.
What do you say about him?”
The man answered, “He is a prophet.”
18 The Jews still did not believe that this
really happened to the man. They did not
believe that this man was blind and was now
healed. But later they sent for the man’s
parents. 19 They asked his parents, “Is this your
son? You say that he was born blind. So why
can he see now?”
20 The parents answered, “We know that this
man is our son. And we know that he was born
blind. 21 But we don’t know why he can see
now. We don’t know who healed his eyes. Ask
him. He is old enough to answer for himself.”
22 His parents said this because they were
afraid of the Jewish leaders. The Jewish
leaders had already decided that they would
punish any person that said Jesus was the
Christ. They would put those people out of
the synagogue. 23 That is why his parents said,
“He is old enough. Ask him.”
24 So the Jewish leaders called the man that
had been blind. They told the man to come in
again. They said, “You should give God the
glory by telling the truth. We know that this
man (Jesus) is a sinner.”
25 The man answered, “I don’t know if he is
a sinner. But I do know this: I was blind, and
now I can see.”
26 The Jewish leaders asked, “What did he
(Jesus) do to you? How did he heal your eyes?”
27 The man answered, “I have already told
you that. But you would not listen to me. Why
do you want to hear it again? Do you want to
become his followers too?”
28 The Jewish leaders became angry and said
some very bad things to the man. Then they
said, “You are a follower of that man (Jesus).
We are followers of Moses. We know that
God spoke to Moses. But we don’t even know
where this man (Jesus) comes from!”
30 The man answered, “This is a very strange
thing. You don’t know where Jesus comes
from. But he healed my eyes. 31 We all know
that God does not listen to sinners. But God
will listen to a person that worships and obeys
him. 32 This is the first time that any person
ever healed a man that was born blind. 33 This
man (Jesus) must be from God. If he were not
from God, he could not do anything like this.”
JOHN 9:34–10:21

34 The Jewish leaders answered, “You were born full of sin! Are you trying to teach us?” And the Jewish leaders forced the man to leave.

Spiritual Blindness
35 Jesus heard that the Jewish leaders had forced the man to leave. Jesus found the man and said to him, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”
36 The man asked, “Who is the Son of Man, sir? Tell me, so I can believe in him!”
37 Jesus said to him, “You have already seen him. The Son of Man is the one talking with you now.”
38 The man answered, “Yes, I believe, Lord!” Then the man bowed and worshiped Jesus.

39 Jesus said, “I came into this world so that the world could be judged. I came so that blind people could see. And I came so that people who think they see will become blind.”
40 Some of the Pharisees were near Jesus. They heard Jesus say this. They asked, “What? Are you saying that we are blind too?”
41 Jesus said, “If you were really blind (without understanding), you would not be guilty of sin. But you say that you see (know what you are doing). So you are guilty.”

The Shepherd and His Sheep

10 Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. When a man enters the sheep pen, he should use the gate. If he climbs in some other way, then he is a robber. He is trying to steal the sheep. 2 But the man that takes care of the sheep enters through the gate. He is the shepherd. 3 The man that guards the gate opens the gate for the shepherd. And the sheep listen to the voice of the shepherd. The shepherd calls his own sheep, using their names, and he leads them out. 4 The shepherd brings all of his sheep out. Then he goes ahead of them and leads them. The sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 But sheep will never follow a person they don’t know. They will run away from that person, because they don’t know his voice.” 6 Jesus told the people this story. But the people did not understand what the story meant.

Jesus Is the Good Shepherd
7 So Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth. I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All the people that came before I came were thieves and robbers. The sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate. The person that enters through me will be saved. That person will be able to come in and go out. He will find everything he needs. 10 A thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. But I came to give life—life that is full and good.

11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. 12 The worker that is paid to keep the sheep is different from the shepherd. The paid worker does not own the sheep. So when the worker sees a wolf coming, he runs away and leaves the sheep alone. Then the wolf attacks the sheep and scatters them. 13 The man runs away because he is only a paid worker. He does not really care for the sheep.

14–15 “I am the shepherd that cares for the sheep (people). I know my sheep like the Father knows me. And my sheep know me like I know the Father. I give my life for these sheep. 16 I have other sheep too. They are not in this flock here. I must lead them also. They will listen to my voice. In the future there will be one flock and one shepherd. 17 The Father loves me because I give my life. I give my life so that I can get it back again. 18 No person takes my life away from me. I give my own life freely. I have the right to give my life. And I have the right to get it back again. This is what the Father told me.”

19 Again the Jews did not agree with each other because of these things Jesus said. 20 Many of these Jews said, “A demon* has come into him and made him crazy. Why listen to him?”

21 But other Jews said, “These things we are hearing are not coming from someone that is crazy with a demon*. Can a demon heal the eyes of blind people? No!”

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
blind people Now Jesus is talking about people that are spiritually blind, not physically blind.
Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
The Jewish Leaders Against Jesus

22 It was winter, and the time came for the Festival of Dedication* at Jerusalem. 23 Jesus was in the temple* area at Solomon’s Porch.* 24 The Jewish leaders gathered around Jesus. They said, “How long will you make us wonder about you? If you are the Christ,* then tell us clearly.”

25 Jesus answered, “I told you already, but you did not believe. I do miracles* in my Father’s name. Those miracles show who I am. 26 But you don’t believe. Why? Because you are not my sheep (people). 27 My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give my sheep eternal life. They will never die. And no person can take them out of my hand. 29 My Father gave my sheep to me. He is greater than all. No person can steal my sheep out of my Father’s hand. 30 The Father and I are one.”

31 Again the Jews there picked up rocks to kill Jesus. 32 But Jesus said to them, “I have done many good things from the Father. You have seen those things. Which of those good things are you killing me for?”

33 The Jews answered, “We are not killing you for any good thing you did. But you say things that are against God. You are only a man, but you say you are the same as God! That is why we are trying to kill you with rocks!”

34 Jesus answered, “It is written in your law, ‘I (God) said you are gods.’* 35 This Scripture* called those people gods—the people that received God’s message. And Scripture is always true. 36 So why do you say that I am saying things that are against God because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’? I am the one God chose and sent into the world. 37 If I don’t do what my Father does, then don’t believe what I say. 38 But if I do the same things my Father does, then you should believe in the things I do. You might not believe in me, but you should believe in the things I do. Then you will know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.”

39 The Jewish leaders tried to get Jesus again. But Jesus escaped from them. 40 Then Jesus went back across the Jordan River. Jesus went to the place where John* was baptizing* before. Jesus stayed there, and many people came to him. The people said, “John never did a miracle.* But everything John said about this man (Jesus) is true.”

And many people there believed in Jesus.

The Death of Lazarus

11 There was a man named Lazarus who was sick. He lived in the town of Bethany. This is the town where Mary and her sister Martha lived. (Mary is the same woman that later put perfume on the Lord (Jesus) and wiped his feet with her hair.) Mary’s brother was Lazarus, the man that was now sick. So Mary and Martha sent a person to tell Jesus, “Lord, your dear friend Lazarus is sick.”

4 When Jesus heard this he said, “The end of this sickness will not be death. But this sickness is for the glory of God. This has happened to bring glory to the Son of God.”

5 (Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.) 6 When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for two more days. 7 Then Jesus said to his followers, “We should go back to Judea.”

8 The followers answered, “But teacher, those Jews in Judea tried to kill you with stones. That was only a short time ago. Now you want to go back there?”

9 Jesus answered, “There are twelve hours of light in the day. Right? If a person walks in the day, then he will not stumble and fall. Why? Because he can see with the light of this world. 10 But when a person walks at night he stumbles. Why? Because there is no light to help him see.”

11 After Jesus said these things, he said, “Our friend Lazarus is now sleeping. But I am going there to wake him.”
The followers answered, “But Lord, if he can sleep, he will be well.”

Jesus meant that Lazarus was dead. But Jesus’ followers thought Jesus meant that Lazarus was really sleeping. So then Jesus said clearly, “Lazarus is dead. And I am glad that I was not there. I am happy for you, because now you will believe in me. We will go to him now.”

Then Thomas (the one called Didymus) said to the other followers, “We will go too. We will die with Jesus in Judea.”

Jesus in Bethany

Jesus arrived in Bethany. Jesus found that Lazarus had already been dead and in the tomb for four days. Bethany was about two miles from Jerusalem. Many Jews had come to Martha and Mary. They came to comfort them about their brother Lazarus.

Martha heard that Jesus was coming. She went out to greet Jesus. But Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you anything you ask.”

Jesus said, “Your brother will rise and be alive again.”

Martha answered, “I know that he will rise to live again at the time of the resurrection on the last day.”

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection. I am life. The person that believes in me will have life after he dies. And the person that lives and believes in me will never really die. Martha, do you believe this?”

Martha answered, “Yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God. You are the One that was coming to the world.”

Jesus Cries

After Martha said these things, she went back to her sister Mary. Martha talked to Mary alone. Martha said, “The Teacher (Jesus) is here. He is asking for you.” Mary heard this, she stood up and went quickly to Jesus. Jesus had not yet come into the village. He was still at the place where Martha met him. The Jews who had come were with Mary in the house. They were comforting her. They saw Mary stand and leave quickly. They thought that she was going to the tomb of Lazarus. They thought she was going there to cry. So they followed her. Mary went to the place where Jesus was. When she saw Jesus, she bowed at his feet. Mary said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

Jesus saw that Mary was crying. Jesus saw the Jews that came with her. They were crying too. Jesus felt very upset. He was deeply troubled. Jesus asked, “Where did you put him (Lazarus)?” They said, “Lord, come and see.”

Jesus cried.

And the Jews said, “Look! Jesus loved Lazarus very much!”

But some of these Jews said, “Jesus healed the eyes of the blind man. Why didn’t Jesus help Lazarus and stop him from dying?”

Again Jesus felt very upset.

Jesus Makes Lazarus Alive Again

Jesus came to the tomb where Lazarus was. The tomb was a cave with a large stone covering the entrance. Jesus said, “Move the stone away.”

Martha said, “But Lord, it has been four days since Lazarus died. There will be a bad smell.” Martha was the sister of the dead man (Lazarus).

Then Jesus said to Martha, “Remember what I told you? I said that if you believed, then you would see the glory of God.”

So they moved the stone away from the entrance. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you heard me. I said these things because of the people here around me. I want them to believe that you sent me.”

After Jesus said this he called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man (Lazarus) came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with pieces of cloth. He had a handkerchief covering his face.

tomb A grave dug in a wall of rock.
resurrection Being raised from death to live again.
Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
Jesus said to the people, “Take the cloth off of him and let him go.”

The Jewish Leaders Plan to Kill Jesus
(Mt. 26:1–5; Mk. 14:1–2; Lk. 22:1–2)

45There were many Jews that came to visit Mary. They saw what Jesus did. And many of these Jews believed in Jesus. 46But some of the Jews went to the Pharisees.* They told the Pharisees what Jesus did. 47Then the leading priests and Pharisees called a meeting of the Jewish council. They said, “What should we do? This man (Jesus) is doing many miracles.* 48If we let him continue doing these things, all the people will believe in him. Then the Romans will come and take away our temple* and our nation.”

49One of the men there was Caiaphas. He was the high priest* that year. Caiaphas said, “You people know nothing! 50It is better for one man to die for the people than for the whole nation to be destroyed. But you don’t realize this.”

51Caiaphas did not think of this himself. He was high priest* that year. So he was really prophesying* that Jesus would die for the Jewish people. 52Yes, Jesus would die for the Jewish people. But Jesus would also die for God’s other children that were scattered in all the world. He would die to bring them all together and make them one people.

53That day the Jewish leaders began planning to kill Jesus. 54So Jesus stopped traveling around openly among the Jews. Jesus left Jerusalem and went to a place near the desert. Jesus went to the town called Ephraim. Jesus stayed there with his followers.

55It was almost time for the Jewish Passover* festival. Many people from the country went to Jerusalem before the Passover. They went to do the special things to make themselves pure* for the Passover. They looked for Jesus. They stood in the temple* area and asked each other, “Is he (Jesus) coming to the festival? What do you think?” 57But the leading priests and the Pharisees* had given a special order about Jesus. They said that if any person knew where Jesus was, the person must tell them. Then the leading priests and the Pharisees could arrest Jesus.

Jesus in Bethany with His Friends
(Mt. 26:6–13; Mk. 14:3–9)

12Six days before the Passover* festival, Jesus went to Bethany. Bethany is the town where Lazarus lived. (Lazarus is the man Jesus raised from death.) 2In Bethany they had a dinner for Jesus. Martha served the food. Lazarus was one of the people eating with Jesus. 3Mary brought in a pint of very expensive perfume made from pure nard.* Mary poured the perfume on Jesus’ feet. Then she wiped his feet with her hair. And the sweet smell from the perfume filled the whole house.

4Judas Iscariot was there. Judas was one of Jesus’ followers. (He was the one that would later be against Jesus.) Judas did not like what Mary did. 5That perfume was worth 300 silver coins.* It should have been sold, and the money should have been given to the poor people.” 6But Judas did not really care about poor people. Judas said this because he was a thief. Judas was the one that kept the money box* for the group of followers. And Judas often stole money from the box.

7Jesus answered, “Don’t stop her. It was right for her to save this perfume for today—the day for me to be prepared for burial. 8The poor people will always be with you. But you will not always have me.”

The Plot Against Lazarus
(Mt. 26:9; Mk. 14:9–10)

9Many of the Jews heard that Jesus was in Bethany. So they went there to see Jesus. They also went there to see Lazarus. Lazarus was the one Jesus raised from death. 10So the leading priests made plans to kill Lazarus too.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

miracle(s) Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.

prophesying To prophesy means to speak for God.

Passover An important Jewish holy day. The Jews ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

nard An expensive oil from the root of the nard plant.

silver coins One coin, a Roman denarius, was the average pay for one day’s work.
11 Because of Lazarus, many Jews were leaving their leaders and believing in Jesus. That is why the Jewish leaders wanted to kill Lazarus too.

**Jesus Enters Jerusalem**
(Mt. 21:1–11; Mk. 11:1–11; Lk. 19:28–40)

12 The next day the people in Jerusalem heard that Jesus was coming there. These were the many people that had come to the Passover* festival. 13 The people took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Jesus. The people shouted,

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"Praise* Him! 
Welcome! God bless the One that comes in the name of the Lord!"
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Psalm 118:25–26

God bless the King of Israel!"

14 Jesus found a donkey and rode on it. This was like the Scripture* says:

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"Do not be afraid, city of Zion!*
Look! Your king is coming.
He is riding on a young donkey."
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Zechariah 9:9

16 The followers of Jesus did not understand at that time what was happening. But after Jesus was raised to glory, they understood that these things were written about him. Then the followers remembered that they had done these things for him.

**People Tell About Jesus**

17 There were many people with Jesus when he raised Lazarus from death and told him to come out of the tomb.* Now those people were telling other people about what Jesus did. 18 Many people went out to meet Jesus, because they heard that Jesus did this miracle.*

**Passover** An important Jewish holy day. The Jews ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

**Praise** Literally, “Hosanna,” a Hebrew word used in praying to God for help. Here, it was probably a shout of celebration used in praising God or his Messiah.

**Scripture** Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

**city of Zion** Literally, “daughter of Zion,” meaning Jerusalem.

**tomb** A grave dug in a wall of rock.

**miracle(s)** Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.

19 So the Pharisees* said to each other, “Look! Our plan is not working. All the people are following him!”

**Jesus Talks About Life and Death**

20 There were some Greek people there too. These were some of the people that went to Jerusalem to worship at the Passover* festival. 21 These Greek people went to Philip. (Philip was from Bethsaida, in Galilee.) The Greek people said, “Sir, we want to meet Jesus.” 22 Philip went and told Andrew. Then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

23 Jesus said to them, “Now is the time for the Son of Man* to receive his glory. 24 I tell you the truth. A grain of wheat must fall to the ground and die. Then it grows and makes many seeds. But if it never dies, then it will always be only a single seed. 25 The person that loves his own life will lose it. But the person that hates his life in this world will keep it. He will have life forever. 26 The person that serves me must follow me. Then my servant will be with me everywhere I am. My Father will give honor to people that serve me.

**Jesus Talks About His Death**

27 "Now I am very troubled. What should I say? Should I say, ‘Father save me from this time* of suffering’? No, I came to this time so that I could suffer. 28 Father, do what will bring you glory!"

Then a voice came from heaven, “I have already brought glory to myself. I will do it again.”

29 The people standing there heard the voice. Those people said it was thunder.

30 Jesus said to the people, “That voice was for you and not for me. 31 Now is the time for the world to be judged. Now the ruler of this world (the devil) will be thrown out. 32 I will be lifted up from the earth. And when this

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
happens, I will bring all people to me.” 33Jesus said this to show how he would die.

34The people said, “But our law says that the Christ will live forever. So why do you say, ‘The Son of Man’ must be lifted up’? Who is this ‘Son of Man’?”

35Then Jesus said, “The light will be with you for only a short time more. So walk while you have the light. Then the darkness (sin) will not catch you. The person that walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. 36So put your trust in the light while you still have it. Then you will become sons of light.” When Jesus finished saying these things, he left. Jesus went to a place where the people could not find him.

Some Jews Refuse to Believe in Jesus
37Jesus did all these many miracles.* The people saw these things, but they still did not believe in him. 38This was to make clear the full meaning of what Isaiah the prophet* said:

“Lord, who believed the things we told them? Who has seen the Lord’s power?”

Isaiah 53:1

39This is why the people could not believe.
Because Isaiah also said,

40 “God made the people blind.
God closed their minds.
God did this so that they will not see with their eyes
and understand with their minds.
God did this so that they would not turn and be healed.”

Isaiah 6:10

41Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory. So Isaiah spoke about him.

42But many people believed in Jesus. Even many of the Jewish leaders believed in Jesus. But they were afraid of the Pharisees.* So they did not say openly that they believed. They were afraid that they would be put out of the synagogue.* 43These men loved praise from people more than praise from God.

Jesus’ Teaching Will Judge People
44Then Jesus said loudly, “The person that believes in me is really believing in the One (God) who sent me. 45The person that sees me is really seeing the One who sent me. 46I am light, and I came into this world. I came so that every person that believes in me would not stay in darkness.

47“I did not come into the world to judge people. I came to save the people in the world. So I am not the one that judges the people who hear my teaching but don’t obey. 48There is a judge for the person that refuses to believe in me and does not accept what I say. The message I have taught will judge that person on the last day. 49Why? Because the things I taught were not from myself. The Father (God) who sent me told me what to say and what to teach. 50And I know that eternal life comes from what the Father commands. So the things I say are what the Father told me to say.”

Jesus Washes His Followers’ Feet
13
It was almost time for the Jewish Passover* festival. Jesus knew that it was time for him to leave this world. It was now time for Jesus to go back to the Father. Jesus had always loved those people in the world who were his. Now was the time Jesus showed them his love the most.

1Jesus and his followers were at the evening meal. The devil had already persuaded Judas Iscariot to turn against Jesus. (Judas was the son of Simon.) 2The Father had given Jesus power over everything. Jesus knew this. Jesus also knew that he had come from God. And he knew that he was going back to God. 3While they were eating, Jesus stood up and took off his robe. Jesus got a towel and wrapped the towel around his waist. 4Then Jesus poured
Jesus came to Simon Peter. But Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, you should not wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “You don’t know what I am doing now. But later you will understand.” Peter said, “No! You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “If I don’t wash your feet, then you cannot be one of my people.” Simon Peter answered, “Lord, after you wash my feet, wash my hands and my head too!” Jesus said, “After a person has a bath, his whole body is clean. He needs only to wash his feet. And you men are clean, but not every one of you.” Jesus knew who would turn against him. That is why Jesus said, “Not every one of you is clean.” Jesus finished washing their feet. Then he put on his clothes and went back to the table. Jesus asked, “Do you understand what I did for you? You call me ‘Teacher.’ And you call me ‘Lord.’ And this is right, because that is what I am. I am your Lord and Teacher. But I washed your feet like a servant. So you also should wash each other’s feet. I did this as an example for you. So you should do for each other like I did for you. I tell you the truth. A servant is not greater than his master. The person that is sent to do something is not greater than the one that sent him. If you know these things, you will be happy if you do them.

Jesus Tells Who Will Be Against Him
(Mt. 26:20–25; Mk. 14:17–21; Lk. 22:21–23)

21 After Jesus said these things, he felt very troubled. Jesus said openly, “I tell you the truth. One of you will be against me.” 22 Jesus’ followers all looked at each other. They did not understand who the person was that Jesus was talking about. 23 One of the followers was next to Jesus and was leaning close to him. This was the follower that Jesus loved. Simon Peter made signs to this follower to ask Jesus who the person was that he was talking about.

25 That follower leaned closer to Jesus and asked, “Lord, who is it that will be against you?”

26 Jesus answered, “I will dip this bread into the dish. The man I give it to is the man that will turn against me.” So Jesus took a piece of bread. He dipped it and gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. When Judas took the bread, Satan (the devil) entered him. Jesus said to Judas, “The thing that you will do—do it quickly!” None of the men at the table understood why Jesus said this to Judas. Judas was the one that kept the money box for the group. So some of the followers thought that Jesus meant for Judas to go and buy some things they needed for the feast. Or they thought that Jesus wanted Judas to go give something to the poor people. Judas accepted the bread Jesus gave him. Then Judas went out. It was night.

Jesus Talks About His Death
(Mt. 26:26–28; Mk. 14:26–28; Lk. 22:19–20)

31 When Judas was gone, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man receives his glory. And God receives glory through the Son of Man. If God receives glory through him, then God will give glory to the Son through himself. God will give him glory quickly.”

33 Jesus said, “My children, I will be with you only a short time more. You will look for me. And what I told the Jewish leaders, I tell you now: Where I am going you cannot come. I give you a new command: Love each other. You must love each other like I loved you. All people will know that you are my followers if you love each other.”

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

‘has turned against me’ Literally, ‘has lifted up his heel against me.’ Quote from Ps. 41:9.

I AM This is like the name of God used in Ex. 3:14, but it can also mean “I am he (the Christ).”

Son of Man A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
Jesus Says that Peter Will Deny Him
(Mt. 26:31–35; Mk. 14:27–31; Lk. 22:31–34)

36Simon Peter asked Jesus, “Lord, where are you going?”
Jesus answered, “Where I am going you cannot follow now. But you will follow later.”
37Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I am ready to die for you!”
38Jesus answered, “Will you really give your life for me? I tell you the truth. Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you don’t know me.”

Jesus Comforts His Followers

14 Jesus said, “Don’t be troubled. Trust in God. And trust in me. 2There are many rooms in my Father’s house. I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you with me, so that you can be where I am. 4You know the way to the place where I am going.”

5Thomas said, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going. So how can we know the way?”
6Jesus answered, “I am the way. I am the truth and the life. The only way to the Father is through me. 7If you really knew me, then you would know my Father too. But now you know the Father. You have seen him.”

8Philip said to Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father. That is all we need.”
9Jesus answered, “Philip, I have been with you for a long time. So you should know me. The person that has seen me has seen the Father too. So why do you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10Do you truly believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The things I have told you don’t come from me. The Father lives in me, and he is doing his own work. 11Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or believe because of the miracles I have done. 12I tell you the truth. The person that believes in me will do the same things I have done. Yes! He will do even greater things than I have done. Why? Because I am going to the Father. 13And if you ask for anything in my name, I will do it for you. Then the Father’s glory will be shown through the Son. 14If you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it.

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

15“If you love me, then you will do the things I command. 16I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper. He will give you this Helper to be with you forever. 17The Helper is the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him. Why? Because the world does not see him or know him. But you know him. He lives with you, and he will live in you.

18“I will not leave you all alone like children without parents. I will come back to you. 19In a very short time the people in the world will not see me any more. But you will see me. You will live because I live. 20On that day you will know that I am in the Father. You will know that you are in me and I am in you. 21If a person knows my commands and obeys those commands, then that person truly loves me. And my Father will love the person that loves me. And I will love that person. I will show myself to him.”

22Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But Lord, why do you plan to show yourself to us, but not to the world?”
23Jesus answered, “If any person loves me, then he will obey my teaching. My Father will love that person. My Father and I will come to that person and live with him. 24But the person that does not love me does not obey my teaching. This teaching that you hear is not really mine. It is from my Father who sent me.

25“I have told you all these things while I am with you. 26But the Helper will teach you everything. The Helper will cause you to remember all the things I told you. This Helper is the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name.

27“I leave you peace. It is my own peace I give you. I give you peace in a different way than the world does. So don’t be troubled. Don’t be afraid. 28You heard me say to you, ‘I

miracle(s) Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.
am leaving, but I will come back to you.’ If you loved me, then you would be happy that I am going back to the Father. Why? Because the Father is greater than I am. I have told you this now, before it happens. Then when it happens, you will believe. I will not talk with you much longer. The ruler of this world (the devil) is coming. He has no power over me. But the world must know that I love the Father. So I do exactly what the Father told me to do.

“Come now. We will leave this place.”

Jesus Is Like a Vine

Jesus said, “I am the true vine; my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that does not make fruit. And he trims and cleans every branch that makes fruit, so that it will make even more fruit. You are already clean because of the teaching I have told you. Continue in me and I will continue in you. No branch can make fruit alone. It must continue in the vine. It is the same with you. You cannot make fruit alone. You must continue in me.

I am the vine and you are the branches. If a person continues in me and I continue in that person, then that person will make much fruit. But without me that person can do nothing. If a person does not continue in me, then he is like a branch that is thrown away. That branch dies. People pick up dead branches, throw them into the fire, and burn them.

Continue in me and follow my teachings. If you do this, then you can ask for anything you want, and it will be given to you. You should make much fruit and show that you are my followers. This brings glory to my Father. I loved you like the Father loved me. Now continue in my love. I have obeyed my Father’s commands, and I continue in his love. In the same way, if you obey my commands, you will continue in my love. I have told you these things so that you can have the true happiness that I have. I want you to be completely happy. This is what I command you: Love each other like I have loved you.

The greatest love a person can show is to die for his friends. You are my friends if you do the things I tell you to do. I don’t call you servants now. A servant does not know what his master is doing. But now I call you friends because I have told you everything I heard from my Father. You did not choose me; I chose you. And I gave you this work: to go and make fruit. I want this fruit to continue in your life. Then the Father will give you anything you ask for in my name. This is my command: Love each other.

Jesus Warns His Followers

If the world hates you, remember that the world hated me first. If you belonged to the world, then the world would love you like it loves its own people. But I have chosen you out of the world. So you don’t belong to the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the lesson I told you: A servant is not greater than his master. If people did wrong to me, then they will do wrong to you too. And if people obeyed my teaching, then they will obey yours too. People will do all this to you because of me. They don’t know the One who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to the people of the world, then they would not be guilty of sin. But now I have spoken to them. So they have no excuse for their sin. Any person that hates me also hates my Father. I did things among those people that no other person has ever done. If I had not done those things, they would not be guilty of sin. But they have seen those things I did. And still they hate me and my Father. But this happened so that what is written in their law would be true: ‘They hated me for no reason.’

I will send you the Helper from the Father. The Helper is the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father. When he comes, he will tell about me. And you will tell people about me too, because you have been with me from the beginning.

‘They hated me for no reason’ These words could be from Ps. 35:19 or Ps. 69:4.


Spirit of truth The Holy Spirit. It was his work to help Jesus’ followers understand God’s truth. See Jn. 16:13.

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branch The “branches” are Jesus’ followers. See verse 5.
make fruit This means the way Jesus’ followers must live to show that they belong to him. See verses 7–10.
16 “I have told you these things so that people will not be able to destroy your faith. 2 People will make you leave their synagogues. 3 Yes, a time is coming when people will think that killing you would be doing service for God. 4 People will do these things because they have not known the Father, and they have not known me. 5 I have told you these things now. So when the time comes for these things to happen, you will remember that I warned you.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

“I did not tell you these things at the beginning, because I was with you then. 2 Now I am going back to the One who sent me. But none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ 3 You are filled with sadness because I have told you these things. 4 But I tell you the truth. It is better for you that I go away. Why? Because when I go away I will send the Helper* to you. 5 When the Helper comes, he will prove to the people of the world the truth about these things: about sin, about being right with God, and about judgment. 6 The Helper will prove that people have sin, because they don’t believe in me. 7 He will prove to them about my being right with God, because I am going to the Father. You will not see me then. 8 And the Helper will prove to the world the truth about judgment, because the ruler of this world (the devil) is already judged.

9 “I have many more things to say to you. But those things are too much for you to accept now. 10 But when the Spirit of truth* comes, he will lead you into all truth. The Spirit of truth will not speak his own words. He will speak only what he hears. He will tell you the things that will happen. 11 The Spirit of truth will bring glory to me. How? He will get things from me and tell them to you. 12 All the things that the Father has are mine. That is why I said that the Spirit will get things from me and tell them to you.

Sadness Will Change to Happiness

16 “After a short time you won’t see me. Then after another short time you will see me again.”

17 Some of the followers said to each other, “What does Jesus mean when he says, ‘After a short time you won’t see me. Then after another short time you will see me again?’ And what does he mean when he says, ‘Because I am going to the Father’?” 18 The followers asked, “What does he mean by ‘a short time’? We don’t understand what he is saying.”

19 Jesus saw that the followers wanted to ask him about this. So Jesus said to the followers, “Are you asking each other what I meant when I said, ‘After a short time you won’t see me. Then after another short time you will see me again’? 20 I tell you the truth. You will cry and be sad, but the world will be happy. You will be sad, but your sadness will change to happiness. 21 When a woman gives birth to a baby, she has pain, because her time has come. But when her baby is born, she forgets the pain. She forgets because she is so happy that a child has been born into the world. 22 It is the same with you. Now you are sad. But I will see you again and you will be truly happy. You will have a happiness that no one can take away.

23 In that day you will not ask me for anything. I tell you the truth. My Father will give you anything you ask for in my name. 24 You have never asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive. And you will be truly happy.

Victory over the World

25 “I have told you these things, using words that hide the meaning. But the time will come when I will not use words like that to tell you things. I will speak to you in plain words about the Father. 26 In that day you will ask the Father for things in my name. I am saying that I will not need to ask the Father for you. 27 No! The Father himself loves you. He loves you because you have loved me. And he loves you because you have believed that I came from God. 28 I came from the Father into the world. Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

29 Then the followers of Jesus said, “You are speaking clearly to us now. You are not using words that are hard to understand. 30 We can
see now that you know all things. You can answer a person’s question even before he asks it. This makes us believe that you came from God.”

31 Jesus said, “So now you believe? 32 Listen to me. A time is coming when you will be scattered. Each of you will be scattered to his own home. That time is now here. You will leave me. I will be alone. But I am never really alone, because the Father is with me.

33 I told you these things so that you can have peace in me. In this world you will have trouble. But be brave! I have defeated the world!”

Jesus Prays for His Followers

17 After Jesus said these things he looked toward heaven. Jesus prayed, “Father, the time has come. Give glory to your Son so that the Son can give glory to you. 2 You gave the Son power over all people so that the Son could give eternal life to all those people you have given to him. 3 And this is eternal life: that people can know you, the only true God, and that people can know Jesus Christ, the One you sent. 4 I finished the work you gave me to do. I brought you glory on earth. 5 And now, Father, give me glory with you. Give me the glory I had with you before the world was made.

6 “You gave me some men from the world. I have shown them what you are like. Those men belonged to you, and you gave them to me. They have obeyed your teaching. 7 Now they know that everything you gave me comes from you. 8 I gave these men the teachings that you gave me. They accepted those teachings. They know that I truly came from you. And they believed that you sent me. 9 I pray for them now. I am not praying for the people in the world. But I am praying for these men you gave me, because they are yours. 10 All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And my glory is seen in these men. 11 Now I am coming to you. I will not stay in the world now. But these men are still in the world. Holy Father, keep them safe. Keep them safe by the power of your name (the name you gave me), so that they will be one, the same as you and I are one. 12 While I was with them, I kept them safe. I kept them safe by the power of your name—the name you gave me. I protected them. And only one of them was lost—the man (Judas) that chose to be lost. He was lost so that what was said in the Scriptures* would happen.

13 I am coming to you now. But I pray these things while I am still in the world. I say these things so that these men can have the true happiness that I have. I want them to be completely happy. 14 I have given them your teaching. And the world has hated them. The world hated these men, because they don’t belong to the world, the same as I don’t belong to the world. 15 I am not asking you to take them out of the world. But I am asking that you keep them safe from the Evil One (the devil). 16 They don’t belong to the world, the same as I don’t belong to the world. 17 Make them ready for your service through your truth. Your teaching is truth. 18 I have sent them into the world, the same as you sent me into the world. 19 I am making myself ready to serve. I do this for them, so that they can truly be ready for your service.

20 “I pray for these men. But I am also praying for all people that will believe in me because of the teaching of these men. 21 Father, I pray that all people that believe in me can be one. You are in me and I am in you. I pray that these people can also be one in us, so that the world will believe that you sent me. 22 I have given these people the glory that you gave me. I gave them this glory so that they can be one, the same as you and I are one. 23 I will be in them, and you will be in me. So they will be completely one. Then the world will know that you sent me. And the world will know that you loved these people the same as you loved me.

24 “Father, I want these people that you have given me to be with me in every place I am. I want them to see my glory. This is the glory you gave me because you loved me before the world was made. 25 Father, you are the One who is good. The world does not know you, but I know you. And these people know that you sent me. 26 I showed them what you are like. And again I will show them what you are like. Then they will have the same love that you have for me. And I will live in them.”

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
JOHN 18:1–24

Jesus Is Arrested
(Mt. 26:47–56; Mk. 14:43–50; Lk. 22:47–53)

18 When Jesus finished praying, he left with his followers. They went across the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden of olive trees. Jesus and his followers went there.

2Judas knew where this place was, because Jesus met there often with his followers. Judas was the one that turned against Jesus. 3So Judas led a group of soldiers to the garden. Judas also brought some guards from the leading priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons.

4Jesus knew everything that would happen to him. Jesus went out and asked, “Who are you looking for?”

5The men answered, “Jesus from Nazareth.” Jesus said, “I am Jesus.” (Judas, the one that turned against Jesus, was standing there with them.) 6When Jesus said, “I am Jesus,” the men moved back and fell to the ground.

7Jesus asked them again, “Who are you looking for?”

The men said, “Jesus from Nazareth.”

8Jesus said, “I told you that I am Jesus. So if you are looking for me, then let these other men go free.” This happened so that the words Jesus said before would be true: “I have not lost any of the men you gave me.”

10Simon Peter had a sword. He took out the sword and struck the servant of the high priest. Peter cut off the servant’s right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) 11Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back in its place! I must accept the cup the Father has given me.”

Jesus Is Brought Before Annas
(Mt. 26:57–58; Mk. 14:53–54; Lk. 22:54)

12Then the soldiers with their commander and the Jewish guards arrested Jesus. They tied Jesus and brought him to Annas. Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Caiaphas was the high priest that year. 14Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders that it would be better if one man died for all the people.

Peter Lies About Knowing Jesus
(Mt. 26:69–70; Mk. 14:66–68; Lk. 22:55–57)

15Simon Peter and another one of Jesus’ followers went with Jesus. This follower knew the high priest. So he went with Jesus into the yard of the high priest’s house. 16But Peter waited outside near the door. The follower that knew the high priest came back outside. He spoke to the girl that opened the gate for people. Then he brought Peter inside. 17The girl at the gate said to Peter, “Are you also one of the followers of that man Jesus?”

Peter answered, “No, I am not!”

18It was cold, so the servants and guards had built a fire. They were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter was standing with these men.

The High Priest Questions Jesus
(Mt. 26:59–66; Mk. 14:55–64; Lk. 22:66–71)

19The high priest asked Jesus questions about his followers. He asked Jesus questions about the things Jesus taught. 20Jesus answered, “I have always spoken openly to all people. I always taught in the synagogues and in the temple area. All the Jews come together there. I never said anything in secret. 21So why do you question me? Ask the people that heard my teaching. They know what I said.”

22When Jesus said this, one of the guards standing there hit him. The guard said, “You should not talk to the high priest like that!”

23Jesus answered, “If I said something wrong, then tell everyone here what was wrong. But if the things I said are right, then why do you hit me?”

24So Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas the high priest. Jesus was still tied.
JOHN 18:25–19:11

Peter Lies Again
(Mt. 26:71–75; Mk. 14:69–72; Lk. 22:58–62)

25Simon Peter was standing at the fire, keeping himself warm. The other men said to Peter, “Are you one of the followers of that man (Jesus)?”

But Peter denied it. He said, “No, I am not.”

26One of the servants of the high priest* was there. This servant was a relative to the man whose ear Peter had cut off. The servant said, “I think I saw you with him (Jesus) in the garden!”

27But again Peter said, “No, I was not with him!” And at that same time a rooster crowed.

Jesus Is Brought Before Pilate
(Mt. 27:1–2, 11–31; Mk. 15:1–20; Lk. 23:1–25)

28Then the guards took Jesus from Caiphas’ house to the Roman governor’s palace. It was early in the morning. The Jews there would not go inside the palace. They did not want to make themselves unclean,* because they wanted to eat the Passover* meal.

29So Pilate went outside to the Jews. He asked, “What do you say this man has done wrong?”

30The Jews answered, “He is a bad man. That is why we brought him to you.”

31Pilate said to the Jews, “You Jews take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.”

The Jewish leaders answered, “But your law does not allow us to punish a person by killing him.” (This happened so that what Jesus said about how he would die would be true.)

33Then Pilate went back inside the palace. Pilate called Jesus to him. He asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

34Jesus said, “Is that your own question, or did other people tell you about me?”

35Pilate said, “I am not a Jew! It was your own people and their leading priests that brought you before me. What have you done wrong?”

36Jesus said, “My kingdom does not belong to this world. If it belonged to this world, then my servants would fight so that I would not be given to the Jewish leaders. But my kingdom is from another place.”

37Pilate said, “So you are a king!”

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. That is true. I was born for this: to tell people about the truth. That is why I came into the world. And every person that belongs to the truth listens to me.”

38Pilate said, “What is truth?” When Pilate said this, he went out to the Jewish leaders again. Pilate said to them, “I can find nothing to charge against this man. But it is one of your customs for me to free one prisoner to you at the time of the Passover.* Do you want me to free this ‘king of the Jews’?”

40They yelled back, “No, not him! Let Barabbas go free!” (Barabbas was a rebel.)

19Then Pilate ordered that Jesus be taken away and be whipped. The soldiers used some thorny branches to make a crown. They put this crown of thorns on Jesus’ head. Then the soldiers put a purple robe around Jesus. Then the soldiers came to Jesus many times and said, “Hello, O king of the Jews!” They hit Jesus in the face.

4Again Pilate came out and said to the Jewish leaders, “Look! I am bringing Jesus out to you. I want you to know that I find nothing I can charge against him.” 5Then Jesus came out. He was wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to the Jews, “Here is the man!”

6When the leading priests and the Jewish guards saw Jesus they yelled, “Kill him on a cross! Kill him on a cross!”

But Pilate answered, “You take him and nail him to a cross yourselves. I find nothing I can charge against him.”

7The Jewish leaders answered, “We have a law that says he must die, because he said that he is the Son of God.”

8When Pilate heard this, he was more afraid. 9Pilate went back inside the palace. He asked Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus did not answer him. 10Pilate said, “You refuse to speak to me? Remember, I have the power to make you free. I also have the power to kill you on a cross.”

11Jesus answered, “The only power you have over me is the power given to you by

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high priest  The most important Jewish priest and leader.
unclean  Going into a non-Jewish place would ruin the special cleansing the Jews had done. See Jn. 11:55.
Passover  An important Jewish holy day. The Jews ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.
1261

JOHN 19:12–31

God. So the man who gave me to you is guilty of a greater sin.”

12 After this, Pilate tried to let Jesus go free. But the Jewish leaders yelled, “Any person who makes himself a king is against Caesar.* So if you let this man (Jesus) go free, that means you are not Caesar’s friend.”

13 Pilate heard what these Jews said. So he brought Jesus out to the place called “The Stone Pavement.” (In the Jewish language* the name is “Gabbatha.”) Pilate sat down on the judge’s seat there. 14 It was now almost noon on Preparation day* of Passover* week. Pilate said to the Jews, “Here is your king!”

15 They yelled, “Take him away! Take him away! Kill him on a cross!”

Pilate asked them, “Do you want me to kill your king on a cross?”

The leading priests answered, “The only king we have is Caesar!”

16 So Pilate gave Jesus to them to be killed on a cross.

Jesus Is Killed on a Cross
(Mt. 27:32–44; Mk. 15:21–32; Lk. 23:26–39)

The soldiers took Jesus. 17 Jesus carried his own cross. He went out to a place called “The Place of the Skull.” (In the Jewish language* the name of this place is “Golgotha.”) 18 At Golgotha they nailed Jesus to the cross. They also put two other men on crosses. They put the men on each side of Jesus with Jesus in the middle. 19 Pilate wrote a sign and put it on the cross. The sign said, “JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.” 20 The sign was written in the Jewish language, in Latin, and in Greek. Many of the Jews read the sign, because this place where they killed Jesus on the cross was near the city. 21 The leading Jewish priests said to Pilate, “Don’t write, ‘The King of the Jews.’ But write, ‘This man said, I am the King of the Jews.’”

22 Pilate answered, “I will not change what I have written.”

23 After the soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross, they took his clothes. They divided his clothes into four parts. Each soldier got one part. They also took his tunic.* It was all one piece of cloth woven from top to bottom. 24 So the soldiers said to each other, “We should not tear this into parts to divide it. We should choose lots* to see who will get it.” This happened so that it would be like the Scripture* said:

“They divided my clothes among them. And they threw lots* for my clothing.”

Psalm 22:18

So the soldiers did this.

25 Jesus’ mother stood near his cross. His mother’s sister was also standing there with Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. 26 Jesus saw his mother. He also saw the follower that he loved very much standing there. He said to his mother, “Dear woman, here is your son.” 27 Then Jesus said to the follower, “Here is your mother.” So after that, this follower took Jesus’ mother to live in his home.

Jesus Dies
(Mt. 27:45–56; Mk. 15:33–41; Lk. 23:44–49)

28 Later, Jesus knew that everything had been done. To make the Scriptures* happen he said, “I am thirsty.”* 29 There was a jar full of vinegar there. So the soldiers soaked a sponge in it. They put the sponge on a branch of a hyssop plant. Then they lifted it to Jesus’ mouth. 30 Jesus tasted the vinegar. Then he said, “It is finished.” Jesus bowed his head and died.

31 This day was Preparation day,* The next day was a special Sabbath day.* The Jewish leaders did not want the bodies to stay on the cross on the Sabbath day. So they asked Pilate
JOHN 19:32–20:15

Some Followers Find Jesus’ Tomb Empty

(Mt. 28:1–10; Mk. 16:1–8; Lk. 24:1–12)

20 Early on Sunday morning Mary Magdalene went to the tomb of Jesus, where his body was. It was still dark. Mary saw that the large stone that covered the entrance was moved away. So Mary ran to Simon Peter and the other follower (the one Jesus loved very much). Mary said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb. We don’t know where they put him.”

3So Peter and the other follower started going to the tomb. They were both running, but the other follower ran faster than Peter. So the other follower reached the tomb first. The follower bent down and looked in. He saw the pieces of linen cloth lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came from behind him. Peter went into the tomb. He saw the pieces of linen lying there. He also saw the cloth that had been around Jesus’ head. The cloth was folded up and laid in a different place from the pieces of linen. Then the other follower went in. This was the follower that had reached the tomb first. He saw what had happened and believed. (These followers did not yet understand from the Scriptures that Jesus must rise from death.)

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

(Mk. 16:9–11)

10 Then the followers went back home. But Mary stood outside the tomb, crying. While she was crying, she bent down and looked inside the tomb. Mary saw two angels dressed in white. They were sitting where Jesus’ body had been. One angel was sitting where Jesus’ head had been, and the other angel was sitting where Jesus’ feet had been.

11 The angels asked Mary, “Woman, why are you crying?” Mary answered, “Some people have taken away the body of my Lord. I don’t know where they put him.” When Mary said this she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. But she did not know that it was Jesus.

12 Jesus asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?” Mary thought that this was the man that takes care of the garden. So Mary said to him,
“Did you take Jesus away, sir? Tell me where you put him. I will go and get him.”

16Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

Mary turned toward Jesus and said in the Jewish language,* “Rabboni.” (This means “Teacher.”)

17Jesus said to her, “Don’t hold me. I have not yet gone back up to the Father. But go to my brothers (followers) and tell them this: ‘I am going back to my father and your father. I am going back to my God and your God.’”

18Mary Magdalene went to the followers and told them, “I saw the Lord!” And she told them the things Jesus said to her.

Jesus Appears to His Followers
(Mt. 28:16-20; Mk. 16:14-18; Lk. 24:36-49)

19The day was Sunday. That same evening the followers were together. The doors were locked, because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Then Jesus came and stood among them. Jesus said, “Peace be with you!”

20After Jesus said this, he showed the followers his hands and his side. The followers were very happy when they saw the Lord.

21Then Jesus said again, “Peace be with you! The Father sent me. In the same way, I now send you.”

22After Jesus said that, he breathed {on the followers}. Jesus said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.* If you forgive people’s sins, then their sins are forgiven. If you don’t forgive people’s sins, then their sins are not forgiven.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas

24Thomas (called Didymus) was not with the followers when Jesus came. Thomas was one of the twelve. The other followers told Thomas, “We saw the Lord.” Thomas said, “I will not believe it until I see the nail holes in his hands. And I will not believe until I put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into his side.”

25A week later the followers were in the house again. Thomas was with them. The doors were locked, but Jesus came and stood among them. Jesus said, “Peace be with you!”

27Then Jesus said to Thomas, “Put your finger here. Look at my hands. Put your hand here in my side. Stop doubting and start believing.”

28Thomas said to Jesus, “My Lord and my God!”

29Jesus said to Thomas, “You believe because you see me. Those people that believe without seeing me will be truly blessed.”

Why John Wrote This Book

30Jesus did many other miracles* that his followers saw. Those miracles are not written in this book. But these things are written so that you can believe that Jesus is the Christ,* the Son of God. Then, by believing, you can have life through his name.

Jesus Appears to Seven Followers

21Later, Jesus showed himself again to his followers. This was by Lake Tiberias (Galilee). This is how it happened: Some of the followers were together. They were Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the two sons of Zebedee, and two other followers. Simon Peter said, “I am going out to fish.”

The other followers said, “We will go with you.” So all the followers went out and got into the boat. They fished that night but caught nothing.

4Early the next morning Jesus stood on the shore. But the followers did not know it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to the followers, “Friends, have you caught any fish?”

The followers answered, “No.”

6Jesus said, “Throw your net into the water on the right side of your boat. You will find some fish there.” So the followers did this. They caught so many fish that they could not pull the net back into the boat.

7The follower that Jesus loved said to Peter, “That man is the Lord (Jesus)!” Peter heard him say, “That man is the Lord.” Peter put his coat around himself. (Peter had taken his clothes off {to work,} Then he jumped into the
JOHN 21:8–25

water. The other followers went to shore in the boat. They pulled the net full of fish. They were not very far from shore, only about 100 yards. When the followers stepped out of the boat and onto the shore, they saw a fire of hot coals. There were fish on the fire and some bread there too. Then Jesus said, “Bring some of the fish that you caught.”

Simon Peter went into the boat and pulled the net to the shore. It was full of big fish. There were 153. The fish were very heavy, but the net did not tear. Jesus said to them, “Come and eat.” None of the followers would ask him, “Who are you?” They knew he was the Lord. Jesus walked to the food. He took the bread and gave it to them. Jesus also got the fish and gave it to them.

This was now the third time Jesus showed himself to his followers after he was raised from death.

**Jesus Talks to Peter**

When they finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these other men love me?” Peter answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Then Jesus said to Peter, “Take care of my lambs.”

Again Jesus said to Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Then Jesus said to Peter, “Take care of my sheep.”

A third time Jesus said, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was sad because Jesus asked him three times, “Do you love me?” Peter said, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you!”

Jesus said to Peter, “Take care of my sheep.” I tell you the truth. When you were young, you tied your own belt and went where you wanted. But when you are old, you will put out your hands and another person will tie you. That person will lead you where you don’t want to go.” (Jesus said this to show how Peter would die to give glory to God.) Then Jesus said to Peter, “Follow me!”

Peter turned and saw the follower that Jesus loved walking behind them. (This was the follower that had leaned against Jesus at the supper and said, “Lord, who will turn against you?”) When Peter saw this follower behind him he asked Jesus, “Lord, what about him?”

Jesus answered, “Maybe I want him to live until I come. That should not be important to you. You follow me!”

So a story spread among the brothers. They were saying that this follower that Jesus loved would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die. He only said, “Maybe I want him to live until I come. That should not be important to you.”

That follower is the one that is telling these things. He is the one that has now written these things. We know that what he says is true.

There are many other things that Jesus did. If every one of these things were written down, I think the whole world would not be big enough for all the books that would be written.
Acts

Luke Writes Another Book

1 Dear Theophilus, The first book I wrote was about everything that Jesus did and taught. I wrote about the whole life of Jesus, from the beginning until the day he was carried up into heaven. Before this happened, Jesus talked to the apostles he had chosen. With the help of the Holy Spirit, Jesus told the apostles what they should do. This was after Jesus' death, but he showed the apostles that he was alive. Jesus proved this by doing many powerful things. The apostles saw Jesus many times during the 40 days after he was raised from death. Jesus spoke to the apostles about the kingdom of God. One time when Jesus was eating with them, he told them not to leave Jerusalem. Jesus said, “The Father has promised you something; I told you about it before. Wait here in Jerusalem to receive this promise. John baptized people with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus Is Carried Up into Heaven

6 The apostles were all together. They asked Jesus, “Lord, is this the time for you to give the Jews their kingdom again?”

7 Jesus said to them, “The Father is the only One who has the authority to decide dates and times. You cannot know these things. But the Holy Spirit will come to you. Then you will receive power. You will be my witnesses—you will tell people about me. First, you will tell people in Jerusalem. Then you will tell people in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world.”

9 After Jesus told the apostles these things, he was lifted up into the sky. While the apostles were watching, Jesus went into a cloud, and they could not see him. 10 Jesus was going away, and the apostles were looking into the sky. Suddenly, two men (angels) wearing white clothes stood beside them. 11 The two men said to the apostles, “Men from Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? You saw Jesus carried away from you into heaven. He will come back in the same way you saw him go.”

A New Apostle Is Chosen

12 Then the apostles went back to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. (This mountain is about one-half mile from Jerusalem.) 13 The apostles entered the city. They went to the place where they were staying; this was in a room upstairs. The apostles were: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (the son of Alphaeus), Simon (known as the Zealot), and Judas (the son of James).

14 The apostles were all together. They were constantly praying with the same purpose. Some women, Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers were there with the apostles.

15 After a few days there was a meeting of the believers. (There were about 120 of them.) Peter stood up and said, “Brothers, in the Scriptures the Holy Spirit said through

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.
Zealot The Zealots were a group of Jewish patriots.
Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
David* that something must happen. He was talking about Judas, one of our own group. Judas served together with us. The Spirit*, said that Judas would lead men to arrest Jesus."

18(Judas was paid money for doing this. His money was used to buy him a field. But Judas fell on his head, and his body broke open. All his intestines poured out. 19And all the people of Jerusalem learned about this. That is why they named that field Akeldama. In their language Akeldama means “field of blood.”)

20Peter said, "In the book of Psalms, this is written about Judas:

'People should not go near his land (property);
No one should live there!' Psalm 69:25

And it is also written:

'Let another man have his work.' Psalm 109:8

21–22"So now another man must join us and become a witness of Jesus’ resurrection.* This man must be one of those men who were part of our group during all the time when the Lord Jesus was with us. This man must have been with us from the time John began to baptize* people until the day when Jesus was carried up from us into heaven.”

23The apostles* put two men before the group. One was Joseph Barsabbas. He was also called Justus. The other man was Matthias. 24–25The apostles prayed, “Lord, you know the minds of all people. Show us which one of these two men you choose to do this work. Judas turned away from it and went where he belongs. Lord, show us which man should take his place as an apostle!” 26Then the apostles used lots* to choose one of the two men. The lots showed that Matthias was the one that the Lord wanted. So he became an apostle with the other eleven.

**The Coming of the Holy Spirit**

2When the day of Pentecost* came, they were all together in one place. 2Suddenly a noise came from the sky. It sounded like a strong wind blowing. This noise filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3They saw something that looked like flames of fire. The flames were separated and stood over each person there. 4They were all filled with the Holy Spirit,* and they began to speak different languages. The Holy Spirit was giving them the power to do this.

5There were some Jewish men that truly worshiped God in Jerusalem at this time. These men were from every country in the world. 6A large group of these men came together because they heard the noise. They were surprised because the apostles* were speaking, and every man heard in his own language. 7The Jews were all amazed at this. They did not understand how the apostles could do this. They said, “Look! These men (the apostles) that we hear speaking are all from Galilee*! 8But we hear them in our own languages. How is this possible? We are from different places: 9Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, 10Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the areas of Libya near the city of Cyrene, Rome, Crete and Arabia. Some of us were born Jews. Others are converts.* We are from these different countries. But we can hear these men in our own languages! We can all understand the great things they are saying about God.” 12The people were all amazed and confused. They asked each other, “What is happening?” 13Other people were laughing at the apostles. These people thought the apostles were drunk from too much wine.

**Peter Speaks to the People**

14Then Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles.* He spoke loudly so that all the people could hear. He said, “My Jewish

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**David** King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.  
**Spirit, Holy Spirit** Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.  
**resurrection** Being raised from death to live again.  
**baptize** A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.  
**apostles** The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.  
**lots** Rocks or sticks used like dice for making a choice.
brothers and all of you who live in Jerusalem, listen to me. I will tell you something you need to know. Listen carefully. 15 These men are not drunk like you think; it is only nine o’clock in the morning! 16 But Joel the prophet* wrote about the things you see happening here today. This is what Joel wrote:

‘God says:
In the last days,
   I will pour out (give) my Spirit* on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.*
Your young men will see visions.*
Your old men will have special dreams.

At that time,
   I will pour out (give) my Spirit* on my servants, men and women, and they will prophesy.*
I will show amazing things in the sky above.
I will give proofs on the earth below.
There will be blood, fire, and thick smoke.

The sun will be changed into darkness, and the moon will become red like blood. Then the great and glorious day of the Lord will come.
And every person who trusts in the Lord will be saved.’

Joel 2:28–32

22 “My Jewish brothers, listen to these words: Jesus from Nazareth was a very special man. God clearly showed this to you. God proved this by the powerful and amazing things he did through Jesus. You all saw these things. So you know this is true. 23 Jesus was given to you, and you killed him. With the help of bad men you nailed Jesus to a cross.

24 But God knew all this would happen. This was God’s plan. God made this plan long ago. 24 Jesus suffered the pain of death, but God made him free. God raised Jesus from death. Death could not hold Jesus. 25 David* said this about Jesus:

‘I saw the Lord before me always;
   he is at my right side to keep me safe.
26 So my heart is happy, and the words I speak are words of joy.
   Yes, even my body will live with hope,
   because you will not leave me in the place of death.*
   You will not let the body of your Holy One rot in the grave.
28 You taught me how to live.
   You will come close to me and give me great joy.’

Psalm 16:8–11

29 “My brothers, I can tell you truly about David,* our ancestor. He died and was buried. His grave is still here with us today. 30 David was a prophet* and knew something God said. God promised David that he would make a person from David’s family to be a king like David.* 31 David knew this before it happened. That is why David said this about that person:

‘He was not left in the place of death.*
   His body did not rot in the grave.’

David was talking about the Christ* rising from death. 32 So Jesus is the One God raised from death, not David! We are all witnesses of this. We saw him! 33 Jesus was lifted up to heaven. Now Jesus is with God, at God’s right side. The Father (God) has now given the Holy Spirit* to Jesus. The Holy Spirit is what God promised to give. So now Jesus is pouring out (giving) that Spirit. This is what you see and hear. 34 David* was not the one who was lifted up to heaven. It was Jesus who was lifted up to heaven. David himself said:

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.
place of death Literally, “Hades.”
God promised … like David See 2 Sam. 7:12,13 and Ps. 132:11.
Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

prophet A person that spoke for God. Sometimes prophets told about things that would happen in the future.
Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
prophecy To speak for God.
vision(s) Something like dreams used by God to speak to people.
ACTS 2:35–3:11

The Lord (God) said to my Lord:
Sit at my right side,
until I put your enemies
under your power.” Psalm 110:1

36“So, all the Jewish people should know this truly: God has made Jesus to be Lord and Christ. He is the man you nailed to the cross!”

37When the people heard this, they felt very, very sorry. They asked Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

38Peter said to them, “Change your hearts and lives and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Then God will forgive your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” 39This promise is for you. It is also for your children and for the people that are far away. It is for every person that the Lord our God calls to himself.”

40Peter warned them with many other words; he begged them, “Save yourselves from the evil of the people that live now!”

41Then those people who accepted what Peter said were baptized. On that day about 3,000 people were added to the group of believers.

3The believers continued to meet together. They used their time to learn the teaching of the apostles. The believers shared with each other. They ate together and prayed together.

The Believers Share

43The apostles were doing many powerful and amazing things; and every person felt great respect for God. 44All the believers stayed together. They shared everything. The believers sold their land and the things they owned. Then they divided the money and gave it to those people who needed it. The believers met together in the temple yard every day. They all had the same purpose. They ate together in their homes. They were happy to share their food and ate with joyful hearts. 47The believers praised God, and all the people liked them. More and more people were being saved every day; the Lord was adding those people to the group of believers.

Peter Speaks to the People

11The man was holding on to Peter and John. All the people were amazed, because the man was healed. They ran to Peter and John at temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
Solomon’s Porch. 12 When Peter saw this, he said to the people, “My Jewish brothers, why are you surprised at this? You are looking at us like it was our power that made this man walk. Do you think this was done because we are good? 13 No! God did it! He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is the God of all our fathers. He gave glory to Jesus, his special servant. But you gave Jesus to be killed. Pilate decided to let Jesus go free. But you told Pilate you did not want Jesus. 14 Jesus was pure and good (innocent), but you said you did not want him. You told Pilate to give you a murderer instead of Jesus. 15 And so you killed the One that gives life! But God raised him from death. We are witnesses of this—we saw this with our own eyes. 16 It was the power of Jesus that made this crippled man well. This happened because we trusted in the power of Jesus. You can see this man, and you know him. He was made completely well because of trust in Jesus. You all saw it happen!

17 “My brothers, I know you did those things to Jesus because you did not understand what you were doing. Your leaders also did not understand. 18 God said that these things would happen. God said through the prophets that his Christ would suffer and die. I have told you how God made this happen. 19 So you must change your hearts and lives! Come back to God and he will forgive your sins. 20 Then the Lord (God) will give you times of spiritual rest. He will give you Jesus, the One he chose to be the Christ. 21 But Jesus must stay in heaven until the time when all things will be made right again. God told about this time when he spoke long ago through his holy prophets. 22 Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will give you a prophet. That prophet will come from among your own people (the Jews). He will be like me. You must obey everything that prophet tells you. 23 And if any person refuses to obey that prophet, then that person will die, separated from God’s people.’ 24 Samuel, and all the other prophets who spoke for God after Samuel, talked about this time now. 25 You have received the things the prophets talked about. You have received the agreement that God made with your fathers. God said to your father Abraham, ‘Every nation on earth will be blessed through your descendants.’ 26 God has sent his special servant (Jesus). God sent him to you first. God sent Jesus to bless you. He does this by making each of you turn away from doing bad things.”

Peter and John Before the Jewish Council

4 While Peter and John were speaking to the people, some men came to them. There were some Jewish priests, the captain of the soldiers that guarded the temple, and some Sadducees. 2 They were upset because of what Peter and John were teaching the people. By telling people about Jesus, the two apostles were teaching that people will rise from death.

3 The Jewish leaders grabbed Peter and John and put them in jail. It was already night, so they kept Peter and John in jail until the next day. 4 But many of the people that heard Peter and John believed the things they said. There were now about 5,000 men in the group of believers.

5 The next day the Jewish leaders, the older Jewish leaders, and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. 6 Annas (the high priest), Caiaphas, John, and Alexander were there. Everyone from the high priest’s family was there. 7 They made Peter and John stand before

prophet A person that spoke for God.
‘The Lord … people’ Quote from Deut. 18:15, 19.
Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.
descendants All the people born in a person’s family after that person dies.
temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don’t live again after death.
apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.
all the people there. The Jewish leaders asked them many times, “How did you make this crippled man well? What power did you use? With whose authority did you do this?”

8 Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. He said to them, “Leaders of the people and you older leaders: Are you questioning us today about the good thing that was done to this crippled man? Are you asking us what made him well? We want all of you and all the Jewish people to know that this man was made well by the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth! You nailed Jesus to a cross. God raised him from death. This man was crippled, but he is now well. He is able to stand here before you because of the power of Jesus! Jesus is ‘the stone’ that you builders thought was not important. But this stone has become the cornerstone.”

12 Jesus is the only One who can save people. His name is the only power in the world that has been given to save people. We must be saved through Jesus!”

13 The Jewish leaders understood that Peter and John had no special training or education. But the leaders also saw that Peter and John were not afraid to speak. So the leaders were amazed. Then they realized that Peter and John had been with Jesus. They saw the crippled man standing there beside the two apostles. They saw that the man was healed. So they could say nothing against the apostles. The Jewish leaders told them to leave the meeting. Then the leaders talked to each other about what they should do. They said, “What shall we do with these men (the apostles)? Every person in Jerusalem knows that they have done a great miracle.” This is clear. We cannot say it is not true. But we must make them afraid to talk to people about this man (Jesus). Then this problem will not spread among the people.”

15 So the Jewish leaders called Peter and John in again. They told the apostles not to say anything or to teach anything in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, “What do you think is right? What would God want? Should we obey you or God? We cannot be quiet. We must tell people about the things we saw and heard.”

The Jewish leaders could not find a way to punish the apostles, because all the people were praising God for what had been done. (This miracle was a proof from God. The man that was healed was more than 40 years old!) So the Jewish leaders warned the apostles again and let them go free.

Peter and John Return to the Believers

23 Peter and John left the meeting of Jewish leaders and went to their own group. They told the group everything that the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders had said to them. When the believers heard this, they all prayed to God. They all wanted the same thing. They prayed, “Master, you are the One who made the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything in the world. Our ancestor David was your servant. With the help of the Holy Spirit he wrote these words:

‘Why are the nations shouting? Why are the people of the world planning things against God? It is hopeless!’

26 The kings of the earth prepare themselves to fight, and the rulers all come together against the Lord (God) and against his Christ.”

These things really happened when Herod, Pontius Pilate, the nations, and the Jewish people all ‘came together’ against Jesus here in Jerusalem. Jesus is your holy Servant. He is the One you (God) made to be the Christ.”

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

stone A picture or symbol meaning Jesus.

cornerstone The first and most important rock of a building.
apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
miracle(s) Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

Herod Herod Antipas, tetrarch (ruler) of Galilee and Perea, son of Herod the Great.
ACTS 4:28–5:15

These people that ‘came together’ against Jesus made your plan happen; it happened because of your power and your will. 29And now, Lord, listen to what they are saying. They are trying to make us afraid! Lord, we are your servants. Help us to speak the things you want us to say without fear. 30Help us to be brave by showing us your power: make sick people well, give proofs, and make miracles happen by the power of Jesus, your holy servant.”

After the believers prayed, the place where they were meeting shook. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they continued to speak God’s message without fear.

The Believers Share

The group of believers were all the same in their thinking and in what they wanted. No person in the group said that the things he had were his own. Instead, they shared everything. 33With great power the apostles told the people that the Lord Jesus was truly raised from death. And God blessed all the believers very much. 34They all received the things they needed. Everyone that owned fields (land) or houses sold them for money. They brought the money and gave it to the apostles. Then each person was given the things he needed.

One of the believers was named Joseph. The apostles called him Barnabas. (This name means “A person that helps others.”) He was a Levite born in Cyprus. 37Joseph owned a field. He sold the field, brought the money, and gave it to the apostles.

Ananias and Sapphira

There was a man named Ananias. His wife’s name was Sapphira. Ananias sold some land that he had. 2But he gave only part of the money to the apostles. He secretly kept some of the money for himself. His wife knew this, and she agreed with it. 3Peter said, “Ananias, why did you let Satan (the devil) rule your heart? You lied and tried to deceive (fool) the Holy Spirit. You sold your field, but why did you keep part of the money for yourself? Before you sold the field, it belonged to you. And even after you sold it, you could have used the money any way you wanted. Why did you think of doing this bad thing? You lied to God, not to us men!” 5–6When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. Some young men came and wrapped his body. They carried it out and buried it. And every person that heard about this was filled with fear.

About three hours later his wife (Sapphira) came in. Sapphira did not know about this thing that had happened to her husband. 8Peter said to her, “Tell me how much money you got for your field. Was it this much (the amount Ananias had said)?”

Sapphira answered, “Yes, that was all we got for the field.”

Peter said to her, “Why did you and your husband agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! Do you hear those footsteps? The men that buried your husband are at the door! They will carry you out in the same way.” 10At that moment Sapphira fell down by his feet and died. The young men came in and saw that she was dead. The men carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11All the believers and all the other people that heard about these things were filled with fear.

Proofs from God

The apostles did many miracles and powerful things. All the people saw these things. The apostles were together in Solomon's Porch; they all had the same purpose. 13None of the other people felt worthy to stand with them. All the people were saying good things about the apostles. 14And more and more people believed in the Lord (Jesus)—many men and women were added to the group of believers. 15So the people brought their sick people into the streets. (The people...
heard that Peter was coming by. So the people put their sick on little beds and mattresses. They thought that if the sick people could be close enough for Peter’s shadow to touch them, it would be enough to heal them. 16People came from all the towns around Jerusalem. They brought their sick people and those that were bothered by evil spirits from the devil. All of these people were healed.

The Jewish Leaders Try to Stop the Apostles 17The high priest* and all his friends (a group called the Sadducees*) became very jealous. 18They grabbed the apostles* and put them in jail. 19But during the night, an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail. The angel led the apostles outside and said, 20“Go and stand in the temple* yard. Tell the people everything about this new life in Jesus.” 21When the apostles heard this, they obeyed and went to the temple area. It was early in the morning. The apostles began to teach the people.

The high priest* and his friends came to the temple*. They called a meeting of the Jewish leaders and all the important men of the Jews. They sent some men to the jail to bring the apostles* to them. 22When the men went to the jail, they could not find the apostles there. So they went back and told the Jewish leaders about this. 23The men said, “The jail was closed and locked. The guards were standing at the doors. But when we opened the doors, the jail was empty!” 24The captain of the temple guards and the leading priests heard this. They were confused. They wondered, “What will happen because of this?” 25Then another man came and told them, “Listen! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple yard. They are teaching the people!” 26Then the captain and his men went out and brought the apostles back. But the soldiers did not use force, because they were afraid of the people. The soldiers were afraid that the people would become angry and kill them (the soldiers) with rocks.

27The soldiers brought the apostles* to the meeting and made them stand before the Jewish leaders. The high priest* questioned the apostles. 28He said, “We told you never to teach about this man (Jesus)! But look what you have done! You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching. You are trying to make us responsible (guilty) for the death of this man (Jesus).”

29Peter and the other apostles* answered, “We must obey God, not you! 30You killed Jesus. You hung him on a cross. But God, the same God our fathers* had, raised Jesus up from death! 31Jesus is the One that God raised to his right side. God made Jesus our Leader and Savior. God did this so that all Jews can change their hearts and lives. Then God can forgive their sins. 32We saw all these things happen, and we can say these things are true. The Holy Spirit* also shows that these things are true. God has given the Spirit to all people that obey him.”

33The Jewish leaders heard these words. They became very angry. They began to plan a way to kill the apostles*. 34One of the Pharisees* in the meeting stood up. His name was Gamaliel. He was a teacher of the law, and all the people respected him. He told the men to make the apostles leave the meeting for a few minutes. 35Then he said to them, “Men of Israel, be careful of what you are planning to do to these men! 36Remember when Theudas appeared? He said that he was an important man. About 400 men joined him. But he was killed. And all who followed him were scattered and ran away. They were able to do nothing. 37Later, a man named Judas came from Galilee. It was at the time of the registration.* He led a group of followers, too. He was also killed. And all his followers were scattered and ran away. 38And so now I tell you: Stay away from these men. Leave them

father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews.
Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
registration A census or counting of all the people and the things they own.
The Jewish leaders agreed with the thing that Gamaliel said. 40 They called the apostles in again. They beat the apostles and told them not to talk to people about Jesus again. Then they let the apostles go free. 41 The apostles left the meeting. The apostles were happy because they were given the honor of suffering dishonor (shame) for the name of Jesus. 42 They did this every day in the temple yard and in people's homes.

Some Jews Against Stephen

Stephen (one of the seven men) received a great blessing. God gave Stephen power to do miracles and to show proofs from God to the people. 9 But some Jews came and argued with Stephen. These Jews were from a synagogue. It was called a synagogue for Libertines. (This synagogue was also for Jews from Cyrene, and for Jews from Alexandria.) Jews from Cilicia and Asia were with them. They all came and argued with Stephen. 10 But the Spirit was helping Stephen speak with wisdom. His words were so strong that the Jews could not argue with him. 11 So the Jews paid some men to say, “We heard Stephen say bad things against Moses and against God!” 12 By doing this, these Jews upset the people, the older Jewish leaders, and the teachers of the law. They became so angry that they came and grabbed Stephen. They took him to a meeting of the Jewish leaders. 13 The Jews brought some men into the meeting. They told these men to tell lies about Stephen. The men said, “This man (Stephen) always says bad things about this holy place (the temple). And he always says bad things against the law of Moses. 14 We heard him say that Jesus from Nazareth will destroy this place. And he always says bad things against the law of Moses.” 15 All the people sitting in the meeting watched Stephen closely. His face looked like the face of an angel, and they saw it.
Stephen’s Speech

7 The high priest* said to Stephen, “Are these things true?” 2Stephen answered, “My Jewish fathers and brothers, listen to me. Our glorious God appeared to Abraham, our ancestor. Abraham was in Mesopotamia. This was before he lived in Haran. 3God said to Abraham, ‘Leave your country and your people, and go to the country I will show you.’ 4So Abraham left the country of Chaldea.* He went to live in Haran. After Abraham’s father died, God sent him to this place here, where you live now. 5But God did not give Abraham any of this land. God did not give him even a foot of it. But God promised that in the future he would give Abraham this land for himself and for his children. (This was before Abraham had any children.) 6This is what God said to him: ‘Your descendants* will live in another country. They will be strangers. The people there will make them slaves and do bad things to them for 400 years. 7But I will punish the nation that made them slaves.’ 8And God also said, ‘After those things happen, your people will come out of that country. Then your people will worship me here in this place.’ 9God made an agreement with Abraham; the sign for this agreement was circumcision.* And so when Abraham had a son, he circumcised his son when he was eight days old. His son’s name was Isaac. Isaac also circumcised his son Jacob. And Jacob did the same for his sons. These sons later became the twelve fathers.* 10These fathers* became jealous of Joseph (their younger brother). They sold Joseph to be a slave in Egypt. But God was with Joseph. 11Joseph had many troubles there, but God saved him from all those troubles. Pharaoh was the king of Egypt. He liked Joseph and respected him because of the wisdom that God gave Joseph. Pharaoh gave Joseph the job of being a governor of Egypt. He even let Joseph rule over all the people in Pharaoh’s house. 12But all the land of Egypt and of Canaan became dry. It became so dry that food could not grow there. This made the people suffer very much. Our fathers could not find anything to eat.

13But Jacob heard that there was food stored in Egypt. So he sent our fathers* there. (This was their first trip to Egypt.) 14Then they went there a second time. This time, Joseph told his brothers who he was. And Pharaoh learned about Joseph’s family. 15Then Joseph sent some men to invite Jacob, his father, to come to Egypt. He also invited all his relatives (75 persons altogether). 16So Jacob went down to Egypt. Jacob and our fathers lived there until they died. 17The number of Israelites* in Egypt grew. There were more and more of our people there. (The promise that God made to Abraham was soon to come true.) 18Then a different king began to rule Egypt. He knew nothing about Joseph. 19This king tricked (deceived) our people. He was bad to our ancestors. The king made them put their children outside to die. 20This was the time when Moses was born. He was a very fine child. For three months they took care of Moses in his father’s house. 21When they put Moses outside, Pharaoh’s daughter took him. She raised him like he was her own son. 22The Egyptians taught Moses about all the things they knew. He was powerful in the things he said and did. 23When Moses was about 40 years old, he thought it would be good to visit his brothers,
Moses saw an Egyptian man doing wrong to an Israelite man. So he defended the Israelite. Moses punished the Egyptian for hurting the Israelite; Moses hit him so hard that he died. Moses thought that his Israelite brothers would understand that God was using him to save them. But they did not understand. The next day, Moses saw two Jewish men fighting. He tried to make peace between them. He said, ‘Men, you are brothers! Why are you doing wrong to each other?’ The man who was doing wrong to the other man pushed Moses away. He said to Moses, ‘Did anyone say you could be our ruler and judge? No! Will you kill me like you killed the Egyptian man yesterday?’ When Moses heard him say this, he left Egypt. He went to live in the land of Midian. He was a stranger there. While Moses lived in Midian, he had two sons.

After 40 years Moses was in the desert near Mount Sinai. An angel appeared to him in the flame of a burning bush. When Moses saw this, he was amazed. He went near to look closer at it. Moses heard a voice; it was the Lord's. The Lord said, ‘I am the same God your ancestors had—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ Moses began to shake with fear. He was afraid to look at the bush. The Lord said to him, ‘Take off your shoes, because the place where you are now standing is holy ground. I have seen my people suffer much in Egypt. I have heard my people crying. I have come down to save them. Come now, Moses, I am sending you back to Egypt.’

This Moses was the same man the Israelites said they did not want. They had said to him, ‘Did anyone say you could be our ruler and judge? No!’ Moses is the same man that God sent with the help of an angel. This was the angel Moses saw in the burning bush. Moses did these things in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and then in the desert for 40 years. This is the same Moses that said these words to the Jewish people: ‘God will give you a prophet.’ That prophet will come from among your own people. He will be like me.’ This is the same Moses who was with the gathering of God’s people in the desert. He was with the angel that spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and he was with our ancestors. Moses received commands from God that give life. Moses gave us those commands.

But our ancestors did not want to obey Moses. They rejected him. They wanted to go back to Egypt again. They said to Aaron, ‘Moses led us out of the country of Egypt. But we don’t know what has happened to him. So make some gods to go before us and lead us.’ So the people made an idol that looked like a calf. Then they brought sacrifices (gifts) to it. The people were very happy with what they had made with their own hands! But God turned against them. God finished trying to stop them from worshiping the army of false gods in the sky. This is what is written in the book of the prophets: God says,

‘You Jewish people did not bring me blood offerings and sacrifices in the desert for 40 years;
You carried with you the tent (place of worship) for Moloch (a false god) and the image of the star of your god Rephan. These were the idols you made to worship. So I will send you away beyond Babylon.’

Amos 5:25–27
44 "The Holy Tent* was with our ancestors in the desert. God told Moses how to make this tent. He made it like the plan that God showed him. 45 Later, Joshua led our ancestors to capture the lands of the other nations. Our people went in and God made the other people go out. When our people went into this new land, they took with them this same tent. Our people received this tent from their fathers, and our people kept it until the time of David. 46 God was very pleased with David. David asked God to let him build a house (temple*) for him, the God of Jacob. 47 But Solomon (David’s son) was the person who built the temple.

48 "But the Most High (God) does not live in houses that men build with their hands. This is what the prophet* writes:

49 ‘The Lord says,
Heaven is my throne.
The earth is a place to rest my feet.
What kind of house can you build for me?
There is no place where I need to rest!
Remember, I made all these things!’"

Isaiah 66:1–2

51 Then Stephen said, “You stubborn Jewish leaders! You have not given your hearts to God! You won’t listen to him! You are always against what the Holy Spirit* is trying to tell you. Your ancestors did this, and you are just like them! 52 Your ancestors persecuted every prophet* that ever lived. Those prophets said long ago that the Righteous One (Christ*) would come. But your ancestors killed those prophets. And now you have turned against the Righteous One and killed him. 53 You are the people that received the law {of Moses,} God gave you this law through his angels. But you don’t obey this law!”

Stephan Is Killed

54 The Jewish leaders heard Stephen say these things. They became very angry. The Jewish leaders were so mad that they were grinding their teeth at Stephen. 55 But Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit.* Stephen looked up into the sky. He saw the Glory of God. He saw Jesus standing at God’s right side. 56 Stephen said, “Look! I see heaven open. And I see the Son of Man* standing at God’s right side!”

57 Then the Jewish leaders all shouted with a loud voice. They closed (covered) their ears with their hands. They all ran at Stephen together. 58 They took him out of the city and threw rocks at him until he was dead. The men who told lies against Stephen gave their coats to a young man named Saul. 59 Then they threw rocks at Stephen. But Stephen was praying. He said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” 60 He fell on his knees and shouted, “Lord, don’t blame them for this sin!” After Stephen said this, he died.

8 Saul agreed that the killing of Stephen was a good thing.

Trouble for the Believers

2–3 Some men that truly worshiped God buried Stephen. They cried very loudly for him. On that day the Jews began to persecute* the group of believers in Jerusalem. The Jews made them suffer very much. Saul was also trying to destroy the group. Saul went into their houses. He dragged out men and women and put them in jail. All the believers left Jerusalem. Only the apostles* stayed. The believers went to different places in Judea and Samaria. 4 The believers were scattered everywhere. Every place the believers went they told people the Good News.*

Philip Tells the Good News in Samaria

5 Philip* went to the city of Samaria. He told people about the Christ.* 6 The people there

Holy Tent  Literally, “Tent of the Testimony,” the movable tent where the Ten Commandments were kept and where God lived among his people in the time of Moses.
temple  The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
prophet  Isaiah, who spoke for God about 740–700 B.C.
Spirit, Holy Spirit  Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
persecute(d)  To persecute is to hurt or do bad things to.
prophet  A person that spoke for God.
Christ  The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
Son of Man  A name Jesus used for himself. In Dan. 7:13–14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.
apostles  The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
Good News, message  The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
Philip  Not the apostle named Philip.
heard Philip and saw the miracles* he was doing. They all listened carefully to the things Philip said. Many of these people had evil spirits from the devil inside them. But Philip made the evil spirits leave them. The spirits made a loud noise when they came out. There were also many weak and crippled people there. Philip made these people well, too. The people in that city were very happy because of this.

But there was a man named Simon in that city. Before Philip came there, Simon used his power to do magic and he amazed all the people of Samaria. Simon boasted and called himself a great man. All the people—the least important and the most important—believed the things Simon said. The people said, “This man has the power of God that is called ‘the Great Power!’” Simon amazed the people with his magic tricks so long that the people became his followers. But Philip told the people the Good News* about the kingdom of God and the power of Jesus Christ. Men and women believed Philip. They were baptized.* Simon himself also believed and was baptized. Simon stayed very close to Philip. He saw the miracles* and the very powerful things that Philip did. Simon was amazed.

The apostles* were still in Jerusalem. They heard that the people of Samaria had accepted the word of God. So the apostles sent Peter and John to the people in Samaria. When Peter and John arrived, they prayed for the Samaritan believers to receive the Holy Spirit.* These people had been baptized* in the name of the Lord Jesus. But the Holy Spirit had not yet come down on any of them. This is why Peter and John prayed. The two apostles* put their hands on* the people. Then the people received the Holy Spirit.

Philip Teaches a Man from Ethiopia

An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip.* The angel said, “Get ready and go south. Go to the road that leads down to Gaza from Jerusalem—the road that goes through the desert.” So Philip got ready and went. On the road he saw a man from Ethiopia. This man was a eunuch. He was an important officer in the service of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians. He was responsible for taking care of all her money. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship. Now he was on his way home. He was sitting in his chariot* and reading from the book of Isaiah, the prophet.* The Spirit* said to Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” So Philip went toward the chariot, and he heard the man reading. He was reading from Isaiah, the prophet. Philip said to him, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

Philip

Not the apostle named Philip.

eunuch Man whose testicles have been removed. Rulers often gave such men important positions.

chariot Something like a wagon pulled by horses.

prophet A person that spoke for God. Sometimes prophets told about things that would happen in the future.

miracle(s) Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

put their hands on Here, doing this showed that the apostles had God’s authority or power to give people the special powers of the Holy Spirit.
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Saul Is Converted

In Jerusalem, Saul was still trying to scare and kill the followers of the Lord (Jesus) all the time. So he went to the high priest.*  
2Saul asked him to write letters to the Jews of the synagogues* in the city of Damascus. Saul wanted the high priest to give him the authority to find people in Damascus who were followers of the Way of Jesus. If he found any believers there, men or women, he would arrest them and bring them back to Jerusalem.

3So Saul went to Damascus. When he came near the city, a very bright light from the sky suddenly shined around him. 4Saul fell to the ground. He heard a voice saying to him: “Saul, Saul! Why are you doing these bad things to me?”  
5Saul said, “Who are you, Lord?”  
The voice answered, “I am Jesus. I am the One you are trying to hurt. 6Get up now and go into the city. Someone there will tell you what you must do.”  
7The men traveling with Saul stood there. They said nothing. The men heard the voice, but they saw no one. 8Saul got up from the ground. He opened his eyes, but he could not see. So the men with Saul held his hand and led him into Damascus. 9For three days Saul could not see; he did not eat or drink.

10There was a follower of Jesus in Damascus. His name was Ananias. The Lord (Jesus) spoke to Ananias in a vision.* The Lord said, “Ananias!”  
Ananias answered, “Here I am, Lord.”  
11The Lord said to Ananias, “Get up and go to the street called Straight Street. Find the house of Judas.* Ask for a man named Saul from the city of Tarsus. He is there now, praying. 12Saul has seen a vision.* In this vision a man named Ananias came to him and put his hands on him. Then Saul could see again.”  
13But Ananias answered, “Lord (Jesus), many people have told me about this man (Saul). They told me about the many bad things he did to your people.”  
14Ananias answered, “I have seen your vision, Lord. I know they tell you the truth.”  
15The Lord said, “Go into that house and ask for a young man named Saul. He is praying. 16In a vision I spoke to him first, and I was going to send him to you.”  
17Ananias said, “I have seen the vision, Lord. I know this man is a persecutor who harmed your people.”  
18The Lord answered, “Go with him. I will put my words in his mouth. 19I will show him what he must do. 20Ananias said, “Here I am, Lord. Send me to do your work.”

31The man said, “How can I understand? I need some person to explain it to me!” Then he invited Philip to climb in and sit with him. 32The part of Scripture* that he was reading was this:

“He was like a sheep when it is taken to be killed.
He was like a lamb that makes no sound when someone cuts off its wool.
He said nothing.
33He was shamed, and all his rights were taken away.
His life on earth was ended.
There will be no story about his family (descendants).”

Isaiah 53:7–8

Verse 37 Some late copies of Acts add verse 37: “Philip answered, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you can.’ The officer said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’”

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
prophet A person that spoke for God. Sometimes prophets told about things that would happen in the future.
Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.
Verse 37 Some late copies of Acts add verse 37: “Philip answered, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you can.’ The officer said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’”
Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.
synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.
vision(s) Something like dreams used by God to speak to people.
Judas This is not either of the apostles named Judas.
things this man did to your holy people* in Jerusalem. 14Now he (Saul) has come here to Damascus. The leading priests have given him the power to arrest all people that believe in you.**

15But the Lord (Jesus) said to Ananias, “Go! I have chosen Saul for an important work. He must tell about me to kings, to the Jewish people, and to other nations. I will show Saul the things he must suffer for my name.”

16So Ananias left and went to the house of Judas. He put his hands on Saul and said, “Saul, my brother, the Lord Jesus sent me. He is the One you saw on the road when you came here. Jesus sent me so that you can see again and so that you can be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

17Immediately, something that looked like fish scales fell off Saul’s eyes. Saul was able to see again! Saul got up and was baptized.*

18Then he ate some food and began to feel strong again.

Saul Begins to Tell About Jesus

Saul stayed with the followers of Jesus in Damascus for a few days. 20Soon he began to go to the synagogues* and tell people about Jesus. He told the people, “Jesus is the Son of God!”

21All the people that heard Saul were amazed. They said, “This is the same man that was in Jerusalem. He was trying to destroy the people that trust in this name (Jesus)! He (Saul) has come here to do the same thing. He came here to arrest the followers of Jesus and take them back to Jerusalem to the leading priests.”

22But Saul became more and more powerful. He proved that Jesus is the Christ,* His proofs were so strong that the Jews who lived in Damascus could not argue with him.

Saul Escapes from Some Jews

23After many days, some Jews made plans to kill Saul. 24The Jews were watching the city gates day and night, waiting for Saul. They wanted to kill him. But Saul learned about their plan. 25One night some followers that Saul had taught helped him leave the city. The followers put Saul in a basket. They put the basket through a hole in the city wall and lowered him down.

Saul in Jerusalem

26Then Saul went to Jerusalem. He tried to join the group of followers (believers), but they were all afraid of him. They did not believe that Saul was really a follower of Jesus.* 27But Barnabas accepted Saul and brought him to the apostles.* Barnabas told the apostles that Saul had seen the Lord (Jesus) on the road to Damascus. Barnabas explained to the apostles how the Lord had spoken to Saul. Then he told the apostles that Saul spoke for the Lord (Jesus) without fear to the people in Damascus.

28And so Saul stayed with the followers. He went everywhere in Jerusalem, speaking for the Lord (Jesus) without fear. 29Saul often talked with the Jews that spoke Greek. He had arguments with them. But they were trying to kill him. 30When the brothers (believers) learned about this, they took Saul to the city of Caesarea. From Caesarea they sent Saul to the city of Tarsus.

31The church (believers) everywhere in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had a time of peace. With the help of the Holy Spirit,* the group became stronger. The believers showed that they respected the Lord by the way they lived. Because of this, the group of believers grew larger and larger.

Peter in Lydda and Joppa

32Peter traveled through all the towns around Jerusalem. He visited the believers* who lived in Lydda. 33In Lydda he met a paralyzed (crippled) man named Aeneas. Aeneas had not been able to leave his bed for the past eight years. 34Peter said to him,
“Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Stand up and make your bed! You can do this for yourself now!” Aeneas stood up immediately. 35 All the people living in Lydda and on the plain of Sharon saw him. These people turned to (believed in) the Lord Jesus.

36 In the city of Joppa there was a follower of Jesus named Tabitha. (Her Greek name, Dorcas, means “a deer.”) She always did good things for people. She always gave money to people that needed it. 37 While Peter was in Lydda, Tabitha became sick and died. They washed her body and put it in a room upstairs.

38 The followers in Joppa heard that Peter was in Lydda. (Lydda is near Joppa.) So they sent two men to Peter. They begged him, “Hurry, please come quickly!” 39 Peter got ready and went with them. When he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows* stood around Peter. They were crying. They showed Peter the coats and other clothes that Dorcas (Tabitha) had made when she was still alive. 40 Peter sent all the people out of the room. He kneeled and prayed. Then he turned to Tabitha’s body and said, “Tabitha, stand up!” She opened her eyes. When she saw Peter, she sat up. 41 He gave her his hand and helped her stand up. Then he called the believers* and the widows into the room. He showed them Tabitha; she was alive! 42 People everywhere in Joppa learned about this. Many of these people believed in the Lord (Jesus). 43 Peter stayed in Joppa for many days. He stayed with a man named Simon who was a leatherworker.*

Peter and Cornelius

In the city of Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius. He was an army officer in the “Italian” group of the Roman army. 2 Cornelius was a good (religious) man. He and all the other people that lived in his home worshiped the true God. He gave much of his money to help the Jewish poor people. Cornelius prayed to God always.

10 One afternoon about three o’clock, Cornelius saw a vision.* He saw it clearly. In the vision an angel from God came to him and said, “Cornelius!”

4 Cornelius looked at the angel. He became afraid and said, “What do you want, sir?”

The angel said to Cornelius, “God has heard your prayers. He has seen the things you give to the poor people. God remembers you. 5 Send some men now to the city of Joppa. Send your men to bring back a man named Simon. Simon is also called Peter. 6 Simon is staying with a man, also named Simon, who is a leatherworker.* He has a house beside the sea.” 7 The angel who spoke to Cornelius left. Then Cornelius called two of his servants and a soldier. This soldier was a good (religious) man. The soldier was one of Cornelius’ close helpers. 8 Cornelius explained everything to these three men. Then he sent them to Joppa.

9 The next day these men came near Joppa. At that time, Peter was going up to the roof to pray. It was about noon. 10 Peter was hungry. He wanted to eat. But while they were preparing the food for Peter to eat, a vision* came to him.

11 He saw something coming down through the open sky. It looked like a big sheet coming down to the ground. It was being lowered to the ground by its four corners. 12 Every kind of animal was in it—animals that walk, animals that crawl on the ground, and birds that fly in the air. 13 Then a voice said to Peter, “Get up, Peter; kill any of these animals and eat it.”

14 But Peter said, “I would never do that, Lord! I have never eaten food that is unholy or not pure.”

15 But the voice said to him again, “God has made these things clean (pure). Don’t call them ‘unholy’!” 16 This happened three times. Then the whole thing was taken back up into the sky.

17 Peter wondered what this vision* meant.

The men that Cornelius sent had found Simon’s house. They were standing at the door. 18 They asked, “Is Simon Peter staying here?”

19 Peter was still thinking about the vision.* But the Spirit* said to him, “Listen! Three men

widows A widow is a woman whose husband has died.
believers Literally, “holy ones,” a name for people that believe in Jesus.
leatherworker Man who made leather from animal skins.
army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

vision(s) Something like dreams used by God to speak to people.
Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
are looking for you. Get up and go downstairs. Go with these men and don’t ask questions. I have sent them to you.” 21 So Peter went downstairs to the men. He said, “I am the man you are looking for. Why did you come here?”

22 The men said, “A holy angel told Cornelius to invite you to his house. Cornelius is an army officer. He is a good man; he worships God. All the Jewish people respect him. The angel told Cornelius to invite you to his house so that he can listen to the things you have to say.” 23 Peter asked the men to come in and stay for the night.

The next day Peter got ready and went away with the three men. Some of the brothers (believers) from Joppa went with Peter. 24 The next day they came into the city of Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them. He had already gathered his relatives and close friends at his house. 25 When Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him. Cornelius fell down at Peter’s feet and worshiped him. But Peter told him to get up. Peter said, “Stand up! I am only a man like you.” 26 Peter continued talking with Cornelius. Then Peter went inside and saw a large group of people together there. 27 Peter said to the people, “You people understand that it is against our Jewish law for a Jew to associate with or visit any person who is not a Jew. But God has shown me that I should not call any person ‘unholy’ or ‘not clean.’ 28 That is why I did not argue when the men asked me to come here. Now, please tell me why you sent for me.”

30 Cornelius said, “Four days ago, I was praying in my house. It was at this same time—three o’clock in the afternoon. Suddenly, there was a man (angel) standing before me. He was wearing bright, shiny clothes. The man said, ‘Cornelius! God has heard your prayer. God has seen the things you give to the poor people. God remembers you. 31 So God has spoken to the Jewish people. God sent them the Good News* that peace has come through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Lord (Ruler) of all people! 32 You know about Jesus from Nazareth. God made him the Christ* by giving him the Holy Spirit* and power. Jesus went everywhere doing good things for people. Jesus healed the people that were ruled by the devil. This showed that God was with Jesus. 33 We saw all the things that Jesus did in Judea and in Jerusalem. We are witnesses. But Jesus was killed. They put him on a cross made of wood. But, on the third day after his death, God raised Jesus to life! God let people see Jesus clearly. 34 But Jesus was not seen by all the people. Only the witnesses that God had already chosen saw him. We are those witnesses! We ate and drank with Jesus after he was raised from death. 35 Jesus told us to go and speak to the people. He told us to tell them that he is the One that God chose to be the Judge of all people that are living and all people that have died. 36 Every person who believes (trusts) in Jesus will be forgiven. God will forgive the sins of that person through the name of Jesus.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

John John the Baptist, the man that told people about Christ’s coming. Read Mt. 3; Lk. 3.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

prophet(s) People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

leatherworker Man who made leather from animal skins.
The Holy Spirit Comes to Non-Jews

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came down on all those people who were listening to his speech. The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed. They were amazed that the Holy Spirit was poured out to the non-Jewish people too. These Jewish believers heard them speaking different languages and praising God. Then Peter said, “We cannot refuse to allow these people to be baptized in water. They have received the Holy Spirit the same as we did!” So Peter commanded that Cornelius and his relatives and friends be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then the people asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Peter Returns to Jerusalem

The apostles and the brothers in Judea heard that non-Jewish people had accepted God’s teaching too. But when Peter came to Jerusalem, some Jewish believers argued with him. They said, “You went into the homes of people that are not Jews and are not circumcised! You even ate with them!”

So Peter explained the whole story to them. Peter said, “I was in the city of Joppa. While I was praying, a vision came to me. In the vision I saw something coming down from the sky. It looked like a big sheet. It was being lowered to the ground by its four corners. It came down and stopped very close to me. I looked inside it. I saw animals, both tame and wild. I saw animals that crawl and birds that fly in the air. I heard a voice say to me, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill any of these animals and eat it!’ But I said, ‘I would never do that, Lord! I have never eaten anything that is unholy or not pure.’ But the voice from the sky answered again, ‘God has made these things clean. Don’t call them unholy!’ This happened three times. Then the whole thing was taken back into the sky. Then three men came to the house where I was staying. These three men were sent to me from the city of Caesarea. The Spirit told me to go with them without doubting. These six brothers here also went with me. We went to the house of Cornelius. Cornelius told us about the angel he saw standing in his house. The angel said to Cornelius, ‘Send some men to Joppa. Invite Simon Peter to come. He will speak to you. The things he will say will save you and all your family.’ After I began my speech, the Holy Spirit came on them the same as he came on us at the beginning. Then I remembered the words of the Lord. The Lord said, ‘John baptized people in water, but you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit!’ God gave to these people the same gift that he gave to us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. So could I stop the work of God? No!”

When the Jewish believers heard these things, they stopped arguing. They praised God and said, “So God is allowing the non-Jewish people to change their hearts and have life the same as us!”

The Good News Comes to Antioch

The believers were scattered by the persecution that happened after Stephen was killed. Some of the believers went to places far away like Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. The believers told the Good News in these places; but they told it only to Jews. Some of these believers were men from Cyprus and Cyrene. When these men came to Antioch, they also spoke to Greeks. They told these Greek people the Good News about the Lord.
Jesus. 21 The Lord was helping the believers. And a large group of people believed and started following the Lord (Jesus).

22 The church (group of believers) in Jerusalem heard about these new believers in Antioch. So the believers in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23–24 Barnabas was a good man. He was full of the Holy Spirit* and full of faith. When Barnabas went to Antioch, he saw that God had blessed those people very much. This made Barnabas very happy. He encouraged all the believers in Antioch. He told them, “Never lose your faith. Always obey the Lord with all your hearts.” Many, many people became followers of the Lord Jesus.

25 Then Barnabas went to the city of Tarsus. He was looking for Saul. 26 When he found Saul, Barnabas brought him to Antioch. Saul and Barnabas stayed there a whole year. Every time the group of believers came together, Saul and Barnabas met with them and taught many people. In Antioch the followers of Jesus were called “Christians” for the first time.

27 About that same time some prophets* went from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of these prophets was named Agabus. In Antioch, Agabus stood up and spoke. With the help of the Holy Spirit* he said, “A very bad time is coming to the whole world. There will be no food for people to eat.” (This time without food happened when Claudius was emperor.*) 29 The believers decided that they would all try to help their brothers and sisters who lived in Judea. Each believer planned to send them as much as he could. 30 They gathered the money and gave it to Barnabas and Saul. Then Barnabas and Saul brought it to the elders* in Judea.

**Spirit, Holy Spirit** Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

**prophet(s)** People that spoke for God.

**emperor** The ruler (leader) of the Roman empire.

**elders** A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “oversseers” and “pastors” (“shepherds”), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.

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**Herod Agrippa Hurts the Church**

12 During that same time King Herod* began to persecute* some of the people that belonged to the church (group of believers). 2 Herod ordered James to be killed with a sword. James was the brother of John. 3 Herod saw that the Jews liked this. So he decided to arrest Peter, too. (This happened during the time of the Jewish holiday called the Passover.*) 4 Herod arrested Peter and put him in jail. A group of 16 soldiers guarded Peter. Herod wanted to wait until after the Passover festival. Then he planned to bring Peter before the people. 5 So Peter was kept in jail. But the church was constantly praying to God for Peter.

**Peter Leaves the Jail**

6 Peter was sleeping between two of the soldiers. He was bound with two chains. More soldiers were guarding the door of the jail. It was at night, and Herod* planned to bring Peter out before the people the next day. 7 Suddenly, an angel of the Lord stood there. A light shined in the room. The angel touched Peter on the side and woke him up. The angel said, “Hurry, get up!” The chains fell off Peter’s hands. 8 The angel said to Peter, “Get dressed and put on your shoes.” And so Peter did this. Then the angel said, “Put on your coat and follow me.” 9 So the angel went out and Peter followed. Peter did not know if the angel was really doing this. He thought he might be seeing a vision.* 10 Peter and the angel went past the first guard and the second guard. Then they came to the iron gate that separated them from the city. The gate opened itself for them. Peter and the angel went through the gate and walked about a block. Then the angel suddenly left.

11 Peter realized then what had happened. He thought, “Now I know that the Lord really sent his angel to me. He rescued (saved) me from Herod.” The Jewish people thought that bad
things would happen to me. But the Lord saved me from all these things."

12When Peter realized this, he went to the home of Mary. She was the mother of John. (John was also called Mark.) Many people were gathered there. They were all praying. 

13Peter knocked on the outside door. A servant girl named Rhoda came to answer it. 

14Rhoda recognized Peter’s voice, and she was very happy. She even forgot to open the door. She ran inside and told the group, “Peter is at the door!” 15The believers said to Rhoda, “You are crazy!” But she continued to say that it was true. So they said, “It must be Peter’s angel.” 

16But Peter continued to knock. When the believers opened the door, they saw Peter. They were amazed. 17Peter made a sign with his hand to tell them to be quiet. He explained to them how the Lord led him out of the jail. He said, “Tell James and the other brothers what happened.” Then Peter left to go to another place.

18The next day the soldiers were very upset. They wondered what happened to Peter. 

19Herod* looked everywhere for Peter but could not find him. So Herod questioned the guards. Then he ordered that the guards be killed.

The Death of Herod Agrippa

Later Herod* moved from Judea. He went to the city of Caesarea and stayed there a while. 20Herod was very angry with the people from the cities of Tyre and Sidon. Those people all came in a group to Herod. They were able to get Blastus on their side. Blastus was the king’s personal servant. The people asked Herod for peace because their country needed food from Herod’s country. 21Herod* decided a day to meet with them. On that day Herod was wearing a beautiful royal robe. He sat on his throne and made a speech to the people. 22The people shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not a man!” 23Herod accepted this praise and, did not give the glory to God. So an angel of the Lord caused him to become sick. He was eaten by worms inside him, and he died.

Barnabas and Saul Given a Special Work

13In the church (group of believers) at Antioch there were some prophets* and teachers. They were: Barnabas, Simeon (also called Niger), Lucius (from the city of Cyrene), Manaen (who had grown up with Herod,* the ruler) and Saul. 2These men were all serving the Lord and fasting.* The Holy Spirit* said to them, “Give Barnabas and Saul to me to do a special work. I have chosen them to do this work.” 3So the church fasted* and prayed. They put their hands on* Barnabas and Saul and sent them out.

Barnabas and Saul in Cyprus

4Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit.* They went to the city of Seleucia. Then they sailed from Seleucia to the island of Cyprus. 5When Barnabas and Saul came to the city of Salamis, they told the message* of God in the Jewish synagogues.* (John {Mark} was with them to help.) 6They went across the whole island to the city of Paphos. In Paphos they met a Jewish man who did magic. His name was Barjesus. He was a false prophet.* 7Barjesus always stayed close to Sergius Paulus, the governor. Sergius Paulus was a wise man. He asked Barnabas and Saul to come to him. He wanted

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

prophet(s) People that spoke for God.

fasting, fasted To fast is to live without food for a time of prayer or mourning.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

put their hands on Here, this was a sign to show that these men were given a special work of God.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

false prophet A person that says he speaks for God but does not really speak God’s truth.
to hear the message of God. 8But Elymas, the magician, was against Barnabas and Saul. (Elymas is another name for Barjesus.) Elymas tried to stop the governor from believing in Jesus. 9But Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit.* Paul (Saul’s other name) looked at Elymas (Barjesus) 10and said, “You son of the devil! You are an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of evil tricks and lies. You always try to change the Lord’s truths into lies! 11Now the Lord will touch you and you will be blind. For a time you will not be able to see anything—not even the light from the sun.”

Then everything became dark for Elymas. He walked around lost. He was trying to find someone to lead him by the hand. 12When the governor (Sergius Paulus) saw this, he believed. He was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

**Paul and Barnabas Go to Antioch in Pisidia**

13Paul and those people with him sailed away from Paphos. They came to Perga, a city in Pamphylia. But John, Mark, left them; he returned to Jerusalem. 14They continued their trip from Perga and went to Antioch, a city near Pisidia. In Antioch on the Sabbath day* they went into the Jewish synagogue* and sat down. 15The law of Moses and the writings of the prophets* were read. Then the leaders of the synagogue sent a message to Paul and Barnabas: “Brothers, if you have something to say that will help the people here, please speak!”

16Paul stood up. He raised his hand* and said, “My Jewish brothers and you other people that also worship the true God, please listen to me! 17The God of Israel (the Jews) chose our ancestors. God helped his people to have success during the time they lived in Egypt as strangers. God brought them out of that country with great power. 18And God was patient with them for 40 years in the desert. 19God destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan. He gave their land to his people. 20All this happened in about 450 years.

“After this, God gave our people, judges (leaders) until the time of Samuel* the prophet.* 21Then the people asked for a king. God gave them Saul, the son of Kish. Saul was from the family group of Benjamin. He was king for 40 years. 22After God took Saul away, God made David* their king. This is what God said about David: ‘David, the son of Jesse, is a man who is like me in his thinking. He will do all the things I want him to do.’ 23God has brought one of David’s descendants* to Israel (the Jews) to be their Savior.* That descendant is Jesus. God promised to do this. 24Before Jesus came, John* told God’s message to all the Jewish people. John told the people to be baptized* to show they wanted to change their lives. 25When John was finishing his work, he said, ‘Who do you think I am? I am not the Christ.* He is coming later. I am not worthy to untie his shoes.’

26“My brothers, sons in the family of Abraham,* and you non-Jews who also worship the true God, listen! The news about this salvation has been sent to us. 27The Jews living in Jerusalem and the Jewish leaders did not realize that Jesus was the Savior. The words that the prophets* wrote about Jesus* were read to the Jews every Sabbath day,* but they did not understand. The Jews condemned Jesus. When they did this, they made the words of the prophets come true! 28They could not find any real reason why Jesus should die,

**Good News, message** The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

**Spirit, Holy Spirit** Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

**Sabbath day** Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.

**synagogue(s)** Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

**prophet(s)** People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

**raised his hand** A sign to make the people listen.
but they asked Pilate to kill him. 29 These Jews did all the bad things that the Scriptures* said would happen to Jesus. Then they took Jesus down from the cross and put him in a grave. 30 But God raised him up from death! 31 After this, for many days, the people that had gone with Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem saw Jesus. These people are now his witnesses to the people. 32 We tell you the Good News* about the promise God made to our ancestors. 33 We are their children (descendants), and God has made this promise come true for us. God did this by raising Jesus from death. We also read about this in Psalm 2:

‘You are my Son. 
Today I have become your Father.’ 
Psalm 2:7

34 God raised Jesus from death. Jesus will never go back to the grave and become dust. So God said:

‘I will give you the true and holy promises that I made to David.’ 
Isaiah 55:3

35 But in another Psalm it says:

‘You will not let, the body of your Holy One rot in the grave.’ 
Psalm 16:10

36 David did God’s will during the time he lived. Then he died and was buried like all his ancestors. And his body did rot in the grave! 37 But the One (Jesus) that God raised from death did not rot in the grave. 38–39 Brothers, you must understand what we are telling you: You can have forgiveness of your sins through this One (Jesus). The law of Moses could not free you from your sins. But every person who believes in Jesus is free from all his sins through him (Jesus). 40 The prophets* said some things would happen. Be careful! Don’t let these things happen to you. The prophets said:

41 ‘Listen, you people that doubt! 
You can wonder, but then go away and die;

because during your time, 
I (God) will do something that you will not believe. 
You will not believe it, 
even if someone explains it to you!’” 
Habakkuk 1:5

42 While Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue*, the people asked Paul and Barnabas to come again on the next Sabbath day* and tell them more about these things. 43 After the meeting, many of the Jews followed Paul and Barnabas from that place. With the Jews there were many converts* to the Jewish religion. These converts also worshiped the true God. Paul and Barnabas were persuading them to continue trusting in God’s grace (kindness).

44 On the next Sabbath day,* almost all the people in the city came together to hear the word of the Lord. 45 The Jews saw all these people there. So the Jews became very jealous. They said some very bad things and argued against the words that Paul said. 46 But Paul and Barnabas spoke very boldly. They said, “We must speak the message* of God to you Jews first. But you refuse to listen. You are making yourselves lost—not worthy of having eternal life! So we will now go to the people of other nations! 47 This is what the Lord (God) told us to do. The Lord said:

‘I have made you to be a light for other nations, 
so that you can show the way of salvation to people all over the world.’” 
Isaiah 49:6

48 When the non-Jewish people heard Paul say this, they were happy. They gave honor to the message* of the Lord. And many of the people believed the message. These were the people chosen to have life forever. 49 And so the message* of the Lord was being told through the whole country. 50 But the Jews caused some of the important

scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament. 
good news, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever. 
prophet(s) People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament. 
synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings. 
sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God. 
converts People that changed their religion to become Jews.
shook the dust off their feet A warning. It showed that they were finished talking to these people.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

miracles and wonders Amazing works or great things done by the power of God.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

Zeus The most important of the many Greek gods.

Hermes Another Greek god. The Greeks believed he was a messenger for the other gods.

tore ... clothes This showed they were very angry.
people thought that they had killed Paul. 20The followers of Jesus gathered around Paul and he got up and went back into the town. The next day, he and Barnabas left and went to the city of Derbe.

The Return to Antioch in Syria

21Paul and Barnabas told the Good News* in the city of Derbe too. Many people became followers of Jesus, Paul and Barnabas returned to the cities of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. 22In those cities Paul and Barnabas made the followers of Jesus stronger. They helped them to stay in the faith. Paul and Barnabas said, “We must suffer many things on our way into God’s kingdom.” 23Paul and Barnabas chose elders* for each church (group of believers). They fasted* and prayed for these elders. These elders were men who had trusted the Lord Jesus. So Paul and Barnabas put them in the Lord’s care. 24Paul and Barnabas went through the country of Pisidia. Then they came to the country of Pamphylia. 25They told people the message of Pisidia. Then they came to the country of Pamphylia. 25They told people the message of Pisidia.

The Meeting at Jerusalem

15Then some men came to Antioch from Judea. They began teaching the non-Jewish brothers: “You cannot be saved if you are not circumcised.* Moses taught us to do this.” 2Paul and Barnabas were against this teaching. They argued with these men about it. So the group decided to send Paul, Barnabas, and some other men to Jerusalem. These men were going there to talk more about this with the apostles* and elders.* 3The church helped the men leave on the trip. These men went through the countries of Phoenicia and Samaria. In these countries they told all about how the non-Jewish people had turned to the true God. This made all the brothers very happy. 4Paul, Barnabas, and the others arrived in Jerusalem. The apostles,* the elders,* and the whole group of believers welcomed them. Paul, Barnabas, and the others told about all the things that God had done with them. 5Some of the believers in Jerusalem had belonged to the Pharisees.* They stood up and said, “The non-Jewish believers must be circumcised.* We must tell them to obey the law of Moses!” 6Then the apostles* and the elders* gathered to study this problem. 7There was a long debate. Then Peter stood up and said to them, “My brothers, I know that you remember what happened in the early days. God chose me then from among you to tell the Good News* to the non-Jewish people. They heard the Good News from me and they believed. 8God knows the thoughts of all men, and he accepted these non-Jewish people. God showed this to us by giving them the Holy Spirit* the same as he did to us. 9To God, those people are not different from us. When they believed, God made their hearts pure. 10So now, why are you putting a heavy burden* around the necks of the non-Jewish brothers? Are you trying to make God angry? We and our fathers* were not able to

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement that God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.
apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
burden The Jewish law. Some of the Jews tried to make the non-Jewish believers follow this law.
father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “oversseers” and “pastors” (“shepherds”), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.
fasted To fast is to live without food for a time of prayer or mourning.
Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
carried that burden! 11No, we believe that we and these people will be saved by the grace (kindness) of the Lord Jesus!”

12Then the whole group became quiet. They listened to Paul and Barnabas speak. Paul and Barnabas told about all the miracles and wonders* that God did through them among the non-Jewish people. 13Paul and Barnabas finished speaking. Then James spoke. He said, “My brothers, listen to me. 14Simon (Peter) has told us how God showed his love for the non-Jewish people. For the first time, God accepted the non-Jewish people and made them his people. 15The words of the prophets* agree with this too:

16 ‘I (God) will return after this. I will build David’s* house again. It has fallen down. I will build again the parts of his house that have been pulled down. I will make his house new.

17 Then all other people will look for the Lord (God)—all the non-Jewish people that are my people too. The Lord (God) said this. And he is the One who does all these things.’ Amos 9:11–12

18 These things have been known from the beginning of time.‘

19“So I think we should not bother the non-Jewish brothers who have turned to God. Instead, we should write a letter to them. We should tell them these things:

Don’t eat food that has been given to idols.* (This makes the food unclean.)
Don’t do any kind of sexual sin.
Don’t eat meat from animals that have been strangled (choked) or any meat that still has the blood in it.

20They should not do these things, because there are still men (Jews) in every city who teach the law of Moses. The words of Moses have been read in the synagogue* every Sabbath day* for many years.”

The Letter to the Non-Jewish Believers

22The apostles,* the elders,* and the whole church (group of believers) wanted to send some men with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. The group decided to choose some of their own men. They chose Judas (also called Barsabbas) and Silas. These men were respected by the brothers in Jerusalem. 23The group sent the letter with these men. The letter said:

From the apostles* and elders,* your brothers.

To all the non-Jewish brothers in the city of Antioch and in the countries of Syria and Cilicia:

Dear Brothers:

24We have heard that some men have come to you from our group. The things they said troubled and upset you. But we did not tell them to do this! 25We have all agreed to choose some men and send them to you. They will be with our dear friends, Barnabas and Paul. 26Barnabas and Paul have given their lives to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. 27So we have sent Judas and Silas with them. They will tell you the same things. 28The Holy Spirit* thinks that you should have no more burdens, and we agree. You need to do only these things:

29 Don’t eat food that has been given to idols.* Don’t eat meat from animals that have been strangled (choked) or any meat that still has the blood in it.
Don’t do any kind of sexual sin.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.
Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.
apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “overseers” and “pastors” (“shepherds”), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.
Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

miracles and wonders Amazing works or great things done by the power of God.
prophet(s) People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.
David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.
idoles The false gods that the non-Jewish people worshiped.
If you stay away from these things, you will do well.

We say good-bye now.

30 So Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas left Jerusalem. They went to Antioch. In Antioch they gathered the group of believers and gave them the letter. 31 When the believers read it, they were happy. The letter comforted them. 32 Judas and Silas were also prophets. They said many things to help the brothers (believers) and make them stronger. 33 After Judas and Silas stayed there for a while, they left. They received a blessing of peace from the brothers in Jerusalem who had sent them. 34

35 But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch. They and many others told the Good News* and taught the people the message* of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas Separate

36 A few days later, Paul said to Barnabas, “We told the message* of the Lord in many towns. We should go back to all those towns to visit the brothers and sisters and see how they are doing.” 37 Barnabas wanted to bring John Mark with them too. 38 But on their first trip John Mark had left them at Pamphylia; he did not continue with them in the work. So Paul did not think it was a good idea to take him. 39 Paul and Barnabas had a big argument about this. They separated and went different ways. Barnabas sailed to Cyprus and took Mark with him. 40 Paul chose Silas to go with him. The brothers* in Antioch* put Paul into the Lord’s care and sent him out. 41 Paul and Silas went through the countries of Syria and Cilicia, helping the churches* grow stronger.

Timothy Goes with Paul and Silas

16 Paul went to the cities of Derbe and Lystra. A follower* of Christ named Timothy was there. Timothy’s mother was a Jewish believer. His father was a Greek (not a Jew). 2 The believers in the cities of Lystra and Iconium respected Timothy. They said good things about him. 3 Paul wanted Timothy to travel with him. But all the Jews living in that area knew that Timothy’s father was Greek (not Jewish). So Paul circumcised* Timothy to please the Jews. 4 Then Paul and the men with him traveled through other cities.* They gave the believers the rules and decisions from the apostles* and elders* in Jerusalem. They told the believers to obey these rules. 5 So the churches (groups of believers) were becoming stronger in the faith and were growing bigger every day.

Paul Is Called to Macedonia

6 Paul and the men with him went through the countries of Phrygia and Galatia. The Holy Spirit* did not allow them to tell the Good News* in the country of Asia.* 7 Paul and Timothy went near the country of Mysia. They wanted to go into the country of Bithynia. But the Spirit of Jesus did not let them go in. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went to the city of Troas. 9 That night Paul saw a vision. In this vision, a man from the country of Macedonia came to Paul. The man stood there and begged, “Come across to Macedonia. Help us!” 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we immediately prepared to leave for Macedonia. We understood that God had called us to tell the Good News* to those people.

The Conversion of Lydia

11 We left Troas in a ship, and we sailed to the island of Samothrace. The next day we sailed to the city of Neapolis. 12 Then we went

prophet(s) People that spoke for God.
Verse 34 Some Greek copies of Acts add verse 34: “... but Silas decided to remain there.”
Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
churches Groups of believers in the towns where Paul and Barnabas went before.
circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement that God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.
cities The cities where there were groups of believers.
apostles The men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “overseers” and “pastors” (“shepherds”), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.
Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
Asia The western part of modern Turkey.
vision(s) Something like dreams used by God to speak to people.
16 One time something happened to us while we were going to the place for prayer. A servant girl met us. She had a special spirit in her. This spirit gave her the power to tell what would happen in the future. By doing this she earned a lot of money for the men who owned her. 17 This girl followed Paul and us. She said loudly, “These men are servants of the Most High God! They are telling you how you can be saved!” 18 She continued doing this for many days. This bothered Paul, so he turned and said to the spirit, “By the power of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!” Immediately, the spirit came out.

19 The men that owned the servant girl saw this. These men knew that now they could not use her to make money. So they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them into the meeting place of the city. The city officials were there. 20 The men brought Paul and Silas to the leaders and said, “These men are Jews. They are making trouble in our city. 21 They are telling the people to do things that are not right for us. We are Roman citizens and cannot do these things.” 22 The people were against Paul and Silas. Then the leaders tore the clothes of Paul and Silas and told some men to beat Paul and Silas with rods. 23 The men beat Paul and Silas many times. Then the leaders put Paul and Silas in jail. The leaders told the jailer, “Guard them very carefully!” 24 The jailer heard this special order. So he put Paul and Silas far inside the jail. He tied their feet between large blocks of wood.

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing songs to God. The other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly, there was a big earthquake. It was so strong that it shook the foundation of the jail. Then all the doors of the jail opened. All the prisoners were freed from their chains. 27 The jailer woke up. He saw that the jail doors were open. He thought that the prisoners had already escaped. So the jailer got his sword and was ready to kill himself. 28 But Paul shouted, “Don’t hurt yourself! We are all here!” 29 The jailer told someone to bring a light. Then he ran inside. He was shaking. He fell down in front of Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them outside and said, “Men, what must I do to be saved?” 31 They said to him, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved—you and all these people from your house.” 32 So Paul and Silas told the message of the Lord to the jailer and all the people that lived in his house. 33 It was late at night, but the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. Then the jailer and all his people were baptized. 34 After this the jailer took Paul and Silas home and gave them some food. All the people were very happy because they now believed in God.

35 The next morning, the leaders sent some soldiers to tell the jailer, “Let these men (Paul and Silas) go free!” 36 The jailer said to Paul, “The leaders have sent these soldiers to let you go free. You can leave now. Go in peace.” 37 But Paul said to the soldiers, “Your leaders did not prove that we did wrong. But they beat

Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

spirit A spirit from the devil that gave special knowledge.

kill himself He thought the leaders would kill him for letting the prisoners escape.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
us in front of the people and put us in jail. We are Roman citizens, so we have rights. Now the leaders want to make us go quietly. No! The leaders must come and bring us out!" 

38 The soldiers told the leaders what Paul said. When the leaders heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were afraid. 39 So they came and told Paul and Silas they were sorry. They took Paul and Silas out of jail and asked them to leave the city. 40 But when Paul and Silas came out of the jail, they went to Lydia’s house. They saw some of the believers there and comforted them. Then Paul and Silas left.

Paul and Silas in Thessalonica

17 Paul and Silas traveled through the cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia. They came to the city of Thessalonica. In that city there was a Jewish synagogue. 2 Paul went into this synagogue to see the Jews. This is what he always did. Every Sabbath day for three weeks Paul talked with the Jews about the Scriptures. 3 Paul explained these Scriptures to the Jews. He showed that the Christ must die and then rise from death. Paul said “This man Jesus that I am telling you about is the Christ.” 4 Some of the Jews there believed Paul and Silas and decided to join them. Also, there were some Greek men who worshiped the true God and some important women. A large group of the men and many of the women joined Paul and Silas.

5 But the Jews that did not believe became jealous. They hired some bad men from the city. These bad men gathered many people and made trouble in the city. They went to Jason’s house, looking for Paul and Silas. They wanted to bring Paul and Silas out before the people. 6 But they did not find Paul and Silas. So the people dragged Jason and some of the other believers to the leaders of the city. The people yelled, “These men (Paul and Silas) have made trouble everywhere in the world. And now they have come here too! Jason is keeping them in his house. They all do things against the laws of Caesar. They say there is another king called Jesus.”

8 The leaders of the city and the other people heard these things. They became very upset. 9 They made Jason and the other believers pay a fine. Then they let the believers go free.

Paul and Silas Go to Berea

10 That same night the believers sent Paul and Silas to another city named Berea. In Berea, Paul and Silas went to the Jewish synagogue. 11 These Jews were better people than the Jews in Thessalonica. These Jews were very happy to listen to the things Paul and Silas said. These Jews in Berea studied the Scriptures every day. They wanted to know if these things were true. 12 Many of these Jews believed. Many important Greek men and Greek women also believed. 13 But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was telling the word of God in Berea, they came to Berea too. The Jews from Thessalonica upset the people in Berea and made trouble. 14 So the believers sent Paul away quickly to the sea. But Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea. 15 The believers that went with Paul took him to the city of Athens. These brothers carried a message from Paul back to Silas and Timothy. The message said, “Come to me as soon as you can.”

Paul in Athens

16 Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens. Paul was upset because he saw that the city was full of idols. In the synagogue, Paul talked with the Jews and the Greeks who worshiped the true God. Paul also talked with some people in the business area of the city. Paul did this every day. Some of the Epicurean and some of the Stoic philosophers argued with him.

Some of them said, “This man doesn’t really know what he is talking about. What is he

Roman citizens Roman law said that Roman citizens must not be beaten before their trial.
synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.
Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.
Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.
idols The false gods that the non-Jewish people worshiped.
philosophers People who study and talk about their own ideas and the ideas and teachings of other people.
trying to say?” Paul was telling them the Good News about Jesus’ rising from death. So they said, “He seems to be telling us about some other gods.” They got Paul and took him to a meeting of the Areopagus council. They said, “Please explain to us this new idea that you have been teaching. The things that you are saying are new to us. We have never heard these things before. We want to know what this teaching means.” (All the people of Athens and the people from other countries who lived there always used their time talking about all the newest ideas.)

Then Paul stood before the meeting of the Areopagus council. Paul said, “Men of Athens, I can see that you are very religious in all things. I was going through your city and I saw the things you worship. I found an altar that had these words written on it: ‘TO THE GOD WHO IS NOT KNOWN.’ You worship a god that you don’t know. This is the God I am telling you about! He is the God who made the whole world and everything in it. He is the Lord (Ruler) of the land and the sky. He does not live in temples that men build! This God is the One who gives life, breath, and everything else to people. He does not need any help from people. God has everything he needs. God began by making one man (Adam). From him God made all the different people. God made them to live everywhere in the world. God decided exactly when and where they must live. God wanted the people to look for him. Maybe they could search all around for him and find him. But he is not far from any of us:

28 ‘We live with him.
   We walk with him.
   We are with him.’

Some of your own writers have said:

‘For we are his children.’

That’s right. We are God’s children. So, you must not think that God is like something that people imagine or make. He is not made of gold, silver, or rock. In the past, people did not understand God, and God overlooked this. But now God tells everyone in the world to change and turn to him. God has decided a day when he will judge all the people in the world. He will be fair. He will use a man (Jesus) to do this. God chose this man long ago. And God has proved this to every person. He proved it by raising that man from death!”

When the people heard about Jesus being raised from death, some of them laughed. The people said, “We will hear more about this from you later.” Paul went away from them. But some of the people believed Paul and joined him. One of the people that believed was Dionysius. He was a member of the Areopagus council. Another person who believed was a woman named Damaris. There were also some other people that believed.

Paul in Corinth

Later, Paul left Athens and went to the city of Corinth. In Corinth Paul met a Jewish man named Aquila. Aquila was born in the country of Pontus. But Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, had recently moved from Italy to Corinth. Paul went to visit Aquila and Priscilla. They were tentmakers, the same as Paul. So Paul stayed with them and worked with them. Every Sabbath day Paul talked with the Jews and Greeks in the synagogue. Paul tried to persuade these people to believe in Jesus.

Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia to Paul in Corinth. After this, Paul used all his time telling people the Good News. He showed the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. But the Jews there would not accept Paul’s teaching. They said some very bad things. So Paul shook off the dust from his clothes.

Claudius The emperor (ruler) of Rome, 41–54 A.D.
Sabbath day Saturday, a special day for Jews to rest and honor God.
synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.
Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
shook off the dust from his clothes This was a warning. It showed that Paul was finished talking to these Jews.
said to the Jews, “If you are not saved, it will be your own fault! I have done all I can do! After this, I will go only to non-Jewish people!”

7Paul left the synagogue* and moved into the home of Titius Justus. This man worshiped the true God. His house was next to the synagogue. 8Crispus was the leader of that synagogue. Crispus and all the people living in his house believed in the Lord (Jesus). Many other people in Corinth also listened to Paul. They too believed and were baptized.*

9During the night, Paul had a vision.* The Lord said to him, “Don’t be afraid! Continue talking to people and don’t stop! I am with you. No one will be able to hurt you. Many of my people are in this city.”

10Paul stayed there for a year and a half, teaching God’s truth to the people.

Paul Is Brought Before Gallio

11Gallio became the governor of the country of Achaia. At that time, some of the Jews came together against Paul. They took Paul to the court. 12The Jews said to Gallio, “This man is teaching people to worship God in a way that is against our Jewish law!”

13Paul was ready to say something, but Gallio spoke to the Jews. Gallio said, “I would listen to you Jews if you were complaining about a bad crime or some wrong. But the things you Jews are saying are only questions about words and names—arguments about your own Jewish law. So you must solve this problem yourselves. I don’t want to be a judge of these things!”

14Then Gallio made them leave the court.

15Then they all grabbed Sosthenes. (Sosthenes was the leader of the synagogue.*) They beat Sosthenes before the court. But this did not bother Gallio.

Paul Returns to Antioch

16Paul stayed with the brothers (believers) for many days. Then he left and sailed for Syria. Priscilla and Aquila were also with him. At Cenchrea, Paul cut off his hair.* This showed that he had made a promise (vow) to God. 17Then they went to the city of Ephesus. This is where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. While Paul was in Ephesus, he went into the synagogue* and talked with the Jews. 18Then the Jews asked Paul to stay longer, but he refused. 19Paul left them and said, “I will come back to you again if God wants me to.” And so Paul sailed away from Ephesus.

20Paul went to the city of Caesarea. Then he went and said hello to the church (group of believers) in Jerusalem. After that, Paul went to the city of Antioch. 21Paul stayed in Antioch for a while. Then he left Antioch and went through the countries of Galatia and Phrygia. Paul traveled from town to town in these countries. He made all the followers of Jesus stronger.
very strongly against the Jews before all the people. Apollos clearly proved that the Jews were wrong. He used the Scriptures and showed that Jesus is the Christ.*

Paul in Ephesus

While Apollos was in the city of Corinth, Paul was visiting some places on the way to the city of Ephesus. In Ephesus Paul found some followers [of the Lord]. 2Paul asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit* when you believed?”

These followers said to him, “We have never even heard of a Holy Spirit!”

3So Paul asked them, “What kind of baptism* did you have?”

They said, “It was the baptism that John* taught.”

4Paul said, “John told people to be baptized* to show they wanted to change their lives. John told people to believe in the One who would come after him. That person is Jesus.”

5When these followers heard this, they were baptized* in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6Then Paul put his hands on them* and the Holy Spirit* came into them. They began speaking different languages and prophesying.* 7There were about twelve men in this group.

8Paul went into the synagogue* and spoke very boldly. Paul continued doing this for three months. He talked with the Jews and persuaded them to accept the things he said about the kingdom of God. 9But some of the Jews became stubborn. They refused to believe. These Jews said some very bad things about the Way* of Jesus. All the people heard these things. So Paul left those Jews and took the followers [of Jesus] with him. Paul went to a place where a man named Tyrannus had a school. There Paul talked with people every day. 10Paul did this for two years. Because of this work, every Jew and Greek (non-Jew) in the country of Asia* heard the word of the Lord.

The Sons of Sceva

11God used Paul to do some very special miracles.* 12Some people carried away handkerchiefs and clothes that Paul had used. The people put these things on sick people. When they did this, the sick people were healed, and evil spirits* from the devil left them.

13–14Some Jews also were traveling around and making evil spirits go out of people. The seven sons of Sceva were doing this. (Sceva was a high priest.*) These Jews tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus to make the evil spirits go out of people. They all said, “By the same Jesus that Paul talks about, I order you to come out!”

15But one time an evil spirit said to these Jews, “I know Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?”

16Then the man, who had the evil spirit* from the devil, inside him, jumped on these Jews. He was much stronger than all of them. He beat them up and tore their clothes off. These Jews ran away from that house. 17All the people in Ephesus, Jews and Greeks (non-Jews), learned about this. They all began to have great respect* for God. And the people gave great honor to the name of the Lord Jesus. 18Many of the believers began to confess and tell all the bad things they had done. 19Some of the believers had used magic. These believers brought their magic books and burned them before everyone. Those books were worth about 50,000 silver coins.* 20This is how the word of the Lord was influencing more and more people in a powerful way. And more and more people believed.

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Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
baptism, baptized Greek words meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.
John John the Baptist, the man that told people about Christ’s coming. Read Mt. 3; Lk. 3.
put his hands on them Here, doing this was a sign to show that Paul had God’s authority or power to give these people special powers of the Holy Spirit.
prophesying Speaking or teaching things from God.
synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.
Asia The western part of modern Turkey.
miracle(s) Miracles are amazing works done by God’s power.
high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.
silver coins Probably drachmas. One coin was enough to pay a man for working one day.
Paul Plans a Trip

21After these things, Paul made plans to go to Jerusalem. Paul planned to go through the countries of Macedonia and Achaia, and then go to Jerusalem. Paul thought, “After I visit Jerusalem, I must also visit Rome.” 22Timothy and Erastus were two of Paul’s helpers. Paul sent them ahead to the country of Macedonia. Paul stayed in Asia* for a while.

Trouble in Ephesus

23But during that time, there was some bad trouble in Ephesus. This trouble was about the Way {of Jesus}. This is how it all happened:
24There was a man named Demetrius. He worked with silver. He made little silver models that looked like the temple* of the goddess Artemis. The men that did this work made much money. 25Demetrius had a meeting with these men and some other men who did the same kind of work. Demetrius told them, “Men, you know that we make much money from our business. 26But look at what this man Paul is doing! Listen to what he is saying! Paul has influenced and changed many people. He has done this in Ephesus and all over the country of Asia.* Paul says the gods that men make are not real. 27These things that Paul says might turn the people against our work. But there is also another problem: People will begin to think that the temple of the great goddess Artemis is not important! Her greatness will be destroyed. Artemis is the goddess that everyone in Asia and the whole world worships.”
28When the men heard this, they became very angry. They shouted, “Artemis, the goddess of the city of Ephesus, is great!” 29All the people in the city became upset. The people grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus. (These two men were from Macedonia and were traveling with Paul.) Then all the people ran to the stadium. 30Paul wanted to go in and talk to the people, but the followers of Jesus* did not let him go. 31Also, some leaders of the country were friends of Paul. These leaders sent him a message. They told Paul not to go into the stadium. 32Some people were yelling one thing and other people were yelling other things. The meeting was very confused. Most of the people did not know why they had come there. 33The Jews made a man named Alexander stand before the people. The people told him what to do. Alexander waved his hand because he wanted to explain things to the people. 34But when the people saw that Alexander was a Jew, they all began shouting the same thing. They continued shouting for two hours. The people said, “Great is Artemis of Ephesus! Great is Artemis of Ephesus! Great is Artemis …!”
35Then the city clerk persuaded the people to be quiet. He said, “Men of Ephesus, all people know that Ephesus is the city that keeps the temple* of the great goddess Artemis. All people know that we also keep her holy rock. 36No person can say that this is not true. So you should be quiet. You must stop and think before you do anything. 37You brought these men,* but they have not said anything bad against our goddess. They have not stolen anything from her temple. 38We have courts of law and there are judges. Do Demetrius and those men that work with him have a charge against anyone? They should go to the courts! That is where they can argue with each other! 39Is there something else you want to talk about? Then come to the regular town meeting of the people. It can be decided there. 40I say this because some person might see this trouble today and say that we are rioting (making trouble). We could not explain all this trouble, because there is no real reason for this meeting.”
41After the city clerk said these things, he told the people to go home. And all the people left.

Paul Goes to Macedonia and Greece

20When the trouble stopped, Paul invited the followers of Jesus* to come visit him. He said things to comfort them and then told them good-bye. Paul left and went to the country of Macedonia. 2He said many things
to strengthen the followers of Jesus in the different places on his way through Macedonia. Then Paul went to Greece (Achaia). 3 He stayed there three months. He was ready to sail for Syria, but some Jews were planning something against him. So Paul decided to go back through Macedonia to Syria. 4 Some men were with him. They were: Sopater, the son of Pyrrhus, from the city of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus, from the city of Thessalonica, Gaius, from the city of Derbe, Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus, two men from Asia.* 5 These men went first, ahead of Paul. They waited for us in the city of Troas. 6 We sailed from the city of Philippi after the Jewish Festival of Unleavened Bread.* 7 We met these men in Troas five days later. We stayed there seven days.

Paul’s Last Visit to Troas

7 On Sunday,* we all met together to eat the Lord’s Supper,* Paul talked to the group. He was planning to leave the next day. Paul continued talking until midnight. 8 We were all together in a room upstairs, and there were many lights in the room. 9 There was a young man named Eutychus sitting in the window. Paul continued talking, and Eutychus became very, very sleepy. Finally, Eutychus went to sleep and fell out of the window. He fell to the ground from the third floor. When the people went and lifted him up, he was dead. 10 Paul went down to Eutychus. He kneeled down and hugged Eutychus. Paul said to the other believers, “Don’t worry. He is alive now.” 11 Paul went upstairs again. He divided the bread and ate. Paul spoke to them a long time. When he finished talking, it was early morning. Then Paul left. 12 The people took the young man (Eutychus) home. He was alive, and the people were very much comforted.

The Trip from Troas to Miletus

13 We sailed for the city of Assos. We went first, ahead of Paul. He planned to meet us in Assos and join us on the ship there. Paul told us to do this because he wanted to go to Assos by land. 14 Later, we met Paul at Assos, and then he came on the ship with us. We all went to the city of Mitylene. 15 The next day, we sailed away from Mitylene. We came to a place near the island of Chios. Then the next day, we sailed to the island of Samos. A day later, we came to the city of Miletus. 16 Paul had already decided not to stop at Ephesus. He did not want to stay too long in Asia.* He was hurrying because he wanted to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost* if possible.

Paul Speaks to the Elders from Ephesus

17 In Miletus Paul sent a message back to Ephesus. Paul invited the elders* (leaders) of the church in Ephesus to come to him. 18 When the elders came, Paul said to them, “You know about my life from the first day I came to Asia.* You know the way I lived all the time I was with you. 19 The Jews planned things against me, and this gave me much trouble. But you know that I always served the Lord, sometimes with tears. I never thought about myself first. 20 I always did what was best for you. I told you the Good News* about Jesus in public before the people and also taught in your homes. 21 I told all people—Jewish people and Greek (non-Jewish) people—to change their hearts and turn to God. I told them all to believe in our Lord Jesus. 22 But now I must obey the Holy Spirit* and go to Jerusalem. I don’t know what will happen to me there. 23 I know only that in every city the Holy Spirit

Asia The western part of modern Turkey.
Festival of Unleavened Bread An important Jewish holiday week. In the Old Testament it began the day after Passover, but by this time the two holidays had become one.
Sunday Literally, “first day of the week,” which for the Jews began at sunset on Saturday. But if Luke is using Greek time here, then the meeting was Sunday night.
to eat the Lord’s Supper Literally, “to break bread.” This may mean a meal or the Lord’s Supper, the special meal Jesus told his followers to eat to remember him. Read Lk. 22:14–20.

Pentecost Jewish festival celebrating the wheat harvest.
elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “overseers” and “pastors” (“shepherds”), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.
Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
tells me that troubles and even jail wait for me in Jerusalem. 24 I don’t care about my own life. The most important thing is that I finish my work. I want to finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do—to tell people the Good News about God’s grace (kindness).

25 “And now listen to me. I know that none of you will ever see me again. All the time I was with you, I told you the Good News* about the kingdom of God. 26 So today I can tell you one thing that I am sure of: God will not blame me if some of you are not saved! 27 I can say this because I told you everything that God wants you to know. 28 Be careful for yourselves and for all the people that God has given you. The Holy Spirit* gave you the work of caring for this flock.* You must be like shepherds to the church (people) of God.* This is the church that God bought with his own blood. 29 I know that after I leave, some men will come into your group. They will be like wild wolves. They will try to destroy the flock. 30 Also, men from your own group will become bad leaders. They will begin to teach things that are wrong. They will lead some followers of Jesus away from the truth. 31 So be careful! Always remember this: I was with you for three years. During this time, I never stopped warning you. I taught you night and day. I often cried for you.

32 “Now I am giving you to God. I am depending on the message* about God’s grace (kindness) to make you strong. That message is able to give you the blessings that God gives to all his holy people.* 33 When I was with you, I never wanted anyone’s money or fine clothes. 34 You know that I always worked to take care of my own needs and the needs of the people that were with me. 35 I always showed you that you should work like I did and help people that are weak. I taught you to remember the words of the Lord Jesus. Jesus said, ‘You will be happier when you give than when you receive.’”

36 When Paul finished saying these things, he knelt down and they all prayed together. 37–38 They all cried and cried. The men were very sad because Paul had said that they would never see him again. They hugged Paul and kissed him. They went with him to the ship to say good-bye.

Paul Goes to Jerusalem

21 We all said good-bye to the elders.* Then we sailed away. We sailed straight to Cos island. The next day, we went to the island of Rhodes. From Rhodes we went to Patara. 2 At Patara we found a ship that was going to the area of Phoenicia. We went on the ship and sailed away. 3 We sailed near the island of Cyprus. We could see it on the north side, but we did not stop. We sailed to the country of Syria. We stopped at the city of Tyre because the ship needed to unload its cargo there. 4 We found some followers of Jesus in Tyre, and we stayed with them for seven days. They warned Paul not to go to Jerusalem because of what the Holy Spirit* had told them. 5 But when we finished our visit, we left. We continued our trip. All the followers of Jesus, even the women and children, came outside the city with us to say good-bye. We all kneeled down on the beach and prayed. 6 Then we said good-bye and got on the ship. The followers went home.

7 We continued our trip from Tyre and went to the city of Ptolemais. We greeted the brothers (believers) there and stayed with them one day. 8 The next day we left Ptolemais and went to the city of Caesarea. We went into the home of Philip and stayed with him. Philip had the work of telling the Good News.* He was one of the seven helpers.* 9 He had four daughters who were not married. These

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

flock A flock is many sheep. Here, it means a group of God’s people who follow their leaders (elders) like sheep follow a shepherd.

of God Some Greek copies say, “of the Lord.”

his own blood Or, “the blood of his own son.”

holy people God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “overseers” and “pastors” (“shepherds”), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.

seven helpers Men chosen for a special work. Read Acts 6:1-6.
daughters had the gift of prophesying.* 10 After we had been there for many days, a prophet* named Agabus came from Judea. 11 He came to us and borrowed Paul’s belt. Then Agabus used the belt to tie his own hands and feet. Agabus said, “The Holy Spirit* tells me, ‘This is how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up the man that wears this belt.’ Then they will give him to the people that don’t know God.’”

12 We all heard these words. So we and the other followers* of Jesus there begged (asked) Paul not to go to Jerusalem. 13 But Paul said, “Why are you crying? Why are you making me so sad? I am ready to be tied in Jerusalem. I am also ready to die for the name of the Lord Jesus!”

14 We could not persuade him to stay away from Jerusalem. So we stopped begging him and said, “We pray that what the Lord wants will be done.”

15 After this, we got ready and left for Jerusalem. 16 Some of the followers* of Jesus from Caesarea went with us. These followers took us to the home of Mnason, a man from Cyprus. Mnason was one of the first people to be a follower* of Jesus. They took us to his home so that we could stay with him.

Paul Visits James

17 In Jerusalem the believers were very happy to see us. 18 The next day, Paul went with us to visit James. All the elders* (church leaders) were there too. 19 Paul greeted all of them. Then he told them about how God used him to do many things among the non-Jewish people. He told them all the things that God did through him. 20 When the leaders heard these things, they praised God. Then they said to Paul, “Brother, you can see that thousands of Jews have become believers. But they think it is very important to obey the law of Moses. 21 These Jews have heard about your teaching. They heard that you tell the Jews who live in other countries among non-Jews to leave the law of Moses. They heard that you tell those Jews not to circumcise* their children and not to obey Jewish customs. 22 What should we do? The Jewish believers here will learn that you have come. 23 So we will tell you what to do: Four of our men have made a vow* (promise) to God. 24 Take these men with you and share in their cleansing (washing) ceremony.* Pay their expenses. Then they can shave their heads.* Do this and it will prove to everyone that the things they have heard about you are not true. They will see that you obey the law of Moses in your own life. 25 We have already sent a letter to the non-Jewish believers. The letter said:

Don’t eat food that has been given to idols.*
Don’t eat meat from animals that have been strangled (choked) or any meat that still has the blood in it.
Don’t do any kind of sexual sin.”

Paul Is Arrested

26 So Paul took the four men with him. The next day, Paul shared in their cleansing (washing) ceremony.* Then he went to the temple* area. He announced the time when the days of the cleansing ceremony would be finished. On the last day an offering would be given for each of the men.

27 The seven days were almost finished. But some Jews from Asia* saw Paul in the temple* area. They caused all the people to be upset, and they grabbed Paul. 28 They shouted, “You Jewish men, help us! This is the man who is teaching things that are against the law of Moses, against our people, and against this place (the temple).
This man is teaching these things to all people everywhere. And now he has brought some Greek (non-Jewish) men into the temple yard! He has made this holy place unclean!” 29(The Jews said this because they had seen Trophimus with Paul in Jerusalem. Trophimus was a Greek man from Ephesus. The Jews thought that Paul had taken him into the holy area of the temple.)

30All the people in Jerusalem became very upset. They all ran and grabbed Paul. They dragged him out of the holy area of the temple. The temple gates were closed immediately.

31The people were trying to kill Paul. The commander of the Roman army in Jerusalem learned that there was trouble in the whole city. 32Immediately the commander went to the place where the people were. He brought some army officers and soldiers with him. The people saw the commander and his soldiers. So they stopped beating Paul. 33The commander went to Paul and arrested him. The commander told his soldiers to tie Paul with two chains. Then the commander asked, “Who is this man? What has he done wrong?” 34Some people there were yelling one thing and other people were yelling other things. Because of all this confusion and shouting, the commander could not learn the truth about what had happened. So the commander told the soldiers to take Paul to the army building.

35–36All the people were following them. When the soldiers came to the steps, they had to carry Paul. They did this to protect Paul, because the people were ready to hurt him. The people shouted, “Kill him!” 37The soldiers were ready to take Paul into the army building. But Paul spoke to the commander. Paul asked, “Do I have the right to say something to you?”

The commander said, “Oh, you speak Greek? Then you are not the man I thought you were? I thought you were the Egyptian man who started some trouble against the government not long ago. That Egyptian man led 4,000 killers out to the desert.”

39Paul said, “No, I am a Jewish man from Tarsus. Tarsus is in the country of Cilicia. I am a citizen of that important city. Please, let me speak to the people.”

40The commander let Paul speak to the people. So Paul stood on the steps. He waved his hand so that the people would be quiet. The people became quiet and Paul spoke to them. He used the Jewish language.

Paul Speaks to the People

22Paul said, “My brothers and my fathers, listen to me! I will make my defense to you.” 2The Jews heard Paul speaking the Jewish language. So they became very quiet. Paul said, 3“I am a Jew. I was born in Tarsus in the country of Cilicia. I grew up in this city (Jerusalem). I was a student of Gamaliel.* He carefully taught me everything about the law of our fathers.* I was very serious about serving God, the same as all of you here today. I persecuted the people that followed the Way of Jesus.* Some of them were killed because of me. I arrested men and women. I put them in jail. The high priest* and the whole council of older Jewish leaders can tell you that this is true! One time these leaders gave me some letters. The letters were to the Jewish brothers in the city of Damascus. I was going there to arrest the followers of Jesus and bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.

Paul Tells About His Conversion

6“But something happened to me on my way to Damascus. It was about noon when I came close to Damascus. Suddenly a bright light from the sky shined all around me. I fell to the ground. I heard a voice saying to me: ‘Saul, Saul, why are you doing these bad things to me?’ I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The voice said, ‘I am Jesus from Nazareth. I am the One you are persecuting.’ The men who were with me did not understand the voice. But they saw the light. 10I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ The

Jewish language Hebrew or Aramaic, a language like Hebrew that was spoken by many Jews in the first century.

Gamaliel A very important teacher of the Pharisees, a Jewish religious group. See Acts 5:34.

father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews.

persecute(d) To persecute is to hurt or do bad things to.

high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.
Lord (Jesus) answered, ‘Get up and go into Damascus. There you will be told all the things I have planned for you to do.’ 11I could not see, because the bright light had made me blind. So the men led me into Damascus.

12“In Damascus a man named Ananias* came to me. Ananias was a man that truly worshiped God; he obeyed the law of Moses. All the Jews who lived there respected him. 13Ananias came to me and said, ‘Saul, my brother, you can see again!’ Immediately I was able to see him. 14Ananias told me, ‘The God of our fathers chose you long ago. God chose you to know his plan. He chose you to see the Righteous One (Jesus) and to hear words from him. 15You will be his witness to all people. You will tell men about the things you have seen and heard. 16Now, don’t wait any longer. Get up, be baptized* and wash your sins away. Do this, trusting in him (Jesus) to save you.’

17“Later, I came back to Jerusalem. I was praying in the temple yard, and I saw a vision.* 18I saw Jesus, and Jesus said to me: ‘Hurry! Leave Jerusalem now! The people here will not accept the truth about me.’ 19I said, ‘But Lord, the people know that I was the one who put the believers in jail and beat them. I went through all the synagogues* to find and arrest the people who believe in you. 20The people also know that I was there when Stephen, your witness, was killed. I stood there and agreed that they should kill Stephen. I even held the coats of the men who were killing him!’ 21But Jesus said to me, ‘Leave now. I will send you far away to the non-Jewish people.”

22The people stopped listening when Paul said this last thing about going to the non-Jewish people. They all shouted, “Kill him! Get him out of the world! A man like this should not be allowed to live!” 23They yelled and threw off their coats. They threw dust into the air.* 24Then the commander told the soldiers to take Paul into the army building. He told the soldiers to beat Paul. He wanted to make Paul tell why the people were shouting against him like this. 25So the soldiers were tying Paul, preparing to beat him. But Paul said to an army officer* there, “Do you have the right to beat a Roman citizen* who has not been proven guilty?”

26When the officer heard this, he went to the commander and told him about it. The officer said, “Do you know what you are doing? This man (Paul) is a Roman citizen!”

27The commander came to Paul and said, “Tell me, are you really a Roman citizen?” Paul answered, “Yes.”

28The commander said, “I paid much money to become a Roman citizen.”

29The men who were preparing to question Paul moved away from him immediately. The commander was afraid because he had already tied Paul, and Paul was a Roman citizen.*

Paul Speaks to the Jewish Leaders

30The next day the commander decided to learn why the Jews were speaking against Paul. So he commanded the leading priests and the Jewish council to meet together. The commander took Paul’s chains off. Then he brought Paul out and stood Paul before their meeting.

23 Paul looked at the Jewish council meeting and said, “Brothers, I have lived my life in a good way before God. I have always done what I thought was right.” 2Ananias,* the high priest,* was there. Ananias heard Paul and told the men who were standing near Paul to hit him on his mouth. 3Paul said to Ananias, “God will hit you too! You are like a dirty wall that has been painted

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Ananias In Acts there are three men with this name. See Acts 5:1 and 23:2 for the other two.
father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews.
baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.
temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
vision(s) Something like dreams used by God to speak to people.
synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

throw off their coats This showed that the Jews were very angry at Paul.
throw dust into the air A sign of very strong anger.
army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.
Roman citizen Roman law said that Roman citizens must not be beaten before their trial.
Ananias Not the same man named Ananias in Acts 22:12.
high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.
1302

ACTS 23:4–23

white! You sit there and judge me, using the law of Moses. But you are telling them to hit me, and that is against the law of Moses.

4The men standing near Paul said to him, "You cannot talk like that to God’s high priest. You are insulting him!"

5Paul said, "Brothers, I did not know this man was the high priest. It is written in the Scriptures, ‘You must not say bad things about a leader of your people.’"

6Some of the men in the meeting were Sadducees and some others were Pharisees. So Paul had an idea: He shouted to them, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee and my father was a Pharisee! I am on trial here because I hope (believe) that people will rise from death!"

7When Paul said this, there was a big argument between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The group was divided. (The Sadducees believe that after people die, they will not live again as an angel or as a spirit. But the Pharisees believe in both.) All these Jews began shouting louder and louder. Some of the teachers of the law, who were Pharisees, stood up and argued, "We find nothing wrong with this man! Maybe an angel or a spirit really did speak to him!"

8The argument became a fight. The commander was afraid that the Jews would tear Paul to pieces. So the commander told the soldiers to go down and take Paul away from these Jews and to put him in the army building.

9The next night the Lord Jesus came and stood by Paul. He said, "Be brave! You have told people in Jerusalem about me. You must also go to Rome to tell people there about me!"

Some Jews Plan to Kill Paul

10The next morning some of the Jews made a plan. They wanted to kill Paul. The Jews made a promise (vow) to themselves that they would not eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul. There were more than 40 Jews who made this plan. These Jews went and talked to the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders. The Jews said, "We have made a serious promise to ourselves. We promised that we will not eat or drink until we have killed Paul! So this is what we want you to do: Send a message to the commander from you and all the Jewish leaders. Tell the commander you want him to bring Paul out to you. Tell the commander that you want to ask Paul more questions. We will be waiting to kill Paul while he is on the way here."

11But Paul’s nephew heard about this plan. He went to the army building and told Paul about the plan. Then Paul called one of the army officers and said to him, "Take this young man to the commander. He has a message for him." So the army officer brought Paul’s nephew to the commander. The officer said, "The prisoner, Paul, asked me to bring this young man to you. He wants to tell you something."

12The commander led the young man to a place where they could be alone. The commander asked, "What do you want to tell me?"

13The young man said, "Some Jews have decided to ask you to bring Paul down to their council meeting tomorrow. Those Jews want you to think that they plan to ask Paul more questions. But don’t believe them! There are more than 40 Jews who are hiding and waiting to kill Paul. They have all promised (vowed) not to eat or drink until they have killed him! Now they are waiting for you to say yes."

14The commander sent the young man away. The commander told him, "Don’t tell anyone that you have told me about their plan."

Paul Is Sent to Caesarea

15Then the commander called two army officers. He said to them, "I need some men to go to Caesarea. Get 200 soldiers ready. Also, get 70 soldiers on horses and 200 men to carry spears. Be ready to leave at nine
Roman citizen: Roman law said that Roman citizens must not be beaten before their trial.
Herod: Herod I (the Great), ruler of Judea, 40 B.C. to 4 B.C.
high priest: The most important Jewish priest and leader.

1303

**ACTS 23:24–24:14**

o'clock tonight. Get some horses for Paul to ride. He must be taken to Governor Felix safely.”

The commander wrote a letter. This is what the letter said:

From Claudius Lysias.

To the Most Excellent Governor Felix:

Greetings:

The Jews had taken this man (Paul), and they planned to kill him. But I learned that he is a Roman citizen, so I went with my soldiers and saved him. I wanted to know why they were accusing him. So I brought him before their council meeting. This is what I learned: The Jews said Paul did some things that were wrong. But these charges were about their own Jewish laws. And none of these things were worthy of jail or death. I was told that some of the Jews were making a plan to kill Paul. So I send him to you. I also told those Jews to tell you the things they have against him.

The soldiers did the things they were told. The soldiers got Paul and took him to the city of Antipatris that night. The next day the soldiers on horses went with Paul to Caesarea. But the other soldiers and the spearmen went back to the army building in Jerusalem. The soldiers on horses entered Caesarea and gave the letter to the governor (Felix). Then they gave Paul to him. The governor read the letter. Then he asked Paul, “What country are you from?” The governor learned that Paul was from Cilicia. The governor said, “I will hear your case when the Jews who are against you come here too.” Then the governor gave orders for Paul to be kept in the palace. (This building had been built by Herod.* )

**Some Jews Accuse Paul**

Five days later Ananias went to the city of Caesarea. Ananias was the high priest.* Ananias also brought some of the older Jewish leaders and a lawyer named Tertullus. They went to Caesarea to make charges against Paul before the governor. Paul was called into the meeting, and Tertullus began to make his charges.

Tertullus said, “Most Excellent Felix! Our people enjoy much peace because of you, and many wrong things in our country are being made right through your wise help. We are very thankful to accept these things from you. We accept these things always and in every place. But I don’t want to take any more of your time. So I will say only a few words. Please be patient. This man (Paul) is a troublemaker. He makes trouble with the Jews everywhere in the world. He is a leader of the Nazarene group. Also, he was trying to make the temple* unclean, but we stopped him.* You can decide if all these things are true. Ask him some questions yourself.” The other Jews agreed. They said, “These things are really true!”

**Paul Defends Himself Before Felix**

The governor made a sign for Paul to speak. So Paul answered, “Governor Felix, I know that you have been a judge over this nation (Israel) for a long time. So I am happy to defend myself before you. I went to worship in Jerusalem only twelve days ago. You can learn for yourself that this is true. These Jews who are accusing me did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple.* I was not making trouble with the people. And I was not making trouble or arguing in the synagogues* or any other place in the city. These Jews cannot prove the things they are saying against me now. But I will tell you this: I worship the God of our fathers* as a follower of the Way of Jesus. The Jews say that the Way of Jesus is not the right way. But I believe everything that is taught in the law of temple. The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Verses 6–8 After “... but we stopped him,” some Greek copies add 6b–8a: “And we wanted to judge him by our own law. But the officer Lysias came and used much force to take him from us. And Lysias commanded those people that wanted to accuse him to come to you.”

synagogue(s): Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

father(s): Important ancestors of the Jews.
Moses, And I believe everything that is written in the books of the prophets. 15I have the same hope in God that these Jews have—the hope that all people, good and bad, will be raised from death. 16This is why I always try to do what I believe is right before God and men.

17“I was away from Jerusalem for many years. I went back there to bring money to my people and to give some offerings (gifts). 18I was doing this when some Jews saw me at the temple. I had finished the cleansing (washing) ceremony. I had not made any trouble; no people were gathering around me. 19But some Jews from Asia were there. They should be here, standing before you. If I have really done anything wrong, those Jews from Asia are the ones who should accuse me. They were there! 20Ask these Jews here if they found any wrong in me when I stood before the Jewish council meeting in Jerusalem. 21I did say one thing when I stood before them: I said, ‘You are judging me today because I believe that people will rise from death!’”

22Felix already understood a lot about the Way of Jesus. He stopped the trial and said, “When commander Lysias comes here, I will decide about these things.” 23Felix told the army officer to keep Paul guarded. But he told the officer to give Paul some freedom and to let Paul’s friends bring the things that Paul needed.

Paul Speaks to Felix and His Wife

24After a few days Felix came with his wife, Drusilla. She was a Jew. Felix asked for Paul to be brought to him. Felix listened to Paul talk about believing in Christ Jesus. 25But Felix became afraid when Paul spoke about things like living right, self-control, and the judgment that will come in the future. Felix said, “Go away now! When I have more time, I will call you.”

26But Felix had another reason for talking with Paul. Felix hoped that Paul would pay him a bribe. So Felix sent for Paul often and talked with him.

27But after two years, Porcius Festus became governor. So Felix was no longer governor. But Felix left Paul in prison, because Felix wanted to do something to please the Jews.

Paul Asks to See Caesar

25Festus became governor, and three days later he went from Caesarea to Jerusalem. 2The leading priests and the important Jewish leaders made charges against Paul before Festus. 3They asked Festus to do something for them; the Jews wanted Festus to send Paul back to Jerusalem. They had a plan to kill Paul on the way. 4But Festus answered, “No! Paul will be kept in Caesarea. I myself will go to Caesarea soon. 5Some of your leaders should go with me. They can accuse the man (Paul) there in Caesarea, if he has really done something wrong.”

6Festus stayed in Jerusalem another eight or ten days. Then he went back to Caesarea. The next day Festus told the soldiers to bring Paul before him. Festus was seated on the judgment seat. 7Paul came into the room. The Jews who had come from Jerusalem stood around him. The Jews said that Paul had done many wrong things. But they could not prove any of these things. 8This is what Paul said to defend himself: “I have done nothing wrong against the Jewish law, against the temple,* or against Caesar.”

9But Festus wanted to please the Jews. So he asked Paul, “Do you want to go to Jerusalem? Do you want me to judge you there on these charges?”

10Paul said, “I am standing at Caesar’s judgment seat now. This is where I should be judged! I have done nothing wrong to the Jews; you know this is true. 11If I have done something wrong, and the law says I must die, then I agree that I should die. I don’t ask to be saved from death. But if these charges are not true, then no person can give me to these Jews. No! I want Caesar to hear my case!”

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**prophet(s)** People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**cleansing ceremony** The special things Jews did to end the Nazirite vow.

**Asia** The western part of modern Turkey.

**army officer** A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

**bribe** Money to pay for Paul’s freedom.

**Caesar** The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.
12Festus talked about this with his advisers. Then he said, “You have asked to see Caesar,* so you will go to Caesar!”

Festus Asks King Agrippa About Paul
13A few days later King Agrippa* and Bernice* came to Caesarea to visit Festus.
14They stayed there many days. Festus told the king about Paul’s case. Festus said, “There is a man that Felix left in prison. These Jews wanted me to order his death. 15When I went to Jerusalem, the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders there made charges against him. These Jews wanted me to order his death. 16But I answered, ‘When a man is accused of doing something wrong, Romans don’t give the man to other people to judge. First, the man must face the people that are accusing him. And he must be allowed to defend himself against their charges.’ 17So these Jews came here to Caesarea for the trial. And I did not waste time. The next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded that the man (Paul) be brought in. 18The Jews stood up and accused him. But the Jews did not accuse him of any bad crimes. I thought they would. 19The things they said were about their own religion and about a man named Jesus. Jesus died, but Paul said that he is still alive. 20I did not know much about these things, so I did not ask questions. But I asked Paul, ‘Do you want to go to Jerusalem and be judged there?’ 21But Paul asked to be kept in Caesarea. He wants a decision from the Emperor (Caesar*). So I commanded that Paul be held until I could send him to Caesar.* 22But I don’t really know what to tell Caesar that this man has done wrong. So I have brought him before all of you—especially you, King Agrippa. I hope that you can question him and give me something to write to Caesar. 23I think it is foolish to send a prisoner without making some charges against him.”

24Festus said, “King Agrippa and all of you men gathered here with us, you see this man (Paul). All the Jewish people, here and in Jerusalem, have complained to me about him. When they complain about him, they shout that he should be killed. 25When I judged him, I found no reason to order his death. But he asked to be judged by Caesar.* So I decided to send him to Rome.* 26But I don’t really know what to tell Caesar that this man has done wrong. So I have brought him before all of you—especially you, King Agrippa. I hope that you can question him and give me something to write to Caesar. 27I think it is foolish to send a prisoner without making some charges against him.”

Paul Before King Agrippa
26Agrippa* said to Paul, “You may now speak to defend yourself.”

Then Paul raised his hand* and began to speak. 2He said, “King Agrippa, I will answer all the charges that the Jews say against me. I think it is a blessing that I can stand here before you today and do this. I am very happy to talk to you, because you know much about all the Jewish customs and the things that the Jews argue about. Please listen to me patiently.

4“All the Jews know about my whole life. They know the way I lived from the beginning in my own country and later in Jerusalem. 5These Jews have known me for a long time. If they want to, they can tell you that I was a good Pharisee.* And the Pharisees obey the laws of the Jewish religion more carefully than any other group of Jewish people. 6Now I am on trial because I hope for the promise that God made to our fathers.* 7This is the promise that all the twelve tribes (family groups) of our people hope to receive. For this hope the Jews serve God day and night. My king, the Jews have accused me because I hope for this same promise! 8Why do you people think it is impossible for God to raise people from death?
Pharisees  The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

believers  Literally, “holy ones,” a name for people that believe in Jesus.

synagogue(s)  Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

say bad things against  Literally, “blaspheme,” the same as saying they did not believe in Jesus.

Jewish language  Hebrew or Aramaic, a language like Hebrew that was spoken by many Jews in the first century.

holy  A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

Agrippa  Herod Agrippa II, great-grandson of Herod the Great.

vision(s)  Something like dreams used by God to speak to people.

temple  The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

prophet(s)  People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Christ  The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

Acts 26:9–28

9"When I was a Pharisee, even I thought I should do many things against the name of Jesus from Nazareth. 10And in Jerusalem I did many things against the believers. The leading priests gave me the power to put many of these people (believers) in jail. When the followers of Jesus were being killed, I agreed that it was a good thing. 11In every synagogue I punished them. I tried to make them say bad things against Jesus. I was so angry against these people (believers) that I went to other cities to find them and hurt them.

Paul Tells About Seeing Jesus

12“One time the leading priests gave me permission and the power to go to the city of Damascus. 13I was on the way to Damascus. It was noon. I saw a light from the sky. The light was brighter than the sun. The light shined all around me and the men who were traveling with me. 14We all fell to the ground. Then I heard a voice talking to me in the Jewish language. The voice said, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you doing these bad things to me? You are only hurting yourself by fighting me.’ 15I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The Lord said, ‘I am Jesus. I am the One you are persecuting. 16Stand up! I have chosen you to be my servant. You will be my witness—you will tell people the things that you have seen about me today and the things that I will show you. This is why I have come to you today. 17I will not let your own people (the Jews) hurt you. And I will keep you safe from the non-Jewish people too. I am sending you to these people. 18You will show the people the Truth. The people will turn away from darkness (sin) to the light (good). They will turn away from the power of Satan, and they will turn to God. Then their sins can be forgiven. They can have a share with those people who have been made holy by believing in me.’"

Paul Tells About His Work

19Paul continued speaking: “King Agrippa, after I had this vision from heaven, I obeyed it. 20I began telling people that they should change their hearts and lives and turn back to God. I told the people to do things that show that they really changed their hearts. I told these things first to people in Damascus. Then I went to Jerusalem and to every part of Judea and told these things to the people there. I also went to the non-Jewish people. 21This is why the Jews grabbed me and were trying to kill me at the temple. 22But God helped me, and he is still helping me today. With God’s help I am standing here today and telling all people the things I have seen. But I am saying nothing new. I am saying the same things that Moses and the prophets said would happen. 23They said that the Christ would die and be the first to rise from death. Moses and the prophets said that the Christ would bring light to the Jewish people and to the non-Jewish people.”

Paul Tries to Persuade Agrippa

24While Paul was saying these things to defend himself, Festus shouted, “Paul, you are crazy! Too much study has made you crazy!” 25Paul said, “Most Excellent Festus, I am not crazy. The things I say are true. My words are not the words of a foolish man; I am in my right mind. 26King Agrippa knows about these things. I can speak freely to him. I know that he has heard about all of these things. Why? Because these things happened where all people could see. 27King Agrippa, do you believe the things the prophets wrote? I know you believe!” 28King Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think you can persuade me to become a Christian so easily?”
Paul said, “It is not important if it is easy or if it is hard; I pray to God that not only you but every person listening to me today could be saved and be like me—except for these chains I have!”

King Agrippa, Governor Festus, Bernice, and all the people sitting with them stood up and left the room. They were talking to each other. They said, “This man should not be killed or put in jail; he has done nothing really bad!”

And Agrippa said to Festus, “We could let this man go free, but he has asked to see Caesar.”

Paul Sails for Rome

It was decided that we would sail for Italy. An army officer named Julius guarded Paul and some other prisoners. Julius served in the emperor’s special army. We got on a ship and left. The ship was from the city of Adramyttium and was ready to sail to different places in Asia. Aristarchus went with us. He was a man from the city of Thessalonica in Macedonia. The next day we came to the city of Sidon. Julius was very good to Paul. He gave Paul freedom to go visit his friends. These friends took care of Paul’s needs. We left the city of Sidon. We sailed close to the island of Cyprus because the wind was blowing against us. We went across the sea by Cilicia and Pamphylia. Then we came to the city of Myra in Lycia. In Myra the army officer found a ship from the city of Alexandria. This ship was going to Italy. So he put us on it.

We sailed slowly for many days. It was hard for us to reach the city of Cnidus because the wind was blowing against us. We had lost much time. It was now dangerous to sail, because it was already after the Jewish day of fasting. So Paul warned them, Men, I can see that there will be much trouble on this trip. The ship and the things in the ship will be lost. Our lives may even be lost!” But the captain and the owner of the ship did not agree with Paul. So the army officer did not believe Paul. Instead, the officer believed what the captain and owner of the ship said. And that harbor was not a good place for the ship to stay for the winter. So most of the men decided that the ship should leave there. The men hoped we could go to Phoenix. The ship could stay there for the winter. (Phoenix was a city on the island of Crete. It had a harbor that faced southwest and northwest.)

The Storm

Then a good wind began to blow from the south. The men on the ship thought, “This is the wind we wanted, and now we have it!” So they pulled up the anchor. We sailed very close to the island of Crete. But then a very strong wind named the “Northeaster” came from across the island. This wind took the ship and carried it away. The ship could not sail against the wind. So we stopped trying and let the wind blow us. We went below a small island named Cauda. Then we were able to bring in the lifeboat, but it was very hard to do. After the men took the lifeboat in, they tied ropes around the ship to hold the ship together. The men were afraid that the ship would hit the sandbanks of Syrtis. So they lowered the sail and let the wind carry the ship. The next day the storm was blowing us so hard that the men threw some things out of the ship. A day later they threw out the ship’s equipment. For many days we could not see the sun or the stars. The storm was very bad. We lost all hope of staying alive—we thought we would die.

day of fasting The day of Atonement, an important Jewish holy day in the fall of the year. This was the time of year that bad storms happened on the sea.

Then While the island protected them from the wind.

Syrtis Shallow area in the sea near the Libyan coast.

threw some things ... ship The men did this to make the ship lighter so that it would not sink easily.
21The men did not eat for a long time. Then one day Paul stood up before them and said, “Men, I told you not to leave Crete. You should have listened to me. Then you would not have all this trouble and loss. 22But now I tell you to be happy. None of you will die! But the ship will be lost. 23Last night an angel came to me from God. This is the God I worship. I am his. 24God’s angel said, ‘Paul, don’t be afraid! You must stand before Caesar.* And God has given you this promise: He will save the lives of all those men sailing with you.’ 25So men, be happy! I trust in God. Everything will happen like his angel told me. 26But we will crash on an island.”

27On the fourteenth night we were floating around in the Adriatic Sea.* The sailors thought we were close to land. 28They threw a rope into the water with a weight on the end of it. They found that the water was 120 feet deep. They went a little farther and threw the rope in again. It was 90 feet deep. 29The sailors were afraid that we would hit the rocks. So they threw four anchors into the water. Then they prayed for daylight to come. 30Some of the sailors wanted to leave the ship. They lowered the lifeboat to the water. The sailors wanted the other men to think that they were throwing more anchors from the front of the ship. 31But Paul told the army officer* and the other soldiers, “If these men do not stay in the ship, then your lives cannot be saved!” 32So the soldiers cut the ropes and let the lifeboat fall into the water.

33Just before dawn Paul began persuading all the people to eat something. He said, “For the past two weeks you have been waiting and watching. You have not eaten for 14 days. 34Now I beg (ask) you to eat something. You need it to stay alive. None of you will lose even one hair off your heads.” 35After he said this, Paul took some bread and thanked God for it before all of them. He broke off a piece and began eating. 36All the men felt better. They all started eating too. 37(There were 276 people on the ship.) 38We ate all we wanted. Then we began making the ship lighter by throwing the grain into the sea.

The Ship Is Destroyed

39When daylight came the sailors saw land. But they did not know what land it was. They saw a bay with a beach. The sailors wanted to sail the ship to the beach if they could. 40So they cut the ropes to the anchors and left the anchors in the sea. At the same time, they untied the ropes that were holding the rudders. Then they raised the front sail into the wind and sailed toward the beach. 41But the ship hit a sandbank. The front of the ship stuck there. The ship could not move. Then the big waves began to break the back of the ship to pieces. 42The soldiers decided to kill the prisoners so that none of the prisoners could swim away and escape. 43But the army officer* (Julius) wanted to let Paul live. So he did not allow the soldiers to kill the prisoners. Julius told the people that could swim to jump into the water and swim to land. 44The other people used wooden boards or pieces of the ship. And this is how all the people went to land. None of the people died.

Paul on the Island of Malta

28When we were safe on land, we learned that the island was called Malta. 2It was raining and very cold. But the people that lived there were very good to us. They made a fire for us and welcomed all of us. 3Paul gathered a pile of sticks for the fire. Paul was putting the sticks on the fire. A poisonous snake came out because of the heat and bit Paul on the hand. 4The people living on the island saw the snake hanging from Paul’s hand. They said, “This man must be a murderer! He did not die in the sea, but Justice* does not want him to live.” 5But Paul shook the snake off into the fire. Paul was not hurt. 6The people thought that Paul would swell up or fall down dead. The people waited and watched Paul for a long time, but nothing bad happened to him. So the people

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.
Adriatic Sea The sea between Greece and Italy, including the central part of the Mediterranean Sea.
army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.
Justice The people thought there was a goddess named Justice who would punish bad people.
changed their opinion of Paul. They said, “He is a god!”

7 There were some fields around that same area. A very important man on the island owned these fields. His name was Publius. He welcomed us into his home. Publius was very good to us. We stayed in his house for three days. 8 Publius’ father was very sick. He had a fever and dysentery. 9 But Paul went to him and prayed for him. Paul put his hands on the man and healed him. 10–11 The people on the island gave us many honors. We stayed there three months. When we were ready to leave, the people gave us the things we needed.

**Paul Goes to Rome**

We got on a ship from the city of Alexandria. The ship had stayed on the island of Malta during the winter. On the front of the ship was the sign for the twin gods. 12 We stopped at the city of Syracuse. We stayed in Syracuse three days and then left. 13 We came to the city of Rhegium. The next day a wind began to blow from the southwest, so we were able to leave. A day later we came to the city of Puteoli. 14 We found some brothers (believers) there. They asked us to stay with them a week. Finally, we came to Rome. 15 The believers in Rome heard that we were there. They came out to meet us at the Market of Appius and at the Three Inns. 16 When Paul saw these believers, he felt better. Paul thanked God.

**Paul in Rome**

16 Then we went to Rome. In Rome Paul was allowed to live alone. But a soldier stayed with Paul to guard him. 17 Three days later Paul sent for some of the most important Jews. When they came together, Paul said, “My Jewish brothers, I have done nothing against our people (the Jews). I have done nothing against the customs of our fathers. 18 But I was arrested in Jerusalem and given to the Romans. 19 The Romans asked me many questions. But they could not find any reason why I should be killed. So they wanted to let me go free. 20 But the Jews there did not want that. So I had to ask to come to Rome to have my trial before Caesar. 21 But I am not saying that my people (the Jews) have done anything wrong. 22 That is why I wanted to see you and talk with you. I am bound with this chain because I believe in the hope of Israel.”

21 The Jews answered Paul, “We have received no letters from Judea about you. None of our Jewish brothers who have traveled from there (Judea) brought news about you or told us anything bad about you. 22 We want to hear your ideas. We know that people everywhere are speaking against this group (Christians).”

23 Paul and the Jews chose a day for a meeting. On that day many more of these Jews met with Paul at his house. Paul spoke to them all day long. Paul explained the kingdom of God to them. Paul tried to persuade them to believe the things about Jesus. He used the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets to do this. 24 Some of the Jews believed the things Paul said, but others did not believe. 25 They had an argument. The Jews were ready to leave, but Paul said one more thing to them: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet.” He said,

26 “Go to this people (the Jews) and tell them: You will listen and you will hear, but you will not understand! You will look and you will see, but you will not understand what you see!”

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dysentery A very bad sickness like diarrhea.
twin gods Statues of Castor and Pollux, Greek gods.
Market of Appius A town about 43 miles (69km) from Rome.
Three Inns A town about 30 miles (48km) from Rome.
27 Yes, the minds of these people (the Jews) are now closed. They have ears, but they don’t listen. And they refuse to see the truth.

If their minds were not closed, they might see with their eyes; they might hear with their ears; they might understand with their minds. Then they might turn back to me and be healed.”

Isaiah 6:9–10

28“I want you Jews to know that God has sent his salvation to the non-Jewish people. They will listen!”

30Paul stayed two full years in his own rented house. He welcomed all people that came and visited him. 31Paul told people about the kingdom of God. He taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. He was very bold (brave), and no one tried to stop him from speaking.
Greetings from Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus. God called me to be an apostle. I was chosen to tell God’s Good News to all people.

God promised long ago to give this Good News to his people. God used his prophets to promise this. That promise is written in the Holy Scriptures. The Good News is about God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. As a person, he was born from the family of David. But through the Spirit of holiness Jesus was shown to be God’s Son. He was shown to be God’s Son with great power by rising from death. Through Christ, God gave me the special work of an apostle. God gave me this work to lead people of all nations to believe and obey God. And I do this work for Christ. And you people in Rome were also called to belong to Jesus Christ.

This letter is to all of you in Rome that God has called to be his holy people. You are people that God loves.

Grace (kindness) and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

A Prayer of Thanks

First I want to say that I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you. I thank God because people everywhere in the world are talking about your great faith. Every time I pray I always remember you. God knows this is true. God is the One I worship (serve) in my spirit by telling people the Good News about his Son. I pray that I will be allowed to come to you. It will happen if God wants it. I want very much to see you. I want to give you some spiritual gift to make you strong. I mean that I want us to help each other with the faith that we have. Your faith will help me, and my faith will help you.

Brothers and sisters, I want you to know that I planned many times to come to you. But I have not been allowed to come to you. I wanted to come so that I could help you grow spiritually. I want to help you like I have helped the other non-Jewish people.

I must serve all people—Greeks and non-Greeks, wise people and foolish people. That is why I want so much to tell the Good News to you there in Rome.

I am proud of the Good News. The Good News is the power God uses to save every person that believes—to save the Jews first, and also to save the non-Jews. The Good News shows how God makes people right with himself. God’s way of making people right begins and ends with faith. Like the Scripture says, “The person that is right with God by faith will live forever.”

All People Have Done Wrong

God shows his anger from heaven against all the evil and wrong things that people do. They have the truth, but by their evil lives they hide it. God shows his anger, because everything that is known about God has been made clear to them. Yes, God has clearly shown people everything that is known about

“The person … forever” Quote from Hab. 2:4.
There are things about God that people cannot see—his eternal power and all the things that make him God. But since the beginning of the world those things have been easy for people to understand. Those things are made clear in the things that God has made. So people have no excuse for the bad things they do. People knew God. But they did not give glory to God, and they did not thank him. Their ideas were all useless. There was not one good thought left in their foolish minds. People said they were wise, and they became fools. They gave up the glory of God who lives forever. People traded that glory for the worship of idols made to look like earthly people. People traded God’s glory for things that look like birds, animals, and snakes. People were full of sin, wanting only to do evil things. So God left them and let them go their sinful way. And so they became full of sexual sins, using their bodies wrongly with each other. Those people traded the truth of God for a lie. Those people worshiped and served things that were made. But people did not worship and serve the God who made those things. God should be praised forever. Amen.

Because people did those things, God left them and let them do the shameful things they wanted to do. Women stopped having natural sex with men. They started having sex with other women. In the same way, men stopped having natural sex with women. The men began wanting each other all the time. Men did shameful things with other men. And in their bodies they received the punishment for those wrong things they did.

People did not think it was important to have a true knowledge of God. So God left them and allowed those people to have their own worthless thinking. And so those people do the things that they should not do. Those people are filled with every kind of sin, evil, greed, and hatred. Those people are full of jealousy, murder, fighting, lying, and thinking the worst things about each other. Those people gossip and say evil things about each other. Those people hate God. They are rude and conceited and boast about themselves. Those people invent ways of doing evil. They don’t obey their parents, they are foolish, they don’t keep their promises, and they show no kindness or mercy to other people.

Those people know God’s law. They know God’s law says that people who live like that should die. But they continue to do those wrong things. And they say that people who do those things are doing right.

So do you think that you can judge those other people? You are wrong. You too are guilty of sin. You judge those people, but you do the same bad things they do. So when you judge them, you are really judging yourself guilty. God judges the people that do those wrong things. And we know that God’s judgment is right. You also judge the people that do those wrong things. But you do those wrong things too. So surely you understand that God will judge you. You will not be able to escape. God has been very kind to you. And he has been patient with you. God has been waiting for you to change. But you think nothing of his kindness. Maybe you don’t understand that God is kind to you so that you will change your hearts and lives. But you people are hard and stubborn. You refuse to change. So you are making your own punishment greater and greater. You will get that punishment on the day when God will show his anger. On that day people will see God’s right judgments.

God will reward or punish every person for the things that person has done. Some people live for God’s glory, for honor, and for life that cannot be destroyed. Those people live for those things by always continuing to do good. God will give life forever to those people. But other people are selfish and refuse to follow truth. Those people follow evil. God will give those people his punishment and anger. God will give trouble and suffering to every person that does evil—to the Jews first and also to the non-Jews. But God will give glory, honor, and peace to every person that does good—to the Jews first and also to the non-Jews. God judges all people the same.
12People that have the law* and people that have never heard of the law are all the same when they sin. People that don’t have the law and are sinners will be lost. And, in the same way, people that have the law and are sinners will be judged by the law. 13Hearing the law does not make people right with God. The law makes people right with God only if those people always obey everything the law says. 14The non-Jews don’t have the law. But when they naturally do things that the law commands without even knowing the law, then they are their own law. This is true even though they don’t have the written law. 15They show that in their hearts they know what is right and wrong, the same as the law commands. And those people also show this by the way they feel about right and wrong. Sometimes their thoughts tell them that they did wrong, and this makes them guilty. And sometimes their thoughts tell them that they did right, and this makes them not guilty.) 16All these things will happen on the day when God will judge the secret things inside of people. The Good News* that I tell people says that God will judge people through Christ Jesus.

The Jews and the Law

17What about you? You say you are a Jew. You trust in the law and boast that you are close to God. 18You know what God wants you to do. And you know the things that are important, because you have learned the law. 19You think you are a guide for people that don’t know the right way. You think you are a light for people that are in darkness (sin). 20You think you can show foolish people what is right. And you think you are a teacher for people that still need to learn. You have the law and so you think that you know everything and have all truth. 21You teach other people. So why don’t you teach yourself? You tell people not to steal. But you yourselves steal. 22You say that people must not do the sin of adultery.* But you yourselves are guilty of that sin. You hate idols.* But you steal from temples.* 23You boast about God’s law. But you bring shame to God by breaking his law. 24It is written in the Scriptures*: “The non-Jews say bad things about God because of you Jews,”* 25If you follow the law,* then your circumcision* has meaning. But if you break the law, then it is like you were never circumcised. 26The non-Jews are not circumcised. But if they do what the law says, then it is like they were circumcised. 27You Jews have the written law and circumcision, but you break the law. So the people that are not circumcised in their bodies, but still obey the law, will show that you people are guilty.

28A person is not a true Jew if he is only a Jew in his physical body. True circumcision* is not only on the outside of the body. 29A person is a true Jew only if he is a Jew inside. True circumcision is done in the heart. It is done by the Spirit,* not by the written law. And a person that is circumcised in the heart by the Spirit gets praise from God, not from people.

So, do Jews have anything that other people don’t have? Is there anything special about being circumcised*? 2Yes, the Jews have many special things. The most important thing is this: God trusted the Jews with his teachings. 3It is true that some Jews were not faithful to God. But will that stop God from doing what he promised? 4No! God will continue to be true even when every person is false. Like the Scriptures* say:

“You will be proved right in your words, and you will win when you are being judged.” Psalm 51:4

5When we do wrong, that shows more clearly that God is right. So can we say that...
God does wrong when he punishes us? (I am using an idea that some people might have.) No! If God could not punish us, then God could not judge the world.

7A person might say, “When I lie, it really gives God glory, because my lie shows God’s truth. So why am I judged a sinner?” It would be the same to say, “We should do evil so that good will come.” Many people criticize us and say that we teach those things. People that say those things are wrong, and they should be condemned.

All People Are Guilty

9So are we Jews better than other people? No! We have already said that Jews and non-Jews are the same. They are all guilty of sin. Like the Scriptures* say:

“There is no person without sin. None!
There is no person that understands.
There is no person that is trying to be with God.
All people have turned away,
and all people have become worthless.
There is no person that does good. None!”

Psalm 14:1–3

13 “People’s mouths are like open graves; they use their tongues for telling lies.”

Psalm 5:9

14 “The things they say are like the poison of snakes;”

Psalm 140:3

15 “their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”

Psalm 10:7

16 “People are always ready to hurt and kill; everywhere they go they cause ruin and sadness.
People don’t know the way of peace.”

Isaiah 59:7–8

18 “They have no fear or respect for God.”

Psalm 36:1

19 These things the law* says are for the people that are under the law. This stops all Jewish people from making excuses and brings the whole world (Jews and non-Jews) under God’s judgment. 20 Why? Because no person can be made right with God by following the law. The law only shows us our sin.

How God Makes People Right

21 But God has a way to make people right without the law. And God has now shown us that new way. The law and the prophets* told us about this new way. 22 God makes people right through their faith in Jesus Christ. God does this for all people that believe in Christ. All people are the same. 23 All people have sinned and are not good enough for God’s glory. 24 People are made right with God by his grace (kindness). This is a free gift. People are made right with God by being made free from sin through Jesus Christ. 25 God gave Jesus as a way to forgive people’s sins through faith. God forgives by the blood (death) of Jesus. God gave Jesus to show that he always does what is right and fair. God was right in the past when he was patient and did not punish people for their sins. 26 And God gave Jesus to show today that God does what is right. God did this so that he could judge rightly and also make right anyone that has faith in Jesus.

27 So do we have a reason to boast about ourselves? No! And why not? It is the way of faith that stops all boasting, not the way of following the law. 28 Why? Because a person is made right with God through faith, not through the things he has done to follow the law. This is what we believe. 29 God is not only the God of the Jews. He is also the God of the non-Jews. 30 There is only one God. He will make Jews right with him by their faith. And he will also make non-Jews right with him through their faith. 31 So do we destroy the law by following the way of faith? No! Faith causes us to be what the law truly wants.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
law God’s law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Jews Literally, “circumcision.”

non-Jews Literally, “uncircumcision.”
The Example of Abraham

4 So what can we say about Abraham, * the father of our people? What did he learn about faith? 2 If Abraham was made right by the things he did, then he had a reason to boast. But Abraham could not boast before God. 3 The Scripture* says, “Abraham believed God. And God accepted Abraham’s faith. That made Abraham right with God.”

4 When a person works, his pay is not given to him as a gift. He earns the pay he gets. 5 But a person cannot do any work that will make him right with God. So that person must trust in God. Then God accepts that person’s faith (trust), and that makes him right with God. God is the One who makes even evil people right. 6 David* said the same thing. David said that a person is truly happy when God does not look at the things that person has done but accepts him like a good person:

7 “People are truly blessed (happy) when their wrongs are forgiven, and when their sins are covered!
8 And when the Lord accepts a person like he was without sin, that person is truly blessed!”

Psalm 32:1–2

9 Is this happiness only for those people that are circumcised* (the Jews)? Or is this happiness also for people that are not circumcised (non-Jews)? We have already said that God accepted Abraham’s faith, and that faith made him right with God. 10 So how did this happen? Did God accept Abraham* before or after he was circumcised? God accepted him before his circumcision.* 11 Abraham was circumcised later to show that God accepted him. His circumcision was proof that he was right with God through faith before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the father of all people that believe but are not circumcised. Those people believe and are accepted like people that are right with God. 12 And Abraham is also the father of people that have been circumcised. But it is not their circumcision that makes Abraham their father. He is their father only if they live following the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

God’s Promise Received Through Faith

13 Abraham* and his descendants* received the promise that they would get the whole world. But Abraham did not receive that promise because he followed the law.* Abraham received that promise because he was right with God through his faith. 14 If people could get the things that God promised by following the law, then faith is worthless. And God’s promise to Abraham is worthless. 15 Why? Because the law can only bring God’s anger {when the law is not obeyed}. But if there is no law, then there is nothing to disobey.

16 So people get God’s promise by having faith. This happens so that the promise can be a free gift. And if the promise is a free gift, then all of Abraham’s* people can have that promise. The promise is not only for those people that live under the law {of Moses}. The promise is for any person that lives with faith like Abraham. Abraham is the father of us all.

17 Like it is written {in the Scriptures*}, “I have made you (Abraham) a father of many nations.”* This is true before God. Abraham believed in God—the God who gives life to dead people and decides that things will happen that have not yet happened.

18 There was no hope {that Abraham would have children}. But Abraham believed God and continued hoping. And that is why he became the father of many nations. Like God told him, “You will have many descendants (children).”* 19 Abraham was almost 100 years old, so his body was much past the age for having children. Also, Sarah could not have children. Abraham thought about this. But his

Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.
Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
“Abraham … God” Quote from Gen. 15:6.
David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.
circumcised, circumcision To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.

descendants A person’s children and all their future families.
law God’s law. It is represented in the law of Moses.
“…nations” Quote from Gen. 17:5.
“You … descendants” Quote from Gen. 15:5.
faith in God did not become weak. Abraham never doubted that God would do the thing that God promised. Abraham never stopped believing. He grew stronger in his faith and gave praise to God. Abraham felt sure that God was able to do the thing that God promised. So, “God accepted Abraham’s faith. That made him right with God.”

Those words (“God accepted Abraham’s faith”) were written not only for Abraham. Those words were also written for us. God will also accept us because we believe. We believe in the One (God) that raised Jesus our Lord from death. Jesus was given to die for our sins. And he was raised from death to make us right with God.

Right With God

We have been made right with God because of our faith. So we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through our faith, Christ has brought us into that blessing of God’s grace (kindness) that we now enjoy. And we are very happy because of the hope we have of sharing God’s glory. And we are also happy with the troubles we have. Why are we happy with troubles? Because we know that these troubles make us more patient. And this patience is proof that we are strong. And this proof gives us hope. And this hope will never disappoint us—it will never fail. Why? Because God has poured out his love to fill our hearts. God gave us his love through the Holy Spirit. That Holy Spirit was a gift to us from God.

Christ died for us while we were still weak people. We were living against God, but at the right time, Christ died for us. Very few people will die to save the life of another person, even if that other person is a good person. If the person is a very good person, then someone might be willing to die for that person. But Christ died for us while we were still sinners. In that way God showed us that he loves us very much.

9We have been made right with God by Christ’s blood (death). So through Christ we will surely be saved from God’s anger. I mean that while we were God’s enemies, God made friends with us through the death of his Son. So surely, now that we are God’s friends, God will save us through his Son’s life. And not only will we be saved, but we are also very happy now. We are happy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is because of Jesus that we are now God’s friends.

Adam and Christ

Sin came into the world because of what one man (Adam) did. And with sin came death. So this is why all people must die—because all people sinned. Sin was in the world before the law of Moses. But God does not make people guilty for sin if there is no law. But from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, all people had to die. Adam died because he sinned by not obeying God’s command. But even those people that did not sin the way Adam sinned had to die.

Adam was like the One (Christ) who was coming in the future. But God’s free gift is not like Adam’s sin. Many people died because of the sin of that one man (Adam). But the grace (kindness) that people received from God was much greater. Many people received God’s gift of life by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ. After Adam sinned once, he was judged guilty. But the gift of God is different. God’s free gift came after many sins. And the gift makes people right with God.

One man sinned, and so death ruled all people because of that one man. But now some people accept God’s full grace and his great gift of being made right. Surely those people will have true life and rule through the one man, Jesus Christ.

So one sin of Adam brought the punishment of death to all people. But in the same way, one good thing that Christ did makes all people right with God. And that brings true life for those people. One man (Adam) disobeyed God and many people became sinners. But in the same way, one man (Christ) obeyed God and many people will be made right. The law came to make people...
have more sin. But when people had more sin, God gave them more of his grace (kindness).
21Sin once used death to rule us. But God gave people more of his grace so that grace could rule by making people right with him. This brings life forever through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dead to Sin but Alive in Christ

6 So do you think that we should continue sinning so that God will give us more and more grace (kindness)? No! We died to (quit living) our old sinful lives. So how can we continue living with sin? 3Did you forget that all of us became part of Christ Jesus when we were baptized? We shared his death in our baptism. 4So when we were baptized, we were buried with Christ and shared his death. We were buried with Christ so that we could be raised up and live a new life. This happened the same as Christ was raised from death by the wonderful power of the Father.
5Christ died, and we have been joined with Christ by dying too. So we will also be joined with him by rising from death like Christ rose from death. 6We know that our old life died with Christ on the cross. This happened so that our sinful selves would have no power over us. And then we would not be slaves to sin.
7Any person that has died is made free from sin’s control (power).
8If we died with Christ, we know that we will also live with him. 9Christ was raised from death. And we know that he cannot die again. Death has no power over him now. 10Yes, when Christ died, he died to defeat the power of sin one time—enough for all time. He now has a new life, and his new life is with God. 11In the same way, you should see yourselves as being dead to the power of sin. And see yourselves as being alive for God through Christ Jesus.
12But don’t let sin control you in your life here on earth. You must not be ruled by the things your sinful self makes you want to do.
13Don’t offer the parts of your body to serve sin. Don’t use your bodies as things to do evil with. But you should offer yourselves to God.

Be like people that have died and now live. Offer the parts of your body to God to be used for doing good. 14Sin will not be your master. Why? Because you are not under law. You now live under God’s grace (kindness).

Slaves of Goodness

15So what should we do? Should we sin because we are under grace (kindness) and not under law? No! Surely you know that when you give yourselves like slaves to obey someone, then you are really slaves of that person. The person you obey is your master. You can follow sin, or obey God. Sin brings spiritual death. But obeying God makes you right with him. 17In the past you were slaves to sin—sin controlled you. But thank God, you fully obeyed the things that were taught to you. 18You were made free from sin. And now you are slaves to goodness (right living).
19I explain this by using an example that people know. I explain it this way because it is hard for you to understand. In the past you offered the parts of your body to be slaves to sin and evil. You lived only for evil. In the same way now you must give yourselves to be slaves of goodness. Then you will live only for God.
20In the past you were slaves to sin, and goodness (right living) did not control you. 21You did evil things. Now you are ashamed of those things. Did those things help you? No. Those things only bring spiritual death. 22But now you are free from sin. You are now slaves of God. And this brings you a life that is only for God. And from that you will get life forever. 23When people sin, they earn what sin pays—death. But God gives his people a free gift—life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord.

An Example from Marriage

7Brothers and sisters, you all understand the law of Moses. So surely you know that the law rules over a person only while he is alive. 2I will give you an example: A woman must stay married to her husband as long as he is alive. But when her husband dies, then she is made free from the law of marriage. 3But if that woman marries another man while her husband is still alive, the law
ROMANS 7:4–8:3

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saying she is guilty of adultery.* But if the woman’s husband dies, then that woman is made free from the law of marriage. So if that woman marries another man after her husband dies, she is not guilty of adultery.

4In the same way, my brothers and sisters, your old selves died and you became free from the law* through the body of Christ. Now you belong to someone else. You belong to the One (Christ) that was raised from death. We belong to Christ so that we can be used in service to God. 5In the past, we were ruled by our sinful selves. The law made us want to do sinful things. And those sinful things we wanted to do controlled our bodies, so that the things we did were only bringing us spiritual death. 6In the past, the law held us like prisoners. But our old selves died and we were made free from the law. So now we serve God in a new way, not in the old way with the written rules. Now we serve God in the new way with the Spirit.*

Our Fight Against Sin

7You might think that I am saying that sin and the law* are the same thing. That is not true. But the law was the only way I could learn what sin means. I would never have known what it means to want something wrong. But the law said, “You must not want {things that belong to other people}.” 8And sin found a way to use that command and make me want every kind of wrong thing. So sin came to me because of that command. But without the law, sin has no power. 9I was alive without the law before I knew the law. But when the law’s command came to me, then sin began to live. 10And I died {spiritually} because of sin. The command was meant to bring life, but for me that command brought death. 11Sin found a way to fool me by using the command. Sin used the command to make me die {spiritually}.

12So the law* is holy, and the command is holy and right and good. 13Does this mean that something that is good brought death to me? No! But sin used something that is good to bring death to me. This happened so that I could see what sin is really like. It happened to show that sin is something very, very bad. And the command was used to show this.

The Conflict in Man

14We know that the law* is spiritual. But I am not spiritual. Sin rules me like I am its slave. 15I don’t understand the things I do. I don’t do the {good} things I want to do. And I do the {bad} things I hate to do. 16And if I don’t want to do the {bad} things I do, then that means that I agree that the law is good. 17But I am not really the one doing these {bad} things. It is sin living in me that does these things. 18Yes, I know that nothing good lives in me—I mean nothing good lives in the part of me that is not spiritual. I want to do the things that are good. But I don’t do those things. 19I don’t do the good things that I want to do. I do the bad things that I don’t want to do. 20So if I do things I don’t want to do, then it is not really me doing those things. It is sin living in me that does those bad things.

21So I have learned this rule: When I want to do good, evil is there with me. 22In my mind, I am happy with God’s law. 23But I see another law working in my body. That other law makes war against the law that my mind accepts. That other law working in my body is the law of sin, and that law makes me its prisoner. 24This is terrible! Who will save me from this body that brings me death? 25God* will save me! I thank him {for his salvation} through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So in my mind I am a slave to God’s law. But in my sinful self I am a slave to the law of sin.

Life in the Spirit

8So now people that are in Christ Jesus are not judged guilty. 2Why? Because in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit* that brings life made you* free. It made you* free from the law that brings sin and death. 3The law* was without power because the law was made weak by our sinful selves. But God did what the law could not do. God sent his own Son to earth with the same human life that other

adultery  Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

law  God’s law. Here, it is the law of Moses.

Spirit, Holy Spirit  Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

“You ... people”  Quote from Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21.

law  God’s law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

you  Some Greek copies have “me.”
people use for sin. God sent his Son to be an offering to pay for sin. So God used a human life to condemn (destroy) sin. 4God did this so that we could be right like the law said we must be. Now we don’t live following our sinful selves. We live following the Spirit.

5 People that live following their sinful selves think only about things that their sinful selves want. But those people that live following the Spirit are thinking about the things that the Spirit wants them to do. 6If a person’s thinking is controlled by his sinful self, then there is spiritual death. But if a person’s thinking is controlled by the Spirit, then there is life and peace. 7Why is this true? Because if a person’s thinking is controlled by his sinful self, then that person is against God. That person refuses to obey God’s law. And really that person is not able to obey God’s law.

8 Those people that are ruled by their sinful selves cannot please God.

9 But you are not ruled by your sinful selves. You are ruled by the Spirit, if that Spirit of God really lives in you. But if any person does not have the Spirit of Christ, then that person does not belong to Christ. 10Your body will always be dead because of sin. But if Christ is in you, then the Spirit gives you life, because Christ made you right with God. 11 God raised Jesus from death. And if God’s Spirit is living in you, then he will give life to your bodies that die. God is the One who raised Christ from death. And he will give life to your bodies through his Spirit that lives in you.

12 So, my brothers and sisters, we must not be ruled by our sinful selves. We must not live the way our sinful selves want. 13If you use your lives to do the wrong things your sinful selves want, then you will die spiritually. But if you use the Spirit’s help to stop doing the wrong things you do with your body, then you will have true life.

14 The true children of God are those people that let God’s Spirit lead them. 15 The Spirit that we received is not a spirit that makes us slaves again and causes us to fear. The Spirit that we have makes us God’s chosen children. And with that Spirit we say, “Abba,” Father.” 16 And the Spirit himself speaks to our spirits and makes us sure that we are God’s children. 17 If we are God’s children, then we will get the blessings God has for his people. We will get these things from God. God will give us all that he has given Christ. But we must suffer like Christ suffered. Then we will be able to share his glory.

We Will Have Glory in the Future

18 We have sufferings now. But the sufferings we have now are nothing compared to the great glory that will be given to us. 19 Everything that God made is waiting with excitement for the time when God will show the world who his children are. The whole world wants very much for that to happen. 20 Everything God made was changed to be like it was worth nothing. It did not want to change, but God decided to change it. But there was this hope: 21 That everything God made would be made free from ruin (decay). There was hope that everything God made would have the freedom and glory that belong to God’s children.

22 We know that everything God made has been waiting until now in pain like a woman ready to give birth to a child. 23 Not only the world, but we also have been waiting with pain inside us. We have the Spirit as the first part of God’s promise. So we are waiting for God to finish making us his own children. I mean we are waiting for our bodies to be made free. 24 We were saved, and we have this hope. If we can see what we are waiting for, then that is not really hope. People don’t hope for something they already have. 25 But we are hoping for something that we don’t have yet. We are waiting for it patiently.

26 Also, the Spirit helps us. We are very weak, but the Spirit helps us with our weakness. We don’t know how to pray like we should. But the Spirit himself speaks to God for us. The Spirit begs God for us. The Spirit speaks to God with deep feelings that words cannot explain. 27 God can see what is in people’s hearts. And God knows what is in the

Spirit, Holy Spirit  Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

Abba  An Aramaic word. Jewish children called their fathers “Abba.”
mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit speaks to God for his people in the way that God wants.

28We know that in everything God works for the good of those people that love him. These are the people God called (chose), because that was his plan. 29God knew those people before he made the world. And God decided that those people would be like his Son (Jesus). Then Jesus would be the firstborn* of many brothers and sisters. 30God planned for those people to be like his Son. And he called (chose) those people. God called those people and made them right with him. And God gave his glory to those people that he made right.

God’s Love in Christ Jesus

31So what should we say about this? If God is for us, then no person can stand against us. And God is with us. 32He even let his own Son suffer for us. God gave his Son for us all. So with Jesus now, God will surely give us all things. 33Who can accuse the people that God has chosen? No one! God is the One who makes his people right. 34Who can say that God’s people are guilty? No one! Christ Jesus died {for us}, but that is not all. He was also raised from death. And now he is at God’s right side and is begging God for us. 35Can anything separate us from Christ’s love? No! Can trouble separate us from Christ’s love? No! Can problems or persecution* separate us from Christ’s love? No! If we have no food or clothes, will that separate us from Christ’s love? No! Will danger or even death separate us from Christ’s love? No! 36Like it is written in the Scriptures*: “For you (Christ) we are in danger of death all the time. People think we are worth no more than sheep to be killed.” Psalm 44:22

37But in all these things we have full victory through God who showed his love for us. 38–39Yes, I am sure that nothing can separate us from God’s love—not death, not life, not angels or ruling spirits. I am sure that nothing now, nothing in the future, no powers, nothing above us or nothing below us—nothing in the whole created world—will ever be able to separate us from God’s love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God and the Jewish People

9I am in Christ and I am telling you the truth. I don’t lie. My deepest feelings are ruled by the Holy Spirit.* And those feelings tell me that I am not lying: 2I have great sorrow and always feel much sadness {for the Jewish people}. 3They are my brothers and sisters, my earthly family. I wish I could help them. I would even have a curse on me and cut myself off from Christ if that would help them. 4They are the people of Israel.* Those people (the Jews) are God’s chosen children. Those people have the glory of God and the agreements that God made between himself and his people. God gave them the law of Moses* and the temple* worship. And God gave his promises to those people (the Jews). 5Those people are the descendants* of our great fathers.* And they are the earthly family of Christ. Christ is God over all things. Praise him forever!* Amen.

6Yes, I feel sorry for the Jewish people. I don’t mean that God failed to keep his promise to them. But only some of the people of Israel (the Jews) are truly God’s people.* 7And only some of Abraham’s descendants* are true children of Abraham (God’s people). This is what God said to Abraham:* “Isaac will be your only legal son.”* 8This means that not all of Abraham’s descendants are God’s true children. Abraham’s true children are those people that become God’s children because of the promise God made to Abraham. 9God’s

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firstborn The first male child in a family. Here, it probably means that Christ was the first in God’s family to share God’s glory.

persecution Being hurt or bothered by Christ’s enemies.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
promise to Abraham was like this: “At the right time I will come back, and Sarah will have a son.”

10 And that is not all. Rebecca also had sons. And those sons had the same father. He is our father* Isaac. 11–12 But before the two sons were born, God told Rebecca, “The older son will serve the younger.”* This was before the boys had done anything good or bad. God said this before they were born so that the boy God chose would be chosen because of God’s own plan. He was chosen because he was the one God wanted to call, not because of anything the boys did. 13 Like the Scripture* says, “I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau.”*

14 So what should we say about this? Is God not fair? We cannot say that. 15 God said to Moses, “I will show mercy to the person that I want to show mercy to. I will show pity to the person that I want to show pity to.”* 16 So God will choose the person he decides to show mercy to. And his choice does not depend on what people want or try to do. 17 In the Scripture* God says to Pharaoh*: “I made you king so you could do this for me. I wanted to show my power in you. I wanted my name to be announced in all the world.”* 18 So God shows mercy to the people he wants to show mercy to. And God makes the people stubborn that he wants to make stubborn.

19 So one of you will ask me: “If God controls the things we do, then why does God blame us {for our sins}?” 20 Don’t ask that. You are only people. And people have no right to question God. A clay jar does not question the man that made it. The jar does not say, “Why did you make me like this?” 21 The man that makes the jar can make anything he wants to make. He can use the same clay to make different things. He can make one thing for special purposes and another thing for daily use.

22 It is the same way with what God has done. God wanted to show his anger and to let people see his power. But God endured patiently those people he was angry with—people that were ready to be destroyed. 23 God waited with patience so that he could make known his rich glory. God wanted to give that glory to the people that receive his mercy. God has prepared these people to have his glory. 24 We are those people. We are the people God called (chose). God called us from the Jews and from the non-Jews. 25 Like the Scripture* says in the book of Hosea:

“The people that are not mine—
I will say that they are my people.
And the people that I did not love—
I will say that they are the people I love.”

Hosea 2:23

26 “And in the same place that God said,
‘You are not my people’—
in that place they will be called sons of the living God.”

Hosea 1:10

27 And Isaiah cries out about Israel*:

“There are so many people of Israel that they are like the grains of sand by the sea. But only a few of those people will be saved. 28 Yes, the Lord will quickly finish judging the people on the earth.”*

29 It is like Isaiah said:

“The Lord has all power. The Lord saved some of his people for us. If he had not done that, then we would now be like Sodom,* and we would now be like Gomorrah.”*

30 So what does all this mean? It means this: That the non-Jews were not trying to make themselves right with God. But they were made right with God. They became right because of their faith. 31 And the people of Israel* tried to follow a law to make themselves...
right with God. But they did not succeed. 32 Why not? Because they tried to make themselves right by the things they did. They did not trust in God to make them right. They fell over the stone that makes people fall. 33 The Scripture* talks about that stone:

“Look, I put in Zion a stone that will make people stumble. It is a rock that will make people fall. But any person that trusts in that rock will never be disappointed.”

Isaiah 8:14; 28:16

Brothers and sisters, the thing I want most is for all the Jews to be saved. That is my prayer to God. 2 I can say this about the Jews: They really try to follow God. But they don’t know the right way. 3 They did not know the way that God makes people right with him. And they tried to make themselves right in their own way. So they did not accept God’s way of making people right. 4 Christ ended the law so that every person that believes in him is made right with God.

5 Moses writes about being made right by following the law. Moses says, “A person that wants to find life by following these things (the law) must do the things the law says.”* 6 But this is what the Scripture* says about being made right through faith: “Don’t say to yourself, ‘Who will go up into heaven?’” (That means, “Who will go up to heaven to get Christ and bring him down to earth?”) 7 And don’t say, ‘Who will go down into the world below?’* (That means, “Who will go down to get Christ and bring him up from death?”) 8 This is what the Scripture says: “God’s teaching is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart.”* That teaching is the teaching of faith that we tell people. 9 If you openly say, “Jesus is Lord,” and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from death, then you will be saved. 10 Yes, we believe with our heart, and so we are made right with God. And we use our mouth to say that we believe, and so we are saved. 11 Yes, the Scripture* says, “Any person that trusts in him (Christ) will never be disappointed.”* 12 That Scripture says “any person” because there is no difference between Jew and non-Jew. The same Lord is the Lord of all people. The Lord gives many blessings to all people that trust in him. 13 Yes, the Scripture says, “Every person that trusts in the Lord will be saved.”*

14 But before people can trust in the Lord for help, they must believe in him. And before people can believe in the Lord, they must hear about him. And for people to hear about the Lord, another person must tell them. 15 And before a person can go and tell them, that person must be sent. Like the Scriptures* say, “Beautiful are the feet of those people that come to tell good news.”*

16 But not all the Jews accepted that good news. Isaiah said, “Lord, who believed the things we told them?”* 17 So faith comes from hearing [the Good News]*. And people hear [the Good News] when a person tells them about Christ.

18 But I ask, “Did people not hear [the Good News]?” Yes, they heard—like the Scripture* says:

“Their voices went out all around the world. Their words went everywhere in the world.”

Psalm 19:4

19 Again I ask, “Did the people of Israel* not understand?” Yes, they did understand. First, Moses says this for God:

“I will use a people that is not really a nation to make you jealous. I will use a nation that does not understand to make you angry.”

Deuteronomy 32:21

20 Then Isaiah is bold enough to say this for God:

“All person ... disappointed” Quote from Isa. 28:16. “Every person ... saved” Quote from Joel 2:32. “Beautiful ... good news” Quote from Isa. 52:7. “Lord ... them” Quote from Isa. 53:1. Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever. Israel The Jewish nation (people).
“All day ... follow me” Quote from Isa. 65:2.
Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.
Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
Elijah A prophet that lived about 850 B.C.
prophets People that spoke for God.
alts An altar is a place where sacrifices are offered.
“Lord ... now” Quote from 1 Kings 19:10, 14.
Baal The name of a false god.
“I have ... Baal” Quote from 1 Kings 19:18.

11 God Has Not Forgotten His People

So I ask, “Did God throw out his people?” No! I myself am an Israelite (Jew). I am from the family of Abraham,* from the family group of Benjamin. 2God chose the Israelites to be his people before they were born. And God did not throw out those people. Surely you know what the Scripture* says about Elijah.* The Scripture tells about Elijah praying to God against the people of Israel. Elijah said, “Lord, the people have killed your prophets* and destroyed your altars.* I am the only prophet still living. And the people are trying to kill me now.” 4But what answer did God give Elijah? God said, “I have kept for myself 7,000 men that still worship me. These 7,000 men have not given worship to Baal.” 5It is the same now. There are a few people that God has chosen by his grace (kindness). 6And if God chose his people by grace, then it is not the things they have done that made them God’s people. If they could be made God’s people by the things they did, then God’s gift of grace would not really be a gift.

7So this is what has happened: The people of Israel (the Jews) tried to be right with God. But they did not succeed. But the people God chose did become right with him. The other people became hard and refused to listen to God. 8Like it is written in the Scriptures*:

“All day long I have waited for those people, but they refuse to obey and refuse to follow me.” Isaiah 65:2

21 God said this through Isaiah about the non-Jewish people. But about the Jewish people God says, “All day long I have waited for those people, but they refuse to obey and refuse to follow me.”

9 And David says:

“Let those people be caught and trapped at their own feasts,
Let those people fall and be punished.

10 Let their eyes be closed so they cannot see the truth,
And let them be troubled forever.” Psalm 69:22–23

11 So I ask: When the Jews fell, did that fall destroy them? No! But their mistake brought salvation to the non-Jews. This happened to make the Jews jealous. 12 The Jews’ mistake brought rich blessings for the world. And what the Jews lost brought rich blessings for the non-Jewish people. So surely the world will get much richer blessings when enough Jews become the kind of people God wants.

13 Now I am speaking to you people that are not Jews. I am an apostle* to the non-Jews. So while I have that work, I will do the best I can. 14I hope I can make my own people (the Jews) jealous. That way, maybe I can help some of them to be saved.

15 God turned away from the Jews. When that happened, God became friends with the other people in the world. So when God accepts the Jews, then surely that will bring to people life after death. 16 If the first piece of bread is offered to God, then the whole loaf is made holy. If the roots of a tree are holy, then the tree’s branches are holy too.

17 It is like some of the branches from an olive tree have been broken off, and the branch of a wild olive tree has been joined to that first tree. You non-Jews are the same as that wild branch, and you now share the strength and life of the first tree (the Jews). 18 So don’t boast about those branches that were broken off. You have no reason to boast.

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“God caused the people to fall asleep.” Isaiah 29:10

“God closed their eyes so that they could not see the truth, and God closed their ears so that they could not hear the truth.”

This continues until now.” Deuteronomy 29:4
Why? You don’t give life to the root. The root gives life to you. 19 You will say, “Branches were broken off so that I could be joined to their tree.” 20 That is true. But those branches were broken off because they did not believe. And you continue to be part of the tree only because you believe. Don’t be proud, but be afraid. 21 If God did not let the natural branches of that tree stay, then he will not let you stay if you don’t believe.

22 So you see that God is kind, but he can also be very strict. God punishes those people that stop following him. But God is kind to you, if you continue following in his kindness. If you don’t continue following him, you will be cut off from the tree. 23 And if the Jews will believe in God again, then God will accept the Jews back again. God is able to put them back where they were. 24 It is not natural for a wild branch to become part of a good tree. But you non-Jews are like a branch cut from a wild olive tree. And you were joined to a good olive tree. But those Jews are like a branch that grew from the good tree. So surely they can be joined to their own tree again.

25 I want you to understand this secret truth, brothers and sisters. This truth will help you understand that you don’t know everything. The truth is this: Part of Israel has been made stubborn. But that will change when enough non-Jews have come to God. 26 And that is how all Israel will be saved. It is written in the Scriptures:

“The Savior will come from Zion; He will take away all evil from the family of Jacob.”

Isaiah 59:20–21; 27:9

27 The Jews refuse to accept the Good News, so they are God’s enemies. This has happened to help you non-Jews. But the Jews are still God’s chosen people. So God loves them very much. God loves them because of the promises he made to their fathers. 28 God never changes his mind about the people he calls and the things he gives them. And God never takes back his call to the people. 29 At one time you refused to obey God. But now you have received mercy, because those people (the Jews) refused to obey. 30 And now the Jews refuse to obey, because God showed mercy to you. But this happened so that they can also receive mercy from God. 31 All people have refused to obey God. God has put all people together as people that don’t obey him, so that God can show mercy to all people.

Praise to God

33 Yes, God’s riches are very great! God’s wisdom and knowledge have no end! No person can explain the things God decides. No person can understand God’s ways. 34 Like the Scripture says,

“Who knows the mind of the Lord?
Who is able to give God advice?”

Isaiah 40:13

35 “Who has ever given God anything? God owes nothing to any person.”

Job 41:11

36 Yes, God made all things. And everything continues through God and for God. To God be the glory forever! Amen.

Give Your Lives to God

12 So brothers and sisters, I beg you to do something. God has shown us great mercy. So offer your lives as a living sacrifice to God. Your offering must be only for God and will be pleasing to him. This offering of yourselves is the spiritual way for you to worship (serve) God. 2 Don’t change yourselves to be like the people of this world. But let God change you inside with a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide and accept what God wants for you. You will be able to know what things are good and pleasing to God and what things are perfect.

Israel The Jewish nation (people).
Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
Zion Another name for Jerusalem, the city of God’s people.
Jacob Father of the twelve family groups of Israel.
Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
sacrifice An offering or gift to God.
3God has given me a special gift. That is why I have something to say to every person among you. Don’t think that you are better than you really are. You must see yourself like you really are. Decide what you are by the kind of faith God has given you. 4Each one of us has one body, and that body has many parts. These parts don’t all do the same thing. 5In the same way, we are many people, but in Christ we are all one body. We are the parts of that body. And each part of that body belongs to all the other parts. 6We all have different gifts. Each gift came because of the grace (kindness) that God gave us. If a person has the gift of prophecy, then that person should use that gift with the faith he has. 7If a person has the gift of serving, then that person should serve. If a person has the gift of teaching, then that person should teach. 8If a person has the gift of comforting other people, then that person should comfort. If a person has the gift of giving to help other people, then that person should give freely. If a person has the gift of being a leader, then that person should work hard when he leads. If a person has the gift of showing kindness to other people, then that person should be glad to do that.

9Your love must be real. Hate the things that are evil. Do only the things that are good. 10Love each other in a way that you feel close to each other like brothers and sisters. You should want to give your brothers and sisters more honor than you want for yourself. 11Don’t be lazy when you need to be working for the Lord. Be spiritually excited about serving him. 12Be happy because you have hope. Be patient when you have troubles. Pray all the time. 13Share with God’s people that need help. Look for people that need help, and welcome those people into your homes.

14Say only good things to those people that do bad things to you. Say good things to them and don’t curse them. 15When other people are happy, you should be happy with them. And when other people are sad, you should be sad with them. 16Live together in peace with each other. Don’t be proud. Be willing to be friends with people who are not important to other people. Don’t be conceited.

17If someone does wrong to you, don’t pay him back by doing wrong to him. Try to do the things that all people think are good. 18Do the best you can to live in peace with all people. 19My friends, don’t try to punish people when they do wrong to you. Wait for God to punish them with his anger. It is written: “I am the One who punishes; I will pay people back,” says the Lord. 20But you should do this: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if your enemy is thirsty, give him something to drink. In this way you will make that person ashamed.” 21Don’t let evil defeat you. You should defeat evil by doing good.

Obey Your Government Rulers

13All of you must obey the government rulers. Every person who rules was given the power to rule by God. And all the people that rule now were given that power by God. 2So the person that is against the government is really against something God has commanded. People that are against the government cause themselves to be punished. 3People that do right don’t have to fear the rulers. But those people that do wrong must fear the rulers. Do you want to be free from fearing the rulers? Then you should do right. If you do right, then the rulers will praise you. 4A ruler is God’s servant to help you. But if you do wrong, then be afraid. The ruler has the power to punish, and he will use that power. He is God’s servant to punish people that do wrong. 5So you must obey the government. You should obey because you might be punished if you don’t obey. And you should also obey because you know that is the right thing to do.

6And this is why you pay taxes too. Those rulers are working for God and give all their time to the work of ruling. 7Give all people what you owe them. If you owe them any kind of tax, then pay it. Show respect to the people

“Im ... back” Quote from Deut. 32:35.

you will make that person ashamed Literally, “you will pour burning coals on his head.” People in Old Testament times often put ashes on their heads to show they were sad or sorry.

“If your ... ashamed” Quote from Prov. 25:21–22.
Loving Other People Is the Only Law

8Don’t owe people anything. But you will always owe love to each other. The person that loves other people has obeyed all the law.*
9 Why do I say this? Because the law says, “You must not do the sin of adultery,* you must not murder anyone, you must not steal anything, you must not want things that belong to other people.”* All these commands and all other commands are really only one rule: “Love other people the same as you love yourself.”* 10 Love doesn’t hurt other people. So loving is the same as obeying all the law.

11 I say these things because you know that we live in an important time. Yes, it is now time for you to wake up from your sleep. Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night* is almost finished. The day* is almost here. So we should stop doing things that belong to darkness (sin). We should prepare ourselves to fight evil with the weapons that belong to the light (good). 13 We should live in a right way, like people that belong to the day. We should not have wild and wasteful parties. We should not be drunk. We should not do sexual sins or sin in any way with our bodies. We should not cause arguments and trouble or be jealous. 14 But become like the Lord Jesus Christ, so when people see what you do, they will see Christ. Don’t think about how to satisfy your sinful self and the bad things you want to do.

Don’t Criticize Other People

14 Don’t refuse to accept into your group a person that is weak in faith. And don’t argue with that person about his different ideas. 2One person believes that he can eat any kind of food* he wants. But if another person’s faith is weak, then that person believes he can eat only vegetables. 3 The person that knows that he can eat any kind of food must not feel that he is better than the person that eats only vegetables. And the person that eats only vegetables must not decide that the person that eats all foods is wrong. God has accepted that person. 4 You cannot judge another person’s servant. His own master decides if he is doing right or wrong. And the Lord’s servant will be right, because the Lord is able to make him right.

5 One person might believe that one day is more important than another. And another person might believe that every day is the same. Each person should be sure about his own beliefs in his own mind. 6 The person that thinks one day is more important than other days is doing that for the Lord. And the person that eats all kinds of food is doing that for the Lord. Yes, he gives thanks to God for that food. And the person that refuses to eat some foods does that for the Lord. And he gives thanks to God.

7 Yes, we all live for the Lord. We don’t live or die for ourselves. 8 If we live, we are living for the Lord. And if we die, we are dying for the Lord. So living or dying, we belong to the Lord. 9 That is why Christ died and rose from death to live again. Christ did this so that he could be Lord (ruler) over people that have died and people that are living. 10 So why do you judge your brother in Christ? Or why do you think that you are better than your brother? We will all stand before God, and he will judge us all. 11 Yes, it is written in the Scriptures*:

“Every person will bow before me; every person will say that I am God. As surely as I live, these things will happen, says the Lord (God).”

Isaiah 45:23

12 So each of us will have to explain to God about the things we do.

Don’t Cause Other People to Sin

13 So we should stop judging each other. We must decide not to do anything that will make a brother or sister weak or fall into sin. 14 I am in the Lord Jesus. And I know that there is no law God’s law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

“You must not … people” Quote from Ex. 20:13–15, 17.

“You love other people … yourself” Quote from Lev. 19:18.

night Used as a symbol of the sinful world we live in.

day Used as a symbol of the good time that is coming.

any kind of food The Jewish law said there were some foods Jews should not eat. When Jews became Christians, some of them did not understand they could now eat all foods.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
food that is wrong to eat. But if a person believes that something is wrong, then that thing is wrong for him. 15 If you hurt your brother’s faith because of something you eat, then you are not really following the way of love. Don’t destroy a person’s faith by eating something that he thinks is wrong. Christ died for that person. 16 Don’t allow something that you think is good to become something that other people say is evil. In the kingdom of God, eating and drinking are not important. In the kingdom of God, the important things are these: living right with God, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 Any person who serves Christ by living this way is pleasing God. And that person will be accepted by other people.

19 So let us try as hard as we can to do the things that make peace. And let us try to do the things that will help each other. 20 Don’t let the eating of food destroy the work of God. All food is right to eat. But it is wrong for a person to eat something that makes another person fall into sin. 21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine if that makes your brother or sister fall into sin. It is better not to do anything that will make your brother or sister sin.

22 Your beliefs about these things should be kept secret between yourself and God. What a blessing it is for a person if he can do the things he thinks are right without feeling guilty. 23 But if a person eats something without being sure that it is right, then that person makes himself wrong. Why? Because that person did not believe that it was right. And if a person does anything without believing that it is right, then it is sin.

15 We are strong with faith. So we should help the people who are weak. We should help those people with their weaknesses. We should not try to please ourselves. 2 Each of us should please other people. We should do this to help them. We should try to help them be stronger in faith. 3 Even Christ did not live trying to please himself. It was like the Scriptures said about him: “Those people that insulted you have also insulted me.” 4 Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us. Those things were written so that we could have hope. That hope comes from the patience and strength that the Scriptures give us. 5 Patience and strength come from God. And I pray that God will help you all agree together the way Christ Jesus wants. 6 Then you will all be joined together. And all together you will give glory (praise) to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Christ accepted you. So you should accept each other. This will bring glory to God. 8 I tell you that Christ became a servant of the Jews to show that what God promises is true. Christ did this to prove that God will do the things he promised the Jewish fathers. 9 Christ also did this so that the non-Jews could give glory to God for the mercy he gives to them. The Scriptures say,

“So I will give thanks to you among the non-Jewish people; I will sing praise to your name.”

Psalm 18:49

10 And the Scriptures also say,

“You non-Jews should be happy together with God’s people.”

Deuteronomy 32:43

11 The Scriptures also say,

“Praise the Lord all you non-Jews; all people should praise the Lord.”

Psalm 117:1

12 And Isaiah says,

“A person will come from Jesse’s family; that person will come to rule over the non-Jews; and the non-Jews will have hope because of that person.” Isaiah 11:10

13 I pray that the God who gives hope will fill you with much joy and peace while you trust in him. Then you will have more and...
more hope, and it will flow out of you by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Paul Talks About His Work

14 My brothers and sisters, I am sure that you are full of good. I know that you have all the knowledge you need and that you are able to teach each other. 15 But I have written to you very openly about some things that I wanted you to remember. I did this because God gave me this special gift: 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus. God made me a minister to help the non-Jewish people. I serve God by teaching his Good News.* I do this so that the non-Jewish people may be an offering that God will accept. Those people are made holy* for God by the Holy Spirit.*

17 So I am proud of the things I have done for God in Christ Jesus. 18 I will not talk about anything I did myself. I will talk only about the things that Christ has done with me in leading the non-Jewish people to obey God. They have obeyed God because of the things I have said and done. 19 And they obeyed God because of the power of the miracles* and the great things they saw, and because of the power of God’s Spirit. I have told people the Good News* about Christ in every place from Jerusalem to Illyricum.* And so I have finished that part of my work. 20 I always want to tell the Good News in places where people have never heard of Christ. I do this because I don’t want to build on the work that another person has already started. 21 But it is written {in the Scriptures*}:

“The people that were not told about him (the Christ) will see, and those people that have not heard about him will understand.” Isaiah 52:15

Paul’s Plan to Visit Rome

22 That is why many times I was stopped from coming to you.
23 Now I have finished my work in these areas here. And for many years I have wanted to visit you. 24 So I will visit you when I go to Spain. Yes, I hope to visit you while I am traveling to Spain, and I will stay and enjoy being with you. Then you can help me on my trip. 25 Now I am going to Jerusalem to help God’s people. 26 Some of God’s people in Jerusalem are poor. And The believers in Macedonia and Achaia wanted to help those people. So they gathered some money to give them. 27 The believers in Macedonia and Achaia were happy to do this. And really they should help those believers in Jerusalem. They should help because they are non-Jews and have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings. So they should use the things they have to help the Jews. They owe this to the Jews. 28 I must be sure that the poor people in Jerusalem get all this money that has been given for them. After I finish this work, then I will leave for Spain. While I am traveling to Spain, I will stop and visit you. 29 I know that when I visit you, I will bring you Christ’s full blessing.

Brothers and sisters, I beg you to help me in my work by praying to God for me. Do this because of our Lord Jesus and the love that the Holy Spirit* gives us. 31 Pray that I will be saved from the non-believers in Judea. And pray that this help I bring to Jerusalem will please God’s people there. 32 Then, if God wants me to, I will come to you. I will come with joy, and together you and I will have a time of rest. 33 The God that gives peace be with you all. Amen.

Paul Has Some Final Things to Say

I want you to know that you can trust our sister in Christ, Phoebe. She is a special helper* in the church in Cenchrea. 2 I ask you to accept her in the Lord. Accept her

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

holy A holy person is pure, belongs only to God, and does only the things that God wants.

miracle(s) Amazing things done by the power of God.

Illyricum A Roman province far north and west of Greece.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

special helper Literally, “deacon,” a Greek word meaning “servant.” See 1 Tim. 3:11.
1329

Romans 16:3–27

the way God’s people should. Help her with anything she needs from you. She has helped me very much, and she has helped many other people too.

3Say hello to Priscilla and Aquila. They work together with me in Christ Jesus. They risked their own lives to save my life. I am thankful to them, and all the non-Jewish churches are thankful to them. 4Also, say hello to the church that meets at their house.

Say hello to my dear friend Epaenetus. He was the first person to follow Christ in Asia.* 5Say hello to Mary. She worked very hard for you. 6Say hello to Andronicus and Junia. They are my relatives, and they were in prison with me. They were followers of Christ before I was. And they are some of the most important of the people that Christ sent out to do his work.* They were believers in Christ before I was. 7Say hello to Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. 8Say hello to Urbanus. He is a worker together with me for Christ. And say hello to my dear friend Stachys. 9Say hello to Apelles. He was tested and proved that he truly loves Christ. Say hello to all those people that are in the family of Aristobulus. 10Say hello to Herodion, my relative. Say hello to all the people in the family of Narcissus that belong to the Lord. 11Say hello to Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Those women work very hard for the Lord. Say hello to my dear friend Persis. She has also worked very hard for the Lord. 12Say hello to Rufus. He is a special person in the Lord. Say hello to his mother. She has been a mother to me also. 13Say hello to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and all the brothers in Christ, that are with them. 14Say hello to Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas. And say hello to all the saints (believers) with them. 15When you see each other, say hello with a holy kiss. All of Christ’s churches (groups of believers) say hello to you.

17Brothers and sisters, I ask you to be very careful of those people that cause people to be against each other. Be very careful of those people that upset other people’s faith. Those people are against the true teaching you learned. Stay away from those people. 18People like that are not serving our Lord Christ. They are only doing things to please themselves. They use fancy talk and say nice things to fool the people that don’t know about evil. 19All the believers have heard that you obey. So I am very happy because of you. But I want you to be wise about the things that are good. And I want you to know nothing about things that are evil.

20The God that brings peace will soon defeat Satan (the devil) and give you power over him. The grace (kindness) of our Lord Jesus be with you.

21Timothy, a worker together with me, says hello to you. Also Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater (these are my relatives) say hello to you.

22I am Tertius, and I am writing these things that Paul says. I say hello to you in the Lord.

23Gaius is letting me and the whole church here use his home. He also says hello to you. Erastus and our brother Quartus say hello to you. Erastus is the city treasurer here. * 24* 25Glory to God. God is the One who can make you strong in faith. God can use the Good News* that I teach to make you strong. That is the Good News about Jesus Christ that I tell people. That Good News is the secret truth that God has made known. That secret truth was hidden since the beginning. But that secret truth has now been shown to us. And that truth has been made known to all people. It has been made known by the things the prophets* wrote. This is what God commanded. And that secret truth has been made known to all people, so that they can believe and obey God. God lives forever.

27Glory forever to the only wise God through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Verse 24 Some Greek copies add verse 24: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen.”

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

Prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Asia The western part of modern Turkey.

Most important ... work Literally, “important among (or to) the apostles.”
Greetings from Paul. I was called (chosen) to be an apostle* of Christ Jesus. I was called because that is what God wanted.

Greetings also from Sosthenes, our brother in Christ.

To the church of God in Corinth, to those people that have been made holy* in Christ Jesus. You were called to be God's holy people. You were called with all the people everywhere that trust in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:

Grace (kindness) and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul Gives Thanks to God

I always thank my God for you because of the grace (kindness) that God has given you through Christ Jesus. In Jesus you have been blessed in every way. You have been blessed in all your speaking and all your knowledge. The truth about Christ has been proved in you. So you have every gift from God while you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to come again. Jesus will keep you strong always until the end. He will keep you strong, so that there will be no wrong in you on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God is faithful. He is the One who has called you to share life with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Problems in the Church at Corinth

I beg you brothers and sisters in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I beg that all of you agree with each other, so that there will be no divisions among you. I beg that you be completely joined together by having the same kind of thinking and the same purpose. My brothers and sisters, some people from Chloe's family told me about you. I heard that there are arguments among you. This is what I mean: One of you says, “I follow Paul,” and another person says, “I follow Apollos.” Another person says, “I follow Cephas (Peter),” and another person says, “I follow Christ.” Christ cannot be divided into different groups! Did Paul die on the cross for you? No! Were you baptized* in the name of Paul? No! I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius. I am thankful, because now no one can say that you people were baptized in my name.

(I also baptized the family of Stephanas. But I don’t remember that I myself baptized any others.) Christ did not give me the work of baptizing people. Christ gave me the work of telling the Good News.* But Christ sent me to tell the Good News without using words of worldly wisdom. If I used worldly wisdom to tell the Good News, then the cross* of Christ would lose its power.

God's Power and Wisdom in Christ

The teaching about the cross seems foolish to those people that are lost. But to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Like the Scriptures* say,

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

cross Paul uses the cross as a picture of the gospel, the story of Christ’s death to pay for people’s sins. The cross (Christ’s death) was God’s way to save people.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

apostle(s) The men Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.
holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.
Where is the wise person? Where is the educated person? Where is the philosopher of this time? God has made the wisdom of the world foolish. 21This is what God with his wisdom wanted: The world did not know God through the world’s own wisdom. So God used the message that sounds foolish to save the people that believe it. 22The Jews ask for miracles as proofs. The Greeks want wisdom. 23But this is the message we tell everyone: Christ was killed on a cross. This message is a big problem to the Jews. And the non-Jews think it is foolish. 24But Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God to those people that God has called (chosen)—Jews and Greeks (non-Jews). 25Even the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom. Even the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. 26Brothers and sisters, God called (chose) you. Think about that! And not many of you were wise in the way the world judges wisdom. Not many of you had great influence. Not many of you came from important families. 27But God chose the weak things of the world to give shame to the wise people. God chose the weak things of the world to give shame to the strong people. 28And God chose what the world thinks is not important. He chose what the world hates and thinks is nothing. God chose these to destroy what the world thinks is important. 29God did this so that no man can boast before him. 30It is God that has made you part of Christ Jesus. Christ has become wisdom for us from God. Christ is the reason we are right with God and have freedom from sin; Christ is the reason we are holy. 31So, like the Scriptures say, “If a person boasts, that person should boast only in the Lord.”

The Message About Christ on the Cross

Dear brothers and sisters, when I came to you, I told you the truth of God. But I did not use fancy words or great wisdom. 2I decided that while I was with you I would forget about everything except Jesus Christ and his death on the cross. 3When I came to you, I was weak and shook with fear. 4My teaching and my speaking were not with wise words that persuade people. But the proof of my teaching was the power that the Spirit gives. 5I did this so that your faith would be in God’s power, not in the wisdom of a man.

God’s Wisdom

6We teach wisdom to people that are mature. But this wisdom we teach is not from this world. It is not the wisdom of the rulers of this world. Those rulers are losing their power. 7But we speak God’s secret wisdom. This wisdom has been hidden from people. God planned this wisdom for our glory. He planned it before the world began. 8None of the rulers of this world understood this wisdom. If they had understood it, then they would not have killed our glorious Lord on a cross. 9But like the Scriptures say,

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no person has imagined what God has prepared for those people that love him.” Isaiah 64:4

10But God has shown us these things through the Spirit.

The Spirit knows all things. The Spirit even knows the deep secrets of God. 11It is like this: No person knows the thoughts that another person has. Only that person’s spirit that lives inside him knows those thoughts. It is the same with God. No one knows the thoughts of God. Only the Spirit of God knows those thoughts. 12We did not receive the spirit of the
world. But we received the Spirit that is from God. We received this Spirit so that we can know the things that God has given us. 13When we speak these things, we don’t use words taught to us by the wisdom that men have. We use words taught to us by the Spirit. We use spiritual words to explain spiritual things. 14A person that is not spiritual does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. That person thinks that those things are foolish. That person cannot understand the things of the Spirit, because those things can only be judged spiritually. 15But the spiritual person is able to make judgments about all things. Other people cannot judge that person. The Scriptures say, 

16 “Who knows the mind of the Lord? Who can tell the Lord what to do?”

Isaiah 40:13

But we have the mind of Christ.

Following Men Is Wrong

3 Brothers and sisters, in the past I could not talk to you like I talk to spiritual people. I had to talk to you like worldly people—like babies in Christ. 2The teaching I gave you was like milk, not solid food. I did this because you were not ready for solid food. And even now you are not ready for solid food. 3You are still not spiritual people. You have jealousy and arguing among you. This shows that you are not spiritual. You are acting the same as people of the world. 4One of you says, “I follow Paul,” and another person says, “I follow Apollos.” When you say things like that, you are acting like worldly people.

5Is Apollos important? No! Is Paul important? No! We are only servants of God who helped you believe. Each one of us did the work God gave us to do. 6I planted the seed (teaching) and Apollos watered it. But God is the One who made the seed grow. 7So the person that plants is not important, and the person that waters is not important. Only God is important, because he is the One who makes things grow. 8The person that plants and the person that waters have the same purpose. And each person will be rewarded for his own work. 9We are workers together for God. And you are like a farm that belongs to God.

And you are a house that belongs to God. 10Like an expert builder I built the foundation of that house. I used the gift that God gave me to do this. Other people are building on that foundation. But each person should be careful how he builds. 11The foundation has already been built. No person can build any other foundation. The foundation that has already been built is Jesus Christ. 12A person can build on that foundation, using gold, silver, jewels, wood, grass, or straw. 13But the work that each person does will be clearly seen, because the Day will make it plain. That Day will appear with fire, and the fire will test every man’s work. 14If the building that a person puts on the foundation still stands, then that person will get his reward. 15But if that person’s building is burned up, then he will suffer loss. The person will be saved, but it will be like he escaped from a fire.

16You should know that you yourselves are God’s temple. God’s Spirit lives in you. 17If any person destroys God’s temple, then God will destroy that person. Why? Because God’s temple is holy. You yourselves are God’s temple.

18Don’t fool yourselves. If any person among you thinks that he is wise in this world, then he should become a fool. Then that person can become truly wise. Why? Because the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. It is like the Scriptures say, “He (God) catches the wise (smart) people when they use their sneaky ways.” 19The Scriptures also say, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise people. He knows that their thoughts are worth nothing.” 20So you

foundations The bottom or first part of a house that the rest of the house is built on. 
Day The day Christ will come to judge all people. 
God’s Spirit The Holy Spirit. Also called the Spirit of Christ and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world. 
holy Something holy belongs only to God and should be used only for the things God wants. 
“He ... ways” Quote from Job 5:13. 
“The Lord ... nothing” Quote from Ps. 94:11.
1 CORINTHIANS 3:22–5:5

should not boast about men. All things are yours: 22Paul, Apollos, and Cephas (Peter); the world, life, death, the present, and the future—all these things are yours. 23And you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

Apostles of Christ

4 This is what people should think about us: We are servants of Christ. We are the people that God has trusted with his secret truths. 2A person that is trusted with something must show that he is worthy of that trust. 3I don’t care if I am judged by you. And I don’t care if I am judged by any human court. I don’t even judge myself. 4I don’t know of any wrong that I have done. But that does not make me innocent (without guilt). The Lord is the One who judges me. 5So don’t judge before the right time; wait until the Lord comes. He will shine light on the things that are hidden in darkness. He will make known the secret purposes of people’s hearts. Then God will give every person the praise he should get.

6Brothers and sisters, I have used Apollos and myself as examples for you in these things. I did this so that you could learn from us the meaning of the words, “Follow only what the Scriptures say.” Then you will not be proud of one man and hate another. 7Who says that you are better than other people? Everything you have was given to you. So, if everything you have was given to you, then why do you boast like you got those things by your own power?

8You think you have everything you need. You think you are rich. You think you have become kings without us. I wish you really were kings! Then we could be kings together with you. 9But it seems to me that God has given me and the other apostles* the last place. We are like men condemned to die, with all the people watching. We are like a show for the whole world to see—angels and people. 10We are fools for Christ. But you think you are very wise in Christ. We are weak, but you think you are strong. People give you honor, but they don’t honor us. 11Even now we still don’t have enough to eat or drink, and we don’t have enough clothes. We often get beatings. We have no homes. 12We work hard with our own hands to feed ourselves. People curse us, but we speak a blessing for them. People persecute* us, and we accept it. 13People say bad things about us, but we say good things to them. At this time people still treat us like we are the world’s garbage—the trash of the earth.

14I am not trying to make you feel ashamed. But I am writing these things to give you a warning like you were my own dear children. 15You may have 10,000 teachers in Christ, but you don’t have many fathers. Through the Good News* I became your father in Christ Jesus. 16So I beg you to please be like me. 17That is why I am sending Timothy to you. He is my son in the Lord. I love Timothy, and he is faithful. He will help you remember the way I live in Christ Jesus. That way of life is what I teach in all the churches everywhere.

18Some of you have become boasters. You boast, thinking that I will not come to you again. 19But I will come to you very soon. I will come, if the Lord wants me to. Then I will see what these boasters can do, not what they can say. 20I will want to see this because the kingdom of God is not talk but power. 21Which do you want: that I come to you with punishment, or that I come with love and gentleness?

A Moral Problem in the Church

5 People are really saying that there is sexual sin among you. And it is such a bad kind of sexual sin that it does not happen even among those people that don’t know God. People say that a man there has his father’s wife. 2And still you are proud of yourselves! You should have been filled with sadness. And the man that did that sin should be put out of your group. 3My body is not there with you, but I am with you in spirit. And I have already judged the man who did that sin. I judged him the same as I would if I were really there. 4Come together in the name of our Lord Jesus. I will be with you in spirit, and you will have the power of our Lord Jesus with you. 5Then

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
apostle(s) The men Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

persecute(d) To hurt, bother, or do bad things to.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
give this man to Satan (the Devil), so that his sinful self* will be destroyed. Then his spirit can be saved on the day of the Lord.

6Your proud boasting is not good. You know the saying, “Just a little yeast” makes the whole batch of dough rise.” 7Take out all the old yeast (sin), so that you will be a new batch of dough. You really are Passover bread* without yeast. Yes, Christ, our Passover lamb,* has already been killed. 8So let us eat our Passover meal, but not with the bread that has the old yeast. That old yeast is the yeast of sin and wrongdoing. But let us eat the bread that has no yeast. This is the bread of goodness and truth.

9I wrote to you in my letter that you should not associate with people that sin sexually. 10But I did not mean that you should not associate with the sinful people of this world. Those people of the world sin sexually, or they are greedy and cheat each other, or they worship idols (false gods). To get away from those people you would have to leave this world. 11I am writing to tell you that the person you must not associate with is this: any person that calls himself a brother in Christ but sins sexually, or is greedy, or worships idols, or talks bad to people, or gets drunk, or cheats people. Don’t even eat with a person like that.

12–13It is not my business to judge those people that are not part of the church (group of believers). God will judge those people. But you must judge the people that are part of the church. The Scriptures* say, “Take the evil person out of your group.”**

Judging Problems Between Christians

When one of you has something against another person, why do you go to the judges in the law courts? Those people are not right with God. So why do you let those people decide who is right? You should be ashamed!

sinful self* Or, “body.” Literally, “flesh.”
yeast Used here as a symbol of evil or bad influence.
Passover bread The special bread without yeast that the Jews ate at their Passover meal. Paul means that Christians are free from sin like the Passover bread was free from yeast.
Passover lamb Jesus was a sacrifice for his people, like a lamb killed for the Jewish Passover Feast.
Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
“Take ... group” Quote from Deut. 22:21, 24.

Why don’t you let God’s people decide who is right? 2Surely you know that God’s people will judge the world. So if you will judge the world, then surely you are able to judge small things, like this. 3You know that in the future we will judge angels. So surely we can judge things in this life. 4So if you have those disagreements that must be judged, why do you take those things to people who are not part of the church? Those people mean nothing to the church. 5I say this to shame you. Surely there is some person in your group wise enough to judge a complaint between two brothers (believers)! 6But now one brother goes to court against another brother. You let men that are not believers judge their case!

7The lawsuits that you have against each other show that you are already defeated. It would be better for you to let someone do wrong against you! It would be better for you to let someone cheat you! 8But you yourselves do wrong and cheat! And you do this to other believers in Christ!

9–10Surely you know that the people that do wrong will not get God’s kingdom. Don’t be fooled. These people will not get God’s kingdom: people that sin sexually, people that worship idols,* people that do the sin of adultery,* men that let other men use them for sex or that have sex with other men, people that steal, people that are greedy, people that get drunk, people that say bad things to other people, and people that cheat. 10In the past, some of you were like that. But you were washed clean, you were made holy,* and you were made right with God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Use Your Bodies for God’s Glory

12“All things are allowed for me.” But not all things are good. “All things are allowed for me.” But I will not let anything be my master. 13“Food is for the stomach, and the stomach for food.” Yes. And God will destroy them both. But the body is not for sexual sin. The body is

idol(s) False gods made from wood or stone and worshiped by the non-Jewish people.
adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.
holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.
for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. 14 And God will raise our bodies from death with the same power he used to raise the Lord Jesus. God will also raise us from death. 15 Surely you know that your bodies are parts of Christ himself. So I must never take the parts of Christ and join those parts to a prostitute.* 16 The Scriptures* say, “The two people will become one.”* So you should know that a person that joins himself with a prostitute becomes one with her in body. 17 But the person who joins himself with the Lord is one with the Lord in spirit.

18 So run away from sexual sin. Every other sin that a person does is outside his body. But the person that sins sexually sins against his own body. 19 You should know that your body is a temple (house) for the Holy Spirit.* The Holy Spirit is in you. You have received the Holy Spirit from God. You don’t own yourselves. 20 You were bought* by God at a price. So honor God with your bodies.

About Marriage

7 Now I will discuss the things you wrote to me about. It is good for a man not to marry. 2 But sexual sin is a danger. So each man should have his own wife. And each woman should have her own husband. 3 The husband should give his wife all that she should have as his wife. And the wife should give her husband all that he should have as her husband. 4 The wife does not have power over her own body. Her husband has the power over her body. And the husband does not have power over his own body. His wife has the power over his body. 5 Don’t refuse to give your bodies to each other. But you might both agree to stay away from sex for a time. You might do this so that you can give your time to prayer. Then come together again. This is so that Satan (the Devil) cannot tempt you in your weakness. 6 I say this to give you permission to be separated for a time. I this is not a command. 7 I wish all people were like me. But each person has his own gift from God. One person has one gift, another person has another gift.

8 Now for the people who are not married and for the widows* I say this: It is good for them to stay single like me. 9 But if they cannot control their bodies, then they should marry. It is better to marry than to burn, with sexual desire.

10 Now I give this command for the married people. (The command is not from me; it is from the Lord.) A wife must not leave her husband. 11 But if a wife leaves her husband she must not marry again. Or she should go back together with her husband. Also the husband must not divorce his wife.

12 For all the other people I say this (I am saying these things, not the Lord): A brother in Christ might have a wife who is not a believer. If she will live with him, then he must not divorce her. 13 And a woman might have a husband who is not a believer. If he will live with her, then she must not divorce him. 14 The husband who is not a believer is made holy through his believing wife. And the wife who is not a believer is made holy through her believing husband. If this were not true, then your children would not be clean. But now your children are holy.

15 But if the person who is not a believer decides to leave, let that person leave. When this happens, the brother or sister in Christ is free. God called you to a life of peace. 16 Wives, maybe you will save your husband; and husbands, maybe you will save your wife. You don’t know now what will happen later.

Live as God Called You

17 But each person should continue to live the way the Lord God has given you to live—the way you were when God called you. This is a rule I make in all the churches. 18 If a man was already circumcised* when he was called, then he should not change his circumcision. If a man was without circumcision when he was called, then he should not be circumcised. 19 It is not important if a person is circumcised or not.
not circumcised. The important thing is obeying God’s commands. Each person should stay the way he was when God called him. If you were a slave when God called you, don’t let that bother you. But if you can be free, then become free. The person who was a slave when the Lord called him is free in the Lord. That person belongs to the Lord. In the same way, the person who was free when he was called is now Christ’s slave. You people were bought at a price. So don’t become slaves of men.

Brothers and sisters, in your new life you were bought at a price. So don’t become slaves of the world, the way it is now, will soon be gone. We don’t have much time left. So starting now, people who have wives should use their time to serve the Lord like they don’t have wives. People who are sad should live like they are not sad. People who are happy should live like they are not happy. People who buy things should live like they own nothing. People who use the things of the world should live like those things are not important to them. You should live like this, because this world, the way it is now, will soon be gone.

I want you to be free from worry. A man who is not married is busy with the Lord’s work. He is trying to please the Lord. But a man who is married is busy with things of the world. He is trying to please his wife. He must think about two things—pleasing his wife and pleasing the Lord. A woman who is not married or a girl who has never married is busy with the Lord’s work. She wants to give herself fully—body and soul—to the Lord. But a married woman is busy with things of the world. She is trying to please her husband. I am saying these things to help you. I am not trying to limit you. But I want you to live in the right way. And I want you to give yourselves fully to the Lord without giving your time to other things.

A man might think that he is not doing the right thing with his virgin, if she is almost past the best age to marry. So he might think that marriage is necessary. He should do what he wants. He should let them marry. It is no sin. But another man might be more sure in his mind. There may be no need for marriage, so that he is free to do what he wants. If this man has decided in his own heart to keep his virgin, then he is doing the right thing. So the man who gives his virgin in marriage does right. And the man who does not give his virgin in marriage does better.

A woman must stay with her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, the woman is free to marry any man she wants. But she must marry in the Lord. The woman is happier if she does not marry again. This is my opinion, and I believe that I have God’s Spirit.

Now, I will write about meat that is sacrificed to idols. We know that “we all have knowledge.” “Knowledge” puffs you up full of pride. But love makes you help others grow stronger. The person who thinks he

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**Questions About Getting Married**

Now I write about people who are not married. I have no command from the Lord about this. But I give my opinion. And I can be trusted, because the Lord has given me mercy. This is a time of trouble. So I think that it is good for you to stay the way you are. If you have a wife, then don’t try to become free from her. If you are not married, then don’t try to find a wife. But if you decide to marry, that is not a sin. And it is not a sin for a girl that has never married to get married. But those people who marry will have trouble in this life. I want you to be free from this trouble.

Brothers and sisters, this is what I mean: We don’t have much time left. So starting now, people who have wives should use their time to serve the Lord like they don’t have wives. People who are sad should live like they are not sad. People who are happy should live like they are not happy. People who buy things should live like they own nothing. People who use the things of the world should live like those things are not important to them. You should live like this, because this world, the way it is now, will soon be gone.

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A woman must stay with her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, the woman is free to marry any man she wants. But she must marry in the Lord. The woman is happier if she does not marry again. This is my opinion, and I believe that I have God’s Spirit.

**About Food Offered to Idols**

Now, I will write about meat that is sacrificed to idols. We know that “we all have knowledge.” “Knowledge” puffs you up full of pride. But love makes you help others grow stronger. The person who thinks he

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**people who are not married** Literally, “virgins.”

**virgin** A girl that is not married and has never had sexual relations.

**Verses 36–38** Another possible translation is: “36A man might think that he is not doing the right thing with his virgin (the girl he is engaged to). The girl might be almost past the best age to marry. So the man might feel that he should marry her. He should do what he wants. They should get married. It is no sin. But another man might be more sure in his mind. There may be no need for marriage, so he is free to do what he wants. If this man has decided in his own heart to keep his virgin, then he is doing the right thing. So the man who marries his virgin does right. And the man who does not marry does better.”

**sacrificed** Killed and offered as a gift to show worship.

**idol(s)** False gods made from wood or stone and worshiped by the non-Jewish people.
knows something does not yet know anything like he should. But the person who loves God is known by God.

So this is what I say about eating meat: We know that an idol is really nothing in the world. And we know that there is only one God. It’s really not important if there are things called gods, in heaven or on earth. (And there are many things that people call “gods” and “lords.”) But for us there is only one God. He is our Father. All things came from him and we live for him. And there is only one Lord. He is Jesus Christ. All things were made through Jesus, and we also have life through him.

But not all people know this. Some people have had the habit of worshiping idols until now. So now when those people eat meat, they still feel like it belongs to an idol. They are not sure that it is right to eat this meat. So when they eat it, they feel guilty. But food will not make us closer to God. Refusing to eat does not make us less pleasing to God. And eating does not make us better.

But be careful with your freedom. Your freedom to eat anything may make those people who have doubts about what they can eat fall into sin. You understand that it’s alright to eat anything, so you can eat in an idol’s temple. But a person who has doubts might see you eating there, and this might encourage them to eat meat sacrificed to idols too. But they really think it is wrong. So this weak brother or sister is ruined because of your better understanding. And Christ died for this person.

When you sin against your brothers and sisters in Christ like this and you hurt them by causing them to do things they feel are wrong, then you are also sinning against Christ. So if the food I eat makes another believer fall into sin, then I will never eat meat again. I will stop eating meat, so that I will not make my brother or sister sin.

I am a free man! I am an apostle! I have seen Jesus our Lord! You people are an example of my work in the Lord. Other people may not accept me as an apostle. But surely you accept me as an apostle. You people are proof that I am an apostle in the Lord.

Some people want to judge me. So this is the answer I give them: We have the right to eat and drink, don’t we? We have the right to bring a believing wife with us when we travel, don’t we? The other apostles and the Lord’s brothers and Cephas all do this. And are Barnabas and I the only ones that must work to earn our living? No soldier ever serves in the army and pays his own salary. No person ever plants a garden of grapes without eating some of the grapes himself. No person takes care of a flock of sheep without drinking some of the milk himself.

These things are not only what men think. God’s law says the same things. Yes, it is written in the law of Moses: “When a work animal is being used to separate grain, don’t cover its mouth and stop it from eating the grain.” When God said this, was he thinking only about work animals? No. He was really talking about us. Yes, that Scripture was written for us. The person that plows and the person that separates the grain should hope to get some of the grain for their work. We planted spiritual seed among you. So we should be able to harvest (get) from you some things for this life. Surely that is not asking too much. Other men have this right to get things from you. So surely we have this right too. But we don’t use this right. No, we endure everything ourselves so that we will not stop anyone from obeying the Good News of Christ. Surely you know that people that work at the temple get their food from the temple. And people that serve at the altar get part of what is offered at the altar. It is the same with people that have the work of telling the Good News. The Lord has commanded that those people that tell the Good News should get their living from this work.

But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not trying to get anything from you.

idol(s) False gods made from wood or stone and worshiped by the non-Jewish people.
idol’s temple Place for worship of a false god.
sacrificed Killed and offered as a gift to show worship.
apostle(s) The men Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

“When ... eating the grain” Quote from Deut. 25:4.
Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
temple Special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
altar A stone table at the temple used for offering sacrifices.
That is not my purpose for writing this. I would rather die than to have my reason for boasting taken away. My work of telling the Good News is not my reason for boasting. Telling the Good News is my duty—something I must do. It will be bad for me if I don’t tell people the Good News. If I do this work of telling the Good News because it is my own choice, then I deserve a reward. But I have no choice. I must tell the Good News. I am only doing the duty that was given to me.

So what do I get for doing this work? This is my reward: that when I tell people the Good News I can offer it to them for free. This way, I don’t use the right to be paid, that I have in this work of telling the Good News.

I am free. I belong to no other person. But I make myself a slave to all people. I do this to help save as many people as I can. To the people that are without the law I became like a person who is ruled by the law. I did this to help save those people that are ruled by the law. I did this to help save those people that are without the law. I did this so that I could help save them. I have become all things to all people. I did this so that I could save people in any way possible. I do all these things because of the Good News. I do these things so that I can share in the blessings of the Good News.

You know that in a race all the runners run. But only one runner gets the prize. So run like that. Run to win! All people that compete in the games use strict training. They do this so that they can win a crown. But our crown will continue forever. So I run like a person that has a goal. I fight like a boxer that is hitting something—not just the air. It is my own body that I hit. I make it my slave. I do this so that I myself will not be thrown out by God after I have told other people about his blessings.

**Warning from the History of God’s People**

10 Brothers and sisters, I want you to know what happened to our ancestors that followed Moses. They were all under the cloud, and they all walked through the sea. Those people were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food. And they all drank the same spiritual drink. They drank from that spiritual rock that was with them. That rock was Christ. But God was not pleased with most of those people. They were killed in the desert.

And these things that happened are examples for us. These examples should stop us from wanting evil things like those people did. Don’t worship idols like some of those people did. Like the Scriptures say, “The people sat down to eat and drink. The people stood up to dance.” We should not do sexual sins like some of those people did. In one day 23,000 of them died because of their sin. We should not test the Lord like some of those people did. They were killed by snakes because they tested the Lord. And don’t complain like some of those people did. Those people were killed by the angel that destroys.

The things that happened to those people are examples. And those things were written to be warnings for us. We live in the time that all those past histories were pointing to. The person that thinks he is standing strong should be careful that he doesn’t fall. The only temptations that you have are the same temptations that all people have. But you can trust God. He will not let you be tempted more than you can bear. But when you are tempted, ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Moses One of the most important leaders of the Jewish people during the time of the Old Testament.

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

cloud The cloud that led the people of Israel out of Egypt and across the Red Sea. See Ex. 13:20–21 14:19,20.

idol(s) False gods made from wood or stone and worshiped by the non-Jewish people.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

“The people … dance” Quote from Ex. 32:6.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

law Probably the Jewish law—the law of Moses.
God will also give you a way to escape that temptation. Then you will be able to endure it.

14 So, my dear friends, stay away from worshiping idols. I am speaking to you like you are intelligent people; judge for yourselves what I say. 15 The cup of blessing that we give thanks for is a sharing in the blood (death) of Christ, isn’t it? And the bread that we break is a sharing in the body of Christ, isn’t it? 16 (There is one loaf of bread. And we are many people. But we all share from that one loaf. So we are really one body.)

18 And think about what happens when the people of Israel (the Jews) offer sacrifices. When they eat the meat that is sacrificed, they are sharing their meal with God at the altar, aren’t they? 19 So, what about food that is sacrificed to idols? Am I saying that sacrifices to idols are the same as those Jewish sacrifices? No, because an idol is nothing, and the things offered to idols are worth nothing. 20 But I am saying that when food is sacrificed to idols, it is an offering to demons, not to God. And I don’t want you to share anything with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and then go drink a cup with demons. You cannot share a meal at the Lord’s table and then go share a meal with demons. 22 Doing that would make the Lord jealous! And we don’t want to do that, do we? No, because he is much stronger than we are.

Use Your Freedom for God’s Glory

23 “All things are allowed.” Yes. But not all things are good. “All things are allowed.” Yes. But some things don’t help others grow stronger. 24 No person should try to do the things that will help only himself. He should try to do what is good for other people. 25 Eat any meat that is sold in the meat market. Don’t ask questions about the meat to see if it is something you think is wrong to eat. 26 You can eat it, “because the earth and everything in it belong to the Lord.”

27 A person that is not a believer might invite you to eat with him. If you want to go, then eat anything that is put before you. Don’t ask questions to see if it is something you think is wrong to eat. 28 But if a person tells you, “That food was offered to idols,” then don’t eat it. Why? Because some people think it is wrong, and it might cause a problem for the person who told you that. 29 I don’t mean that you think it is wrong. But the other person might think it is wrong. [That is the only reason I would not eat the meat.] My own freedom should not be judged by what another person thinks. 30 I eat the meal with thankfulness. So I don’t want to be criticized because of something I thank God for.

31 So if you eat or if you drink or if you do anything, do it for the glory of God. 32 Never do anything that might make other people do wrong—Jews, Greeks (non-Jews), or God’s church. 33 I do the same thing. I try to please everybody in every way. I am not trying to do what is good for me. I try to do what is good for the most people, so that they can be saved.

Follow my example, like I follow the example of Christ.

Being Under Authority

2 I praise you because you remember me in all things. You follow closely the teachings that I gave you. 3 But I want you to understand this: The head (authority) of every man is Christ. And the head of a woman is the man. And the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man that prophesies or prays with his head covered brings shame to his head. 5 But every woman that prays or prophesies should have her head covered. If her head is not covered, then she brings shame to her head. Then she is the same as a woman that has her head shaved. 6 If a woman does not cover her head, then it is the same as cutting off all her hair. But it is shameful for a woman to cut off her hair or to...
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1 CORINTHIANS 11:7–12:3

shave her head. So she should cover her head. 7But a man should not cover his head. Why? Because he is made like God and is God’s glory. But woman is man’s glory. 8Man did not come from woman. Woman came from man. 9And man was not made for woman. Woman was made for man. 10So that is why a woman should have her head covered with something to show that she is under authority. And also she should do this because of the angels.

11But in the Lord the woman is important to the man, and the man is important to the woman. 12This is true because woman came from man, but also man is born from woman. Really, everything comes from God. 13Decide this for yourselves: Is it right for a woman to pray to God without something on her head? 14Even nature itself teaches you that wearing long hair is shameful for a man. 15But wearing long hair is a woman’s honor. Long hair is given to the woman to cover her head. 16Some people may still want to argue about this. But we and the churches of God don’t accept what those people are doing.

The Lord’s Supper

17In the things I tell you now I don’t praise you. Your meetings hurt you more than they help you. 18First, I hear that when you meet together as a church you are divided. And I believe some of this. 19(It is necessary for there to be differences among you. That is the way to make it clear which ones of you are really doing right.) 20When you all come together, you are not really eating the Lord’s Supper.* 21Why? Because when you eat, each person eats without waiting for the others. Some people don’t get enough to eat, while other people have so much that they become drunk. 22You can eat and drink in your own homes! It seems that you think God’s church (people) is not important. You embarrass those people that are poor. What should I tell you? Should I praise you for doing this? I don’t praise you.

23The teaching that I gave you is the same teaching that I received from the Lord: On the night when Jesus was given to be killed, he took bread and gave thanks for it. Then he divided the bread and said, “This is my body; it is for you. Eat this to remember me.” 24In the same way, after they ate, Jesus took the cup of wine. Jesus said, “This wine shows the new agreement from God to his people. This new agreement begins with my blood (death). When you drink this, do it to remember me.” 25Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you make known the Lord’s death until he comes.

26So if a person eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in a way that is not worthy of it, then that person is sinning against the body and the blood of the Lord. 27Every person should look into his own heart before he eats the bread and drinks the cup. 28If a person eats the bread and drinks the cup without recognizing the body, then that person is judged guilty by eating and drinking. 29That is why many in your group are sick and weak. And many have died. 30But if we judged ourselves in the right way, then God would not judge us. 31But when the Lord judges us, he punishes us to show us the right way. He does this so that we will not be condemned with the other people in the world.

32So, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. 33If a person is too hungry to wait, then he should eat at home. Do this so that your meeting together will not bring God’s judgment on you. I will tell you what to do about the other things when I come.

Gifts from the Holy Spirit

12Now, brothers and sisters, I want you to understand about spiritual gifts. 2You remember the lives you lived before you were believers. You let yourselves be influenced and led away to worship idols—things that have no life. 3So I tell you that no

Lord’s Supper  The special meal Jesus told his followers to eat to remember him. See Lk. 22:14–20.

idol(s)  False gods made from wood or stone and worshiped by the non-Jewish people.
person that is speaking with the help of God’s Spirit says, “Jesus be cursed.” And no person can say, “Jesus is Lord,” without the help of the Holy Spirit.*

4 There are different kinds of spiritual gifts; but they are all from the same Spirit.*

5 There are different ways to serve; but all these ways are from the same Lord. 6 And there are different ways that God works in people; but all these ways are from the same God. God works in us all to do everything. 7 Something from the Spirit can be seen in each person. The Spirit gives this to each person to help other people. 8 The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak with wisdom. And the same Spirit gives another person the ability to speak with knowledge. 9 The same Spirit gives faith to one person. And that one Spirit gives another person gifts of healing. 10 The Spirit gives to another person the power to do miracles,* to another person the ability to prophesy,* to another person the ability to know the difference between good and evil spirits. The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak in different kinds of languages, and to another person the ability to interpret those languages. 11 One Spirit, the same Spirit, does all these things. The Spirit decides what to give each person.

The Body of Christ

12 A person’s body is only one thing, but it has many parts. Yes, there are many parts to a body, but all those parts make only one body. Christ is like that too: 13 Some of us are Jews and some of us are Greeks (non-Jews); some of us are slaves and some of us are free. But we were all baptized* into one body through one Spirit.* And we were all given* the one Spirit.

14 And a person’s body has more than one part. It has many parts. 15 The foot might say, “I am not a hand. So I don’t belong to the body.” But saying this would not stop the foot from being a part of the body. 16 The ear might say, “I am not an eye. So I don’t belong to the body.” But saying this would not make the ear stop being a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, then the body would not be able to hear. If the whole body were an ear, then the body would not be able to smell anything. 18–19 If each part of the body were the same part, then there would be no body. But truly God put the parts in the body like he wanted them. He made a place for each one of them. 20 And so there are many parts, but only one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the foot, “I don’t need you!” 22 No! Those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are really very important. 23 And the parts of the body that we think are not worth very much are the parts that we give the most care to. And we give special care to the parts of the body that we don’t want to show. 24 The more beautiful parts of our body don’t need this special care. But God put the body together and gave more honor to the parts that need it. 25 God did this so that our body would not be divided. God wanted the different parts to care the same for each other. 26 If one part of the body suffers, then all the other parts suffer with it. Or if one part of our body is honored, then all the other parts share its honor too.

27 All of you together are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of that body. 28 And in the church God has given a place first to apostles,* second to prophets,* and third to teachers. Then God has given a place to those people that do miracles,* those people that have gifts of healing, those people that can help others, those people that are able to lead, and those people that can speak in different kinds of languages. 29 Not all people are apostles. Not all people are prophets. Not all people are teachers. Not all people do miracles. 30 Not all people have gifts of healing. Not all people speak in different kinds of languages. Not all people

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

miracles Amazing works done by God’s power.

prophesy(ing) To speak or teach things from God.
baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.
given Literally, “given to drink.”

apostle(s) The men Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

prophet(s) People that speak for God.
interpret those languages. 31 But you should truly want to have the greater gifts of the Spirit.

Let Love Be Your Guide

And now I will show you the best way of all.

I may speak in different languages of men or even angels. But if I don’t have love, then I am only a noisy bell or a ringing cymbal. 21 I may have the gift of prophecy; I may understand all the secret things of God and know everything; and I may have faith so great that I can move mountains. But even with all these things, if I don’t have love, then I am nothing. 3 I may give everything I have to feed people. And I may even give my body as an offering to be burned. But I gain nothing by doing these things if I don’t have love.

Love is patient, and love is kind. Love is not jealous, it does not boast, and it is not proud. Love is not rude, love is not selfish, and love does not become angry easily. Love does not remember wrongs done against it.

Love is not happy with evil, but love is happy with the truth. Love patiently accepts all things. Love always trusts, always hopes, and always continues strong.

Love never ends. There are gifts of prophecy, but they will be ended. There are gifts of speaking in different kinds of languages, but those gifts will end. There is the gift of knowledge, but it will be ended.

These things will end, because this knowledge and these prophecies we have are not complete (not perfect). But when perfection comes, the things that are not complete will end. When I was a child, I talked like a child; I thought like a child; I made plans like a child. When I became a man, I stopped those childish ways.

It is the same with us. Now we see like we are looking into a dark mirror. But at that time, in the future, we shall see clearly. Now I know only a part. But at that time I will know fully, like God has known me. So these three things continue: faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love.

Use Spiritual Gifts to Help the Church

Love is the thing you should try for. And you should truly want to have the spiritual gifts. And the gift you should want most is to be able to prophesy.

I will explain why: A person who has the gift of speaking in a different language is not speaking to people. He is speaking to God. No one understands that person—he is speaking secret things through the Spirit. But a person that prophesies is speaking to people. He gives people strength, encouragement, and comfort.

The person that speaks in a different language is helping only himself. But the person that prophesies is helping the whole church. I would like all of you to have the gift of speaking in different languages. But more, I want you to prophesy. The person that prophesies is greater than the person that can only speak in different languages. But the person speaking in different languages is the same as the person that prophesies if he can also interpret those languages. Then the church can be helped by what he says.

Brothers and sisters, will it help you if I come to you speaking in different languages? No! It will help you only if I bring you a new truth or some knowledge, or some prophecy, or some teaching. It is the same as with non-living things that make sounds—like a flute or a harp. If the different musical notes are not made clear, then you can’t understand what song is being played. Each note must be played clearly for you to be able to understand the tune. And, in a war, if the trumpet does not sound clearly, then the soldiers will not know it is time to prepare for fighting.

It is the same with you. The words you speak with your tongue must be clear. If you don’t speak clearly, then no person can understand what you are saying. You will be talking to the air! It is true that there are many different languages in the world. And they all have meaning.

So if I don’t understand the meaning of what a person says to me, then I think that he talks strange, and he thinks that I talk strange. It is the same with you. You want...
spiritual gifts very much. So try most to have those things that help the church grow stronger.

13 So the person that has the gift of speaking in a _different_ language should pray that he can also interpret the things he says. 14 If I pray in a _different_ language, then my spirit is praying, but my mind does nothing. 15 So what should I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind. I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. 16 You might be praising God with your spirit. But a person there without understanding cannot say “Amen” to your prayer of thanks. Why? Because he does not know what you are saying. 17 You may be thanking God in a good way, but the other person is not helped.

18 I thank God that my gift of speaking in _different kinds of_ languages is greater than any of yours. 19 But in the church meetings I would rather speak five words that I understand than thousands of words in a _different_ language. I would rather speak with my understanding, so that I can teach other people.

20 Brothers and sisters, don’t think like children. In evil things be like babies. But in your thinking you should be like full-grown people. 21 Like the Scriptures say,

> Using people that speak different kinds of languages and using the lips of foreigners, I will speak to these people; but even then these people will not obey me.”

_ Isaiah 28:11–12_

That is what the Lord says.

22 So, _here_, _different_ languages are a proof for people that don’t believe, not for people that believe. And prophecy is for people that believe, not for people that don’t believe. 23 Suppose the whole church meets together and you all speak in _different_ languages. If some people come in that are without understanding or don’t believe, then those people will say you are crazy. 24 But suppose you are all prophesying* and a person comes in that does not believe or a person without understanding comes in. If you are all prophesying, then that person’s sin will be shown to him, and he will be judged by all the things you say. 25 The secret things in that person’s heart will be made known. So that person will bow down and worship God. He will say, “Truly, God is with you.”

Your Meetings Should Help the Church

26 So, brothers and sisters, what should you do? When you meet together, one person has a song, another person has a teaching, another person has a new truth from God, another person speaks in a _different_ language, and another person interprets that language. The purpose of all these things should be to help the church grow strong. 27 When you meet together, if any person speaks to the group in a _different_ language, then it should be only two or not more than three people that do this. And they should speak one after the other. And another person should interpret, what they say.

28 But if there is no interpreter, then any person that speaks in a _different_ language should be quiet in the church meeting. That person should speak only to himself and to God.

29 And only two or three prophets* should speak. The others should judge what they say. 30 And if a message from God comes to another person that is sitting, then the first speaker should be quiet. 31 You can all prophesy* one after the other. In that way all the people can be taught and encouraged. 32 The spirits of prophets are under the control of the prophets themselves. 33 God is not a God of confusion but a God of peace.

34 Women should keep quiet in these church meetings. This is the same as in all the churches of God’s people. Women are not allowed to speak. They must be under authority, like the law of Moses says. 35 If there is something the women want to know, then they should ask their own husbands at home. It is shameful for a woman to speak in the church meeting. 36 Did God’s teaching

Amen To say “Amen” means to agree strongly.


prophecy Speaking or teaching things from God.

prophesy-ing To speak or teach things from God.

prophet(s) People that speak for God.
come from you? No! Or are you the only ones that have received that teaching? No!

If any person thinks that he is a prophet or that he has a spiritual gift, then that person should understand that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command. If that person does not know this, then he is not known by God.

So my brothers and sisters, you should truly want to prophesy. And don’t stop people from using the gift of speaking in different languages. But everything should be done in a way that is right and orderly.

**The Good News About Christ**

Now, brothers and sisters, I want you to remember the Good News I told you about. You received this message, and you continue strong in it. You are saved by this message, and you must continue believing the things I told you. If you don’t do that, then you believed for nothing.

I gave you the message that I received. I told you the most important things: that Christ died for our sins, like the Scriptures say; that Christ was buried and was raised to life on the third day, like the Scriptures say; and that Christ showed himself to Peter and then to the twelve apostles together. After that, Christ showed himself to more than 500 of the brothers and sisters at the same time. Most of these people are still living today. But some have died. Then Christ showed himself to James and later to all the people he sent to do his work. Last of all, Christ showed himself to me. I was different, like a baby that is born before the normal time. All the other apostles are greater than I am. This is because I persecuted the church of God. That is why I am not even good enough to be called an apostle. But, because of God’s grace (gift), that is what I am. And his grace that he gave me was not wasted. I worked harder than all the other apostles. (But I was not really the one working. It was God’s grace that was with me.) So then it is not important if I told you God’s message or if it was the other apostles that told you—we all tell people the same message, and this is what you believed.

**We Will Be Raised from Death**

We tell everyone that Christ was raised from death. So why do some of you say that people will not be raised from death? If people will never be raised from death, then Christ has never been raised from death. And if Christ has never been raised, then the message we tell people is worth nothing. And your faith is worth nothing. And also we will be guilty of lying about God. Why? Because we have told people about God, saying that he raised Christ from death. And if people are not raised from death, then God never raised Christ from death. If dead people are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised from death, then your faith is for nothing: you are still guilty of your sins. And those people in Christ who have already died are lost. If our hope in Christ is only for this life, then people should feel more sorry for us than for anyone else.

But Christ has truly been raised from death—the first one of all those believers who will be raised from death. Death happens to people because of what one man (Adam) did. But the rising from death also happens because of one man (Christ).

In Adam all of us die. In the same way, in Christ all of us will be made alive again. But every man will be raised to life in the right order. Christ was first to be raised. Then when Christ comes again, the people who belong to Christ will be raised to life. Then the end will come. Christ will destroy all rulers, authorities, and powers. Then Christ will give the kingdom to God the Father. Christ must rule until God puts all enemies under Christ’s control. Like the Scripture says, “God put all things under his control.”

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**prophet(s)** People that speak for God.

**prophesy(ing)** To speak or teach things from God.

**Good News, message** The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

**Scriptures** Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

**apostle(s)** The men Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

**people ... work** Literally, “apostles.”

**persecute(d)** To hurt, bother, or do bad things to.

**control** Literally, “feet.”

**Scripture** Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

“God put ... control” Quote from Ps. 8:6.
When it says that “all things” are put under him (Christ), it is clear that this does not include God himself. God is the one putting everything under Christ’s control. After everything has been put under Christ, then the Son (Christ) himself will be put under God. God is the One who put all things under Christ. Christ will be put under God, so that God will be the complete ruler over everything.

If people will never be raised from death, then what will people do who are baptized for those who have died? If dead people are never raised, then why are people baptized for them?

And what about us? Why do we put ourselves in danger every hour? I die every day. That is true, brothers, the same as it is true that I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. I fought wild animals in Ephesus. If I did that only for human reasons, to satisfy my own pride, then I have gained nothing. If people are not raised from death, “Let us eat and drink, because tomorrow we die.”

Don’t be fooled: “Bad friends will ruin good habits.” Come back to your right way of thinking and stop sinning. Some of you don’t know God. I say this to shame you.

What Kind of Body Will We Have?

But some person may ask, “How are dead people raised? What kind of body will they have?” Those are stupid questions. When you plant something, it must die before it can live and grow. And when you plant something, the thing you plant does not have the same “body” that it will have later. The thing you plant is only a seed, maybe wheat or something else. But God gives it a body that he has planned for it. And God gives each kind of seed its own body. All things made of flesh (bodies) are not the same kind of flesh: People have one kind of flesh (body), animals have another kind, birds have another kind, and fish have another kind. Also there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. But the beauty of the heavenly bodies is one kind. The beauty of the earthly bodies is another kind.

The sun has one kind of beauty, the moon has another kind of beauty, and the stars have another. And each star is different in its beauty.

It is the same with the dead people who are raised to life. The body that is “planted” will ruin and decay. But that body is raised to a life that cannot be destroyed. When the body is “planted,” it is without honor. But it is raised in glory. When the body is “planted,” it is weak. But when it is raised, it has power.

The body that is “planted” is a physical body. When it is raised, it is a spiritual body.

There is a physical body. So there is also a spiritual body. Like the Scriptures say, “The first man (Adam) became a living thing.” But the last Adam (Christ) became a spirit that gives life. The spiritual man, did not come first. It was the physical man that came first; then came the spiritual. The first man came from the dust of the earth. The second man (Christ) came from heaven. People belong to the earth. They are like that first man of earth. But those people who belong to heaven are like that man of heaven. We were made like that man of earth. So we will also be made like that man of heaven.

I tell you this, brothers and sisters: Flesh and blood (a physical body) cannot have a part in the kingdom of God. A thing that will ruin cannot have a part in something that never ruins. But listen, I tell you this secret: We will not all die, but we will all be changed. It will only take the time of a second. We will be changed as quickly as an eye blinks. This will happen when the last trumpet blows. The trumpet will blow and those believers who have died will be raised to live forever. And we also will all be changed. This body that will ruin must clothe itself with something that will never ruin. And this body that dies must clothe itself with something that will never die. So this body that ruins will clothe itself with that which never ruins. And this body that dies will clothe itself with that which never dies. When this happens, then the Scriptures will be made true:

**baptized** A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

“Let us ... die” Quote from Isa. 22:13; 56:12.

**Scriptures** Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

**thing** Literally, “soul.”

“The first man ... thing” Quote from Gen. 2:7.
1 CORINTHIANS 15:55–16:24

“Death is swallowed (defeated) in victory.”
Isaiah 25:8

55 “Death, where is your victory?
Grave, where is your power to hurt?”
Hosea 13:14

56Death’s power to hurt is sin. And the power
of sin is the law. 57But we thank God! He gives
us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
58So, my dear brothers and sisters, stand
strong. Don’t let anything change you.
Always give yourselves fully to the work of
the Lord. You know that your work in the
Lord is never wasted.

The Collection for Other Believers

16 Now I will write, about the collection
of money for God’s people. Do the
same thing that I told the Galatian churches to
do: 2On the first day of every week each one
of you should save as much money as you can
from what you are blessed with. You should
put this money in a special place and keep it
there. Then you will not have to gather your
money after I come. 3When I come, I will send
some men to take your gift to Jerusalem.
These men will be the men that you all agree
should go. I will send them with letters of
introduction. 4If it seems good for me to go
also, then those men will go with me.

Paul’s Plans

5I plan to go through Macedonia. So I will
come to you after I go through Macedonia.
6Maybe I will stay with you for a time. I
might even stay all winter. Then you can help
me on my trip, wherever I go. 7I don’t want to
come see you now, because I would have to
leave to go to other places. I hope to stay a
longer time with you if the Lord allows it.
8But I will stay at Ephesus until Pentecost.* 9I
will stay here, because a good opportunity for
a great and growing work has been given to
me now. And there are many people working
against it.

10Timothy might come to you. Try to make
him feel comfortable with you. He is working
for the Lord the same as I am. 11So none of
you should refuse to accept Timothy. Help
him on his trip in peace, so that he can come
back to me. I am expecting him to come back
with the brothers.

12Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly
encouraged him to visit you with the other
brothers. But he was sure that he did not want
to go now. But when he has the opportunity,
he will go to you.

Paul Ends His Letter

13Be careful. Continue strong in the faith.
Have courage and be strong. 14Do everything
in love.

15You know that Stephanas and his family
were the first believers in Achaia. They have
given themselves to the service of God’s
people. I ask you, brothers and sisters, 16to
follow the leading of people like these, and any
other person that works and serves with them.

17I am happy that Stephanas, Fortunatus,
and Achaicus have come. You are not here,
but they have filled your place. 18They have
given rest to my spirit and to yours. You
should recognize the value of men like these.

19The churches in Asia* say hello to you.
Aquila and Priscilla say hello to you in the
Lord. Also the church that meets in their house
says hello to you. 20All the brothers and sisters
here say hello to you. Give each other a holy
kiss when you meet.

21I am Paul, and I am writing this greeting
with my own hand.

22If any person does not love the Lord,
than let that person be separated from God—
lost forever!

Come, O Lord!

23The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.
24My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.

Pentecost Jewish festival celebrating the harvest of wheat. It was
always 50 days after Passover.

Asia The western part of modern Turkey.

Come, O Lord This is a translation of the Aramaic “marana tha.”
Greetings from Paul, an apostle* of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle because that is what God wanted.

Greetings also from Timothy our brother in Christ.

To God’s church that lives in Corinth and to all of God’s people in the whole country of Achaia:

Grace (kindness) and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Paul Gives Thanks to God

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is the Father who is full of mercy. He is the God of all comfort. He comforts us every time we have trouble, so that we can comfort other people any time they have trouble. We can comfort them with the same comfort that God gives us. We share in the many sufferings of Christ. In the same way, much comfort comes to us through Christ. If we have troubles, those troubles are for your comfort and salvation. If we have comfort, it is for your comfort. This helps you to patiently accept the same sufferings that we have. Our hope for you is strong. We know that you share in our sufferings. So we know that you also share in our comfort.

8 Brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the trouble we suffered in the country of Asia. We had great burdens there. The burdens were greater than our own strength. We even gave up hope for life. Truly in our own hearts we believed that we would die. But this happened so that we would not trust in ourselves. It happened so that we would trust in God, who raises people from death. God saved us from these great dangers of death. And God will continue to save us. We have put our hope in him, and he will continue to save us. And you can help us with your prayers. Then many people will give thanks for us—that God blessed us because of their many prayers.

The Change in Paul’s Plans

This is what we are proud of, and I can say with all my heart that it is true: In all the things we have done in the world, we have done everything with an honest and pure heart from God. And this is even more true in the things we have done with you. We did this by God’s grace (kindness), not by the kind of wisdom the world has. The only things we write to you are things that you can read and understand. And I hope that you will fully understand, like you have already understood some things about us. I hope that you will understand that you can be proud of us, like we will be proud of you on the day our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

I was very sure of all this. That is why I made plans to visit you first. Then you could be blessed twice. I planned to visit you on my way to Macedonia. Then I planned to visit you again on my way back. I wanted to get help from you for my trip to Judea. Do you think that I made those plans without really thinking? Or maybe you think I make plans like the world makes plans, so that I say, “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time.

But if you can believe God, then you can believe that what we tell you is never both “Yes” and “No.” The Son of God, Jesus Christ, that Silas and Timothy and I told you about was not “Yes” and “No.” In Christ it has always been “Yes.” The “Yes” to all of

*apostle(s) The men Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

Asia The western part of modern Turkey.
Amen  To say “Amen” means to agree strongly.
gave us his special blessing  Literally, “anointed us.”
Spirit, Holy Spirit  Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

Good News, gospel  The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
stone tablets, stone  Meaning the law that God gave to Moses, which was written on stone tablets. See Ex. 24:12; 25:16.

2 Corinthians 1:21–3:5

God’s promises is in Christ. And that is why we say “Amen” through Christ to the glory of God. 21 And God is the One who makes you and us strong in Christ. God gave us his special blessing. 22 He put his mark on us to show that we are his. And he put his Spirit in our hearts to be a guarantee—a proof that he will give us what he promised.

23 I tell you this, and I ask God to be my witness that this is true: The reason I did not come back to Corinth was that I did not want to punish or hurt you. 24 I don’t mean that we are trying to control your faith. You are strong in faith. But we are workers with you for your own happiness.

So I decided that my next visit to you would not be another visit to make you sad. 2If I make you sad, then who will make me happy? Only you can make me happy—you that I made sad. 3 I wrote you a letter for this reason: so that when I came to you I would not be made sad by those people who should make me happy. I felt sure of all of you. I felt sure that all of you would share my joy. 4 When I wrote to you before, I was very troubled and unhappy in my heart. I wrote with many tears. I did not write to make you sad. I wrote so that you could know how much I love you.

Forgive the Person Who Did Wrong

5 A person in your group has caused sadness. He caused this sadness not to me, but to all of you—I mean he caused sadness to all in some way. (I don’t want to make it sound worse than it really is.) 6 The punishment that most of your group gave him is enough for him. 7 But now you should forgive him and encourage him. This will keep him from having too much sadness and giving up completely. 8 So I beg you to show him that you love him. 9 This is why I wrote to you. I wanted to test you and see if you obey in everything. 10 If you forgive a person, then I also forgive that person. And what I have forgiven—if I had anything to forgive—I forgave it for you, and Christ was with me. 11 I did this so that Satan (the Devil) would not win anything from us. We know very well what Satan’s plans are.

Paul’s Anxiety in Troas

12 I went to Troas to tell people the Good News of Christ. The Lord gave me a good opportunity there. 13 But I had no peace because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said good-bye and went to Macedonia.

Victory Through Christ

14 But thanks be to God. God always leads us in victory through Christ. God uses us to spread his knowledge everywhere like a sweet-smelling perfume. 15 Our offering to God is this: We are the sweet smell of Christ among people who are being saved and among people who are being lost. 16 To the people who are being lost, we are the smell of death that brings death. But to the people who are being saved, we are the smell of life that brings life. So who is good enough to do this work? 17 We don’t sell the word of God for a profit like many other people do. No! But in Christ we speak in truth before God. We speak like men sent from God.

Servants of God’s New Agreement

3 Are we starting to boast about ourselves again? Do we need letters of introduction to you or from you, like some other people? 2 You yourselves are our letter. That letter is written on our hearts. It is known and read by all people. 3 You show that you are a letter from Christ that he sent through us. This letter is not written with ink but with the Spirit of the living God. It is not written on stone tablets. It is written on human hearts.

4 We can say these things, because through Christ we feel sure before God. 5 I don’t mean that we are able to say that we can do anything good ourselves. It is God who makes us able
to do all that we do. 6God made us able to be servants of a new agreement, from God to his people. This new agreement is not a written law. It is of the Spirit. The written law brings death, but the Spirit gives life.

The New Agreement Brings Greater Glory

7The old agreement (the law) that brought death was written with words on stone. It came with God’s glory. The face of Moses was so bright with glory that the people of Israel could not continue looking at his face. And that glory later disappeared. 8So surely the new agreement that brings the Spirit has even more glory. 9This is what I mean: That old agreement judged people guilty of sin, but it had glory. So surely the new agreement that makes people right with God has much greater glory. 10That old agreement had glory. But it really loses its glory when it is compared to the much greater glory of the new agreement. 11If the agreement that disappeared came with glory, then the agreement that continues forever has much greater glory.

12We have this hope, so we are very brave. 13We are not like Moses. He put a covering over his face. Moses covered his face so that the people of Israel would not see it. The glory (brightness) was disappearing, and Moses did not want them to see it end. 14But their minds were closed—they could not understand. Even today that same covering hides the meaning when they read the writings of the old agreement. That covering has not been removed. It is taken away only through Christ. 15But even today, when these people read the law of Moses, there is a covering over their minds. 16But when a person changes and follows the Lord, that covering is taken away. 17The Lord is the Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18And our faces are not covered. We all show the Lord’s glory. We are being changed to be like him. This change in us brings more and more glory. This glory comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Spiritual Treasure in Clay Jars

4God, with his mercy, gave us this work to do. So we don’t give up. 2But we have turned away from secret and shameful ways. We don’t use trickery, and we don’t change the teaching of God. No! We teach the truth plainly. This is how we show people who we are. And this is how they can know in their hearts what kind of people we are before God. 3The Good News that we tell people may be hidden. But it is hidden only to those people who are lost. 4The ruler of this world has blinded the minds of people who don’t believe. They cannot see the light (truth) of the Good News—the Good News about the glory of Christ. Christ is the One who is exactly like God. 5We don’t tell people about ourselves. But we tell people that Jesus Christ is Lord; and we tell people that we are your servants for Jesus. 6God once said, “The light will shine out of the darkness!” And this is the same God who made his light shine in our hearts. He gave us light by letting us know the glory of God that is in the face of Christ.

7We have this treasure from God. But we are only like clay jars that hold the treasure. This shows that this great power is from God, not from us. 8We have troubles all around us, but we are not defeated. We often don’t know what to do, but we don’t give up. 9We are persecuted, but God does not leave us. We are hurt sometimes, but we are not destroyed. 10We have the death of Jesus in our own bodies. We carry this death so that the life of Jesus can also be seen in our bodies (lives). 11We are alive, but for Jesus we are always in...
danger of death. This happens to us so that the life of Jesus can be seen in our bodies that die. 12So death is working in us, but life is working in you.

13The Scriptures* say, “I believed, so I spoke.” 14Our faith is like that too. We believe, and so we speak. 14God raised the Lord Jesus from death. And we know that God will also raise us with Jesus. God will bring us together with you, and we will stand before him. 15All these things are for you. And so the grace (kindness) of God is being given to more and more people. This will bring more and more thanks to God for his glory.

**Living by Faith**

16That is why we never become weak. Our physical body is becoming older and weaker, but our spirit inside us is made new every day. 17We have small troubles for a while now, but those troubles are helping us gain an eternal glory. That eternal glory is much greater than the troubles. 18So we think about the things we cannot see, not what we see. The things we see continue only a short time. And the things we cannot see will continue forever.

5 We know that our body,—the tent we live in here on earth—will be destroyed. But when that happens, God will have a home for us to live in. It will not be a home made by men. It will be a home in heaven that will continue forever. 2But now we are tired of this body. We want God to give us our heavenly home. 3It will clothe us and we will not be naked. 4While we live in this tent (body), we have burdens and we complain. I don’t mean that we want to remove this tent (body). But we want to be clothed (with our heavenly home). Then this body that dies will be fully covered with life. 5This is what God made us for. And he has given us the Spirit* to be a guarantee—a proof that he will give us this new life.

6So we always have courage (confidence). We know that while we live in this body, we are away from the Lord. 7We live by what we believe, not by what we can see. 8So I say that we have confidence. And we really want to be away from this body and be at home with the Lord. 9Our only goal is to please God. We want to please him when we are living here in our body or there with the Lord. 10We must all stand before Christ to be judged. Each person will get what he should. Each person will be paid for the things he did—good or bad—when he lived in the earthly body.

**Helping People Become God's Friends**

11We know what it means to fear the Lord. So we try to help people accept the truth. God knows what we really are. And I hope that in your hearts you know us too. 12We are not trying to prove ourselves to you again. But we are telling you about ourselves. We are giving you reasons to be proud of us. Then you will have an answer for those people who are proud about things that can be seen. Those people don’t care about what is in a person’s heart. 13If we are crazy, then it is for God. If we have our right mind, then it is for you. 14The love of Christ controls us. Why? Because we know that One (Christ) has died for all people. So all have died. 15Christ died for all people so that the people who live would not continue to live for themselves. He died for them and was raised from death so that those people would live for him.

16From this time on we don’t think of any person like the world thinks of people. It is true that in the past we thought of Christ like the world thinks. But we don’t think that way now. 17If any person is in Christ, then that person is made new. The old things have gone; everything is made new! 18All this is from God. Through Christ, God made peace between us and himself. And God gave us the work of bringing people into peace with him. 19I mean that God was in Christ, making peace between us and himself. And God gave us the work of bringing people into peace with him. 20So we have been sent to speak for Christ. It is like God is calling to people through us. We speak for Christ when we beg...
you to be at peace with God. Christ had no sin. But God made him become sin. God did this for us, so that in Christ we could become right with God.

We are workers together with God. So we beg you: Don’t let the grace (kindness) that you received from God be for nothing. God says,

“I heard you at the right time, and I gave you help on the day of salvation.”

I tell you that the “right time” is now. The “day of salvation” is now.

We don’t want people to find anything wrong with our work. So we do nothing that will be a problem to other people. But in every way we show that we are servants of God: in accepting many hard things, in troubles, in difficulties, and in great problems.

We are beaten and thrown into prison. People become upset and fight us. We work hard, and sometimes we get no sleep or food. We show that we are servants of God by our understanding, by our patience, by our kindness, and by living pure. We show this by the Holy Spirit, by true love, by speaking the truth, and by God’s power. We use our right living to defend ourselves against everything. Some people honor us, but other people shame us. Some people say good things about us, but other people say bad things. Some people say we are liars, but we speak the truth.

Some people say we are not known (not important), but we are well known. We seem to be dying, but look! We continue to live. We are punished, but we are not killed. We have much sadness, but we are always rejoicing. We are poor, but we are making many people rich in faith. We have nothing, but really we have everything.

We have spoken freely to you people in Corinth. We have opened our hearts to you. Our feelings of love for you have not stopped. It is you that have stopped your feelings of love for us. I speak to you like you are my children. Do the same as we have done—open your hearts also.

Warning About Non-Christians

You are not the same as those people who don’t believe. So don’t join yourselves to them. Good and bad don’t belong together. Light and darkness cannot have fellowship (sharing). How can Christ and Belial (the devil) have any agreement? What can a believer have together with a non-believer? God’s temple cannot have any agreement with idols. And we are the temple of the living God. Like God said:

“I will live with them and walk with them, I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

I will live with them and walk with them, I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

So come away from those people and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord. Touch nothing that is not clean, and I will accept you.”

“I will be your father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord All-Powerful.”

Dear friends, we have these promises from God. So we should make ourselves pure—free from anything that makes our body or our soul unclean. We should try to become perfect in the way we live, because we respect God.

Paul’s Joy

Open your hearts to us. We have not done wrong to any person. We have not ruined the faith of any person, and we have not cheated any person. I do not say this to blame you. I

Spirit, Holy Spirit  Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

God’s temple  The place where people worship and serve God. Here it means a Christian’s body.

idols  False gods made from wood or stone and worshiped by the non-Jewish people.
told you before that we love you so much that we would live or die with you. I feel very sure of you. I am very proud of you. You give me much courage. And in all of our troubles I have great joy.

5When we came into Macedonia, we had no rest. We found trouble all around us. We had fighting on the outside and fear on the inside. But God comforts people who are troubled. And God comforted us when Titus came. 7We were comforted by his coming and also by the comfort that you gave him. Titus told us about your wish to see me. He told us that you are very sorry for the things you did. And Titus told me about your great care for me. When I heard this, I was much happier.

8Even if the letter I wrote you made you sad, I am not sorry I wrote it. I know that letter made you sad, and I was sorry for that. But it made you sad only for a short time. Now I am happy. My happiness is not because you were made sad. I am happy because your sorrow made you change your hearts. You became sad like God wanted. So you were not hurt by us in any way. 10Being sorry like God wants makes a person change his heart and life. This leads a person to salvation, and we cannot be sorry for that. But the kind of sorrow the world has will bring death. 11You had the kind of sorrow God wanted you to have. Now see what that sorrow has brought you: That sorrow has made you very serious. It made you want to prove that you were not wrong. It made you angry and afraid. It made you want to see me. It made you care. It made you want the right thing to be done. You proved that you were not guilty in any part of that problem. 12I wrote that letter, but not because of the one who did the wrong. And it was not written because of the person who was hurt. But I wrote that letter so that you could see, before God, the great care that you have for us. That is why we were comforted.

We were very comforted. And we were even happier to see that Titus was so happy. All of you made him feel good. 16I am very happy that I can trust you fully.

Christian Giving

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace (kindness) that God gave the churches (groups of believers) in Macedonia. 2Those believers have been tested by great troubles. And they are very poor people. But they gave much because of their great joy. 3I can tell you that they gave as much as they were able. Those believers gave even more than they could afford. They did this freely. No person told them to do this.

4But they asked us again and again—they begged us to let them share in this service for God’s people. 5And they gave in a way that we did not expect: They gave themselves to the Lord and to us before they gave their money. This is what God wants. 6So we asked Titus to help you finish this special work of grace (kindness). Titus is the one who started this work. 7You are rich in everything—in faith, in speaking, in knowledge, in truly wanting to help, and in the love you learned from us. And so we want you to also be rich in this gift of giving.

8I am not commanding you to give. But I want to see if your love is true love. I do this by showing you that other people really want to help. 9You know the grace (kindness) of our Lord Jesus Christ. You know that Christ was rich, but for you he became poor. Christ did this so that you could become rich by his becoming poor.

10This is what I think you should do: Last year you were the first to want to give. And you were the first that gave. 11So now finish the work you started. Then your “doing” will be equal to your “wanting to do.” Give from what you have. 12If you want to give, then your gift will be accepted. Your gift will be judged by what you have, not by what you don’t have. 13We don’t want you to have troubles while other people are comforted. We want everything to be equal. 14At this time you have plenty. These things you have can help other people to have the things they need.
Then later, when they have plenty, they can help you to have the things you need. Then all will be equal. 15 Like the Scriptures* say,

“The person that gathered much did not have too much, and the person that gathered little did not have too little.”

Exodus 16:18

Titus and His Companions

16 I thank God because he gave Titus the same love for you that I have. 17 Titus accepted the things we asked him to do. He wanted very much to go to you. This was his own idea. 18 We are sending with Titus the brother who is praised by all the churches (groups of believers). This brother is praised because of his service in the gospel.* 19 Also, this brother was chosen by the churches to go with us when we carry this gift (the money). We are doing this service to bring glory to the Lord and to show that we really want to help.

20 We are being careful so that no person will criticize us about the way we are caring for this large gift. 21 We are trying to do what is right. We want to do what the Lord accepts as right and also what people think is right.

22 Also, we are sending with them our brother who is always ready to help. He has proved this to us in many ways. And he wants to help even more now because he has much faith in you.

23 Now about Titus—he is my partner. He is working together with me to help you. And about the other brothers—they are sent from the churches (groups of believers), and they bring glory to Christ. 24 So show these men that you really have love. Show them why we are proud of you. Then all the churches can see it.

Help for Fellow Christians

9 I really don’t need to write to you about this help for God’s people. I know that you want to help. I have been boasting about this to the people in Macedonia. I have told them that you people in Achaia were ready to give since last year. And your wanting to give has made most of the people here ready to give also. 5 But I am sending the brothers to you. I don’t want our boasting about you in this to be for nothing. I want you to be ready like I said you would be. 6 If any of the people from Macedonia come with me, and they find that you are not ready, then we will be ashamed. We will be ashamed that we were so sure of you. (And you will be ashamed too!) 5 So I thought that I should ask these brothers to go to you before we come. They will finish making ready the gift you promised. Then the gift will be ready when we come, and it will be a gift you wanted to give—not a gift that you hated to give.

6 Remember this: The person who plants little will harvest only a little. But the person who plants much will harvest much. 7 Each person should give what he has decided in his heart to give. A person should not give if it makes him sad. And a person should not give if he thinks he is forced to give. God loves the person who gives happily. 8 And God can give you more blessings than you need. Then you will always have plenty of everything. You will have enough to give to every good work.

9 Like the Scriptures* say,

“He gives generously to the poor; his kindness will continue forever.”

Psalm 112:9

10 God is the One who gives seed to the person who plants. And he gives bread for food. And God will give you spiritual seed and make your seed grow. He will make a great harvest from your goodness (giving). 11 God will make you rich in every way so that you can always give freely. And your giving through us will make people give thanks to God. 12 This service that you do helps the needs of God’s people. But that is not all your service does. It is also bringing more and more thanks to God.

13 This service you do is a proof of your faith. People will praise God because of this. They will praise God because you follow the gospel* of Christ—the gospel you say you believe. People will praise God because you

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* Scriptures: Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
* Good News, gospel: The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
freely share with them and with all people. 

14 And when those people pray, they will wish they could be with you. They will feel this because of the great grace (kindness) that God gave you. 15 Thanks be to God for his gift that is too wonderful to explain.

Paul Defends His Ministry

I am Paul, and I am begging you. I beg you with the gentleness and the kindness of Christ. 2 Some people say that I am humble when I am with you, and brave when I am away. 3 Some people think that we live in a worldly way. I plan to be very bold against those people when I come. I beg you that when I come I will not need to use that same boldness with you. 4 We do live in the world. But we don’t fight in the same way that the world fights. 5 We fight with weapons that are different from the weapons the world uses. Our weapons have power from God. These weapons can destroy the enemy’s strong places. We destroy people’s arguments. 6 And we destroy every proud thing that raises itself against the knowledge of God. And we capture (catch) every thought and make it give up and obey Christ. 7 We are ready to punish any person there who does not obey. But first we want you to obey fully.

7 You must look at the facts before you. If a person feels sure that he belongs to Christ, then he must remember that we belong to Christ the same as that person. 8 It is true that we boast freely about the authority (power) the Lord gave us. But he gave us this power to strengthen you, not to hurt you. So I will not be ashamed of that boasting we do. 9 I don’t want you to think that I am trying to scare you with my letters. 10 Some people say, “Paul’s letters are powerful and sound important. But when he is with us, he is weak. And his speaking is nothing.” 11 Those people should know this: We are not there with you now, so we say these things in letters. But when we are there with you, we will show the same power that we show in our letters.

12 We don’t dare to put ourselves in the same group with those people who think that they are very important. We don’t compare ourselves to them. They use themselves to measure themselves, and they judge themselves by what they themselves are. This shows that they know nothing. 13 But we will not boast about things outside the work that was given us to do. We will limit our boasting to the work that God gave us. But this work includes our work with you. 14 We are not boasting too much. We would be boasting too much if we had not already come to you. But we have come to you. We came to you with the Good News* of Christ. 15 We limit our boasting to the work that is ours. We don’t boast in the work other people have done. We hope that your faith will continue to grow. We hope that you will help our work to grow much larger. 16 We want to tell the Good News in the areas beyond your city. We don’t want to boast about work that has already been done in another man’s area. 17 But, “The person who boasts should boast in the Lord.”* 18 It is not the person who says that he is good who is accepted. It is the person that the Lord thinks is good who is accepted.

Paul and the False Apostles

I wish you would be patient with me even when I am a little foolish. But you are already patient with me. 2 I feel jealousy for you. And this jealousy is a jealousy that comes from God. I promised to give you to Christ. Christ must be your only husband. I want to give you to Christ to be his pure bride.* 3 But I am afraid that your minds will be led away from your true and pure following of Christ. This might happen the same as Eve was tricked (fooled) by the snake (the devil) with his evil ways. 4 You are very patient with any person who comes to you and tells you things about Jesus that are different from the things we told you. You are very willing to accept a spirit or a gospel that is different from the Spirit* and Good News, gospel The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever. “The person ... Lord” Quote from Jer. 9:24. bride Literally, “virgin.” Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
1355  2 CORINTHIANS 11:5–31

Paul Tells About His Sufferings

16I tell you again: No person should think that I am a fool. But if you think that I am a fool, then accept me like you accept a fool. Then I can boast a little too. 17I boast because I feel sure of myself. But I am not talking like

the Lord would talk. I am boasting like a fool. 18Many people are boasting about their lives in the world. So I will boast too. 19You are wise, so you will gladly be patient with fools! 20If I know you will be patient, because you are even patient with a person who forces you to do things and uses you! You are patient with people that trick you, or think they are better than you, or hit you in the face! 21It is shameful to me to say this, but we were too “weak” to do those things to you!

But if any person is brave enough to boast, then I also will be brave and boast. (I am talking like a fool.) 22Are those people Hebrews? I am too. Are they Israelites? I am too. Are they from Abraham’s family? I am too. 23Are those people serving Christ? I am serving him more. (I am crazy to talk like this.) I have worked much harder than those people. I have been in prison more often. I have been hurt more in beatings. I have been near death many times. 24Five times the Jews have given me their punishment of 39 hits with a whip. 25Three different times I was beaten with rods. One time I was almost killed with rocks. Three times I was in ships that were wrecked, and one of those times I spent the night and the next day in the sea. 26I have traveled many, many times. And I have been in danger from rivers, from thieves, from my own people (the Jews), and from people who are not Jews. I have been in danger in cities, in places where no people live, and on the sea. And I have been in danger with people who say they are brothers, but are really not brothers. 27I have done hard and tiring work, and many times I did not sleep. I have been hungry and thirsty. Many times I have been without food. I have been cold and without clothes. 28And there are many other problems. One of these is the care I have for all the churches. I worry about them every day. 29If I must boast, then I will boast about the things that show that I am weak. 30If I must boast, then I will boast about the things that show that I am weak. 31God
knows that I am not lying. He is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he is to be praised forever. 32When I was in Damascus, the governor under King Aretas wanted to arrest me. So he put guards around the city. 33But some friends put me in a basket. Then they put the basket through a hole in the wall and lowered me down. So I escaped from the governor.

**A Special Blessing in Paul’s Life**

12 I must continue to boast. It won’t help, but I will talk now about visions and revelations from the Lord. 2I know a man in Christ who was taken up to the third heaven. This happened 14 years ago. I don’t know if the man was in his body or out of his body. But God knows. 3–4And I know that this man was taken up to paradise. I don’t know if he was in his body or away from his body. But he heard things which he is not able to explain. He heard things that no man is allowed to tell. 5I will boast about a man like that. But I will not boast about myself. I will boast only about my weaknesses. 6But if I wanted to boast about myself, I would not be a fool. I would not be a fool, because I would be telling the truth. But I won’t boast about myself. Why? Because I don’t want people to think more of me than what they see me do or hear me say.

7But I must not become too proud of the wonderful things that were shown to me. So a painful problem was given to me. That problem is an angel from Satan (the devil). It is sent to beat me and keep me from being too proud. 8I begged the Lord three times to take this problem away from me. 9But the Lord said to me, “My grace (kindness) is enough for you. When you are weak, then my power is made perfect in you.” So I am very happy to boast about my weaknesses. Then Christ’s power can live in me. 10So I am happy when I have weaknesses. I am happy when people say bad things to me. I am happy when I have hard times. I am happy when people treat me badly. And I am happy when I have problems. All these things are for Christ. And I am happy with these things, because when I am weak, then I am truly strong.

**Paul’s Love for the Christians in Corinth**

11I have been talking like a fool. But you made me do it. You people are the ones who should say good things about me. I am worth nothing, but those “great apostles” are not worth any more than I am! 12When I was with you, I did the things that prove that I am an apostle—I did signs, wonders, and miracles. I did these things with much patience. 13So you received everything that the other churches have received. Only one thing was different: I was not a burden to you. Forgive me for this!

14I am now ready to visit you the third time. And I will not be a burden to you. I don’t want any of the things you own. I only want you. Children should not have to save things to give to their parents. Parents should save to give to their children. 15So I am happy to give everything I have for you. I will even give myself for you. If I love you more, will you love me less?

16It is clear that I was not a burden to you. But you think that I was tricky and used lies to catch you. 17Did I cheat you by using any of the men I sent to you? No! You know I didn’t. 18I asked Titus to go to you. And I sent our brother with him. Titus did not cheat you, did he? No! You know that Titus and I did the same things and with the same spirit.

19Do you think that we have been defending ourselves to you all this time? No. We say these things in Christ. And we say these things before God. You are our dear friends. And everything that we do is to make you stronger. 20I do this because I am afraid that when I come you will not be what I want you to be.
And I am afraid that I will not be what you want me to be. I am afraid that in your group there may be arguing, jealousy, anger, selfish fighting, evil talk, gossip, pride, and confusion. I am afraid that when I come to you again, my God will make me humble before you. I may be saddened by many of you who have sinned. I may be saddened because those people have not changed their hearts to be sorry for their evil lives, for their sexual sins, and for the shameful things they have done.

Final Warnings and Greetings

I will come to you again. This will be the third time. And remember, “For every complaint there must be two or three people to say that they know it is true.”

When I was with you the second time, I gave a warning to those people who had sinned. Now I am away from you, and I give a warning to all the other people who have sinned; when I come to you again, I will punish you for your sin. You want proof that Christ is speaking through me. My proof is that Christ is not weak in punishing you. But Christ is powerful among you. It is true that Christ was weak when he was killed on the cross. But he lives now by God’s power. And it is true that we are weak in Christ. But for you we will be alive in Christ by God’s power.

Look closely at yourselves. Test yourselves to see if you are living in the faith. You know that Christ Jesus is in you. But if you fail the test (are not living in the faith), then Christ is not living in you. But I hope you will see that we have not failed the test. We pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. It is not important that people see that we have passed the test. But it is important that you do what is right, even if people think that we have failed the test. We cannot do things that are against the truth. We can only do things that are for the truth. We are happy to be weak, if you are strong. And we pray that you will grow stronger and stronger.

I’m writing these things while I’m not with you. I’m writing so that when I come I will not have to use my power to punish you. The Lord gave me that power to make you stronger, not to destroy you.

Now, brothers and sisters, I say good-bye. Try to be perfect. Do the things I have asked you to do. Agree in your minds with each other, and live in peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you.

Give each other a holy kiss when you greet each other. All God’s holy people say hello to you.

The grace (kindness) of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship (sharing) of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

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“For every complaint ... true” Quote from Deut. 19:15.

holy people Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
Galatians

Greetings from Paul, an apostle.* I was chosen to be an apostle, but not by any group of people. My authority did not come from other people. No! It was Jesus Christ and God the Father who made me an apostle. God is the One who raised Jesus from death.

Greetings also from all those in God’s family who are with me.

To the churches (groups of believers) in Galatia.*

I pray that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will be good to you and give you peace. Jesus gave himself for our sins. Jesus did this to free us from this evil world we live in. This is what God the Father wanted. The glory belongs to God forever and ever. Amen.

There Is Only One Good News Message

A short time ago God called you to follow him. He called you through his grace (kindness) that came through Christ. But now I am amazed at you people! You are already turning away and believing something different from the Good News* {we told you}. There is no other message that is good news. But some people are confusing you. They want to change the Good News about Christ. We told you the true Good News message. So if anyone tells you a different message, they should be condemned—even if it’s one of us or even an angel from heaven! I said this before. Now I say it again: You have already accepted the Good News. If any person tells you another way to be saved, they should be condemned!

Now do you think I am trying to make people accept me? No! God is the One I am trying to please. Am I trying to please people? If I wanted to please people, I would not be a servant of Jesus Christ.

Paul’s Authority Is from God

Brothers and sisters, I want you to know that the Good News* message I told you was not made up by any person. I did not get my message from any other human. The Good News is not something I learned from other people. Jesus Christ himself gave it to me. He showed me the Good News that I should tell people.

You have heard about my past life. I was in the Jewish religion. I persecuted the church of God very much. I tried to destroy the church (believers). I was becoming a leader in the Jewish religion. I did better than most other Jews my own age. I tried harder than anyone else to follow the old rules. These rules were the customs we got from our ancestors.*

But God had special plans for me even before I was born. So God called me with his grace (kindness). God wanted me to tell the Good News* about his Son (Jesus) to the non-Jewish people. So God let me see and learn about his Son. When God called me, I did not get advice or help from any person. I did not go to see the apostles* in Jerusalem. These men were apostles before I was. But, without waiting, I went away to Arabia. Later I went back to the city of Damascus.

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* apostle(s) The men Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

* Galatia Probably the area where Paul began churches on his first missionary trip. See Acts 13 and 14.

* Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

* ancestor(s) Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.
18 Three years later I went to Jerusalem; I wanted to meet Peter.* I stayed with Peter 15 days. 19 I met no other apostles*—only James, the brother of the Lord (Jesus). 20 God knows that these things I write are not lies. 21 Later I went to the areas of Syria and Cilicia.

22 In Judea the churches (groups of believers) in Christ had never met me before. 23 They had only heard this about me: “This man was persecuting us. But now he is telling people about the same faith that he once tried to destroy.” 24 These believers praised God because of me.

The Other Apostles Accepted Paul
2 After 14 years, I went to Jerusalem again. I went with Barnabas, and I took Titus with me. 2 I went because God showed me that I should go. I went to those men who were considered to be the leaders of the believers. When we were alone, I told these men the Good News* I tell to the non-Jewish people. 3–4 Titus was with me. Titus is a Greek (non-Jew). But these leaders did not force even Titus to be circumcised.* 5 We needed to talk about these problems, because some false brothers had come into our group secretly. They came in like spies to find out about the freedom we have in Christ Jesus. They wanted to make us slaves. 5 But we did not agree with anything those false brothers wanted! We wanted the truth of the Good News to continue for you.

6 Those men who seemed to be important did not change the Good News* message I tell people. (It doesn’t matter to me if they were “important” or not. To God all men are the same.) 7 But these leaders saw that God had given me a special work, the same as Peter.* 8 God gave Peter the work of telling the Good News to the Jews. But God gave me the work of telling the Good News to the non-Jewish people. 9 God gave Peter the power to work as an apostle.* Peter is an apostle for the Jewish people. God gave me the power to work as an apostle too. But I am an apostle for the people who are not Jews. 10 James, Peter, and John seemed to be the leaders. They saw that God had given me this special grace (gift). So they accepted Barnabas and me. Peter, James, and John said, “Paul and Barnabas, we agree that you should go to the people who are not Jews. We will go to the Jews.” 11 They asked us to do only one thing—to remember to help the poor people. And this was something that I really wanted to do.

Paul Shows that Peter Was Wrong
11 Peter came to Antioch. He did something that was not right. I was against Peter, because he was wrong. 12 This is what happened: When Peter first came to Antioch, he ate and associated with the non-Jewish people. But then some Jewish men came from James. When these men came, Peter separated himself from the non-Jews. He stopped eating with them. Why? Because he was afraid of the Jews who believe that all non-Jewish people must be circumcised.* 13 So Peter was a hypocrite.* The other Jewish believers joined with Peter. So they were hypocrites too. Even Barnabas was influenced by the things these Jewish believers did. 14 I saw what these Jews did. They were not following the truth of the Good News.* So I spoke to Peter in a way that all the other Jews could hear what I said. This is what I said: “Peter, you are a Jew. But you don’t live like a Jew. You live like a non-Jew. So why do you now force the non-Jewish people to live like Jews?”

15 We Jews were not born as non-Jews and sinners. We were born as Jews. 16 We know that a person is not made right with God by following the law.* No! It is trusting in Jesus Christ that makes a person right with God. So we have put our faith in Christ Jesus, because we wanted to be made right with God. And we are right with God because we trusted in Christ—not because we followed the law.

Peter  The text says “Cephas,” the Jewish name for Peter. He was one of Jesus’ twelve apostles.

apostle(s)  The men Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

Good News  The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

circumcised, circumcision  Cutting off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.

hypocrite(s)  Bad people that act like they are good.

law  God’s law. It is represented in the law of Moses.
Galatians 2:17–3:15

17 We Jews came to Christ to be made right with God by following the law. So it is clear that we were sinners too. Does this mean that Christ makes us sinners? No! 18 But I would really be wrong to begin teaching again those things (the law) that I gave up. 19 I stopped living for the law. It was the law that killed me. I died to the law so that I can now live for God. I (my old life) was killed on the cross with Christ. 20 So the life that I live now is not really me—it is Christ living in me. I still live in my body, but I live by faith in the Son of God (Jesus). Jesus is the One who loved me. He gave himself to save me. 21 This gift is from God, and it is very important to me. Why? Because if law could make us right with God, then Christ did not have to die.

God’s Blessing Comes Through Faith

3 You people in Galatia were told very clearly about the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. But you were very foolish. You let someone trick you. Tell me this one thing: How did you receive the Spirit? Did you receive the Spirit by following the law? No! You received the Spirit because you heard the Good News and believed it. 4 You began your life in Christ, with the Spirit. Now do you try to complete it by your own power? That is foolish. 5 You have experienced many things. Were all those experiences wasted? I hope they were not wasted! 6 Does God give you the Spirit because you follow the law? No! Does God work miracles among you because you follow the law? No! God gives you his Spirit and works miracles among you because you heard the Good News and believed it.

6 The Scriptures say the same thing about Abraham. “Abraham believed God. And God accepted Abraham’s faith. That made Abraham right with God.”* 7 So you should know that the true children of Abraham are the people who have faith. 8 The Scriptures told what would happen in the future. These writings said that God would make the non-Jewish people right through their faith. God told this Good News to Abraham before it happened. God said to Abraham, “I will use you to bless all the people on earth.”* 9 Abraham believed this. Because Abraham believed, he was blessed. It is the same today. All people who believe are blessed the same as Abraham was blessed. 10 But people who depend on following the law to make them right are under a curse. Why? Because the Scriptures say, “A person must do all the things that are written in the law. If he does not always obey, then that person is under a curse!”* 11 So it is clear that no person can be made right with God by the law. The Scriptures say, “The person who is right with God by faith will live forever.”* 12 The law does not use faith; it uses a different way. The law says, “A person who wants to find life by following these things (the law) must do the things the law says.”* 13 The law put a curse on us. But Christ took away that curse. He changed places with us. Christ put himself under that curse. The Scriptures say, “When a person’s body is put (hung) on a tree,* that person is under a curse.”* 14 Christ did this so that God’s blessing could be given to all people. God promised this blessing to Abraham. The blessing comes through Jesus Christ. Christ died, so that we could have the Spirit that God promised. We receive this promise by believing.

The Law and the Promise

15 Brothers and sisters, let me give you an example: Think about an agreement that one

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

law God’s work among people in the world.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

miracle(s) Powerful works or great things done by God’s power.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Abraham Most respected ancestor of the Jews.

“Abraham believed ... God” Quote from Gen. 15:6.

“God will use ... earth” Quote from Gen. 12:3.

“A person ... curse” Quote from Deut. 27:26.

“The person ... forever” Quote from Hab. 2:4.

“A person ... law says” Quote from Lev. 18:5.

put on a tree Deut. 21:22–23 says that when a person was killed for doing wrong, his body was hung on a tree to show shame. Paul means that the cross of Jesus was like that.

“When ... curse” Quote from Deut. 21:23.
Abraham Most respected ancestor of the Jews.
Descendant Literally, “seed.”
descendant(s) The people born in a person’s family after that person dies.
law The law of Moses.
mediator A person who helps one person talk to or give something to another person.
Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.
heir A person who will be given all that his father owned.
Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
Abba An Aramaic word. Jewish children called their fathers “Abba.”
Paul’s Love for the Galatian Christians

8 In the past you did not know God. You were slaves to gods that were not real. 9 But now you know the true God. Really, it is God who knows you. Why do you turn back to those weak and useless rules you followed before? Do you want to be slaves to those things again?

10–11 It worries me that you follow teachings about special days, months, seasons, and years. If I fear that my work for you has been wasted.

12 Brothers and sisters, I was like you; so please become like me. You were very good to me before. 13 You remember why I came to you the first time. It was because I was sick. That sickness was a burden to you. But you did not show hate for me. You did not make me leave. You welcomed me like I was an angel from God. You accepted me like I was Jesus Christ himself! 14 You were very happy then. Where is that joy now? I remember that you wanted to do anything possible to help me. You would have taken out your own eyes and given them to me if that were possible. 16 Now am I your enemy because I tell you the truth?

17 Those people* are working hard to persuade you. But this is not good for you. Those people want to persuade you to turn against us. They want you to follow only them and no other people. 18 It is good for people to show interest in you, but only if their purpose is good. This is always true. It is true when I am with you and when I am away. 19 My little children, again I feel pain for you like a mother feels when she gives birth. I will feel this until you truly become like Christ. 20 I wish I could be with you now. Then maybe I could change the way I am talking to you. Now I don’t know what to do about you.

The Example of Hagar and Sarah

21 Some of you people still want to be under the law of Moses. Tell me, do you know what the law says? 22 The Scriptures* say that Abraham had two sons. The mother of one son was a slave woman. The mother of the other son was a free woman. 23 Abraham’s son from the slave woman was born in the normal human way. But the son from the free woman was born because of the promise God made to Abraham.

24 This true story makes a picture for us. The two women are like the two agreements (covenants) between God and his people. One agreement is the law that God made on Mount Sinai. The people who are under this agreement are like slaves. The mother named Hagar is like that agreement. 25 So Hagar is like Mount Sinai in Arabia. She is a picture of the earthly Jewish city of Jerusalem. This city is a slave, and all its people (the Jews) are slaves to the law. 26 But the heavenly Jerusalem that is above is like the free woman. This is our mother. 27 The Scriptures* say,

“Be happy, woman who cannot have children! You never gave birth. Shout and cry with joy! You never felt the pain of giving birth. The woman who is alone will have more children than the woman who has a husband.”

Isaiah 54:1

28–29 One son of Abraham was born in the normal way. Abraham’s other son (Isaac) was born by the power of the Spirit, because of God’s promise. My brothers and sisters, you are also children of promise like Isaac was then. The son who was born in the normal way treated the other son (Isaac) badly. It is the same today. 30 But what do the Scriptures* say? “Throw out the slave woman and her son! The son of the free woman will receive everything his father has. But the son of the slave woman will receive nothing.”* 31 So, my brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman. We are children of the free woman.

Mount Sinai Mountain in Arabia where God gave his laws to Moses. Read Ex. 19 and 20.

woman ... alone This means her husband has left her.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

“Throw out ... nothing” Quote from Gen. 21:10.
Keep Your Freedom

5 We have freedom now. Christ made us free. So stand strong. Don’t change and go back into the slavery of law. Listen! I am Paul. I tell you that if you go back to law by being circumcised, then Christ is no good for you. Again, I warn every man: If you allow yourselves to be circumcised, then you must follow all the law of Moses. If you try to be made right with God through the law, then your life with Christ is finished—you have left God’s grace. I say this because our hope of being made right with God comes through faith. And the Spirit helps us wait for that hope. When a person is in Christ Jesus, it is not important if he is circumcised or not. The important thing is faith—the kind of faith that works through love.

You were running a good race. You were obeying the truth. Who persuaded you to stop following the true way? That persuasion does not come from the One who chose you. Be careful! “Just a little yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise.” I trust in the Lord that you will not believe those different ideas. Some person is confusing you with those ideas. That person will be punished, whoever he is.

11 My brothers and sisters, I don’t teach that people must be circumcised. If I do teach circumcision, then why am I still being persecuted? If I still taught that people must be circumcised, then my telling them about the cross would not be a problem. I wish those people who are bothering you would add castration to their circumcision.

13 My brothers and sisters, God called you to be free. But don’t use your freedom as an excuse to do the things that please your sinful selves. But serve each other with love. The whole law is made complete in this one command: “Love other people the same as you love yourself.” If you continue hurting each other and tearing each other apart, be careful! You will completely destroy each other.

The Spirit and Human Nature

16 So I tell you: Live by following the Spirit. Then you will not do the evil things your sinful selves want. Our sinful selves want things that are against the Spirit. The Spirit wants things that are against our sinful selves. These two different things are against each other. So you don’t do the things you really want to do. But if you let the Spirit lead you, then you are not under law.

The wrong things our sinful self does are clear: doing sexual sins, not being pure, doing morally bad things, worshipping false gods, doing witchcraft, hating, making trouble, having jealousy, being very angry, being selfish, making people mad at each other, making divisions, having envy, being drunk, having wild and wasteful parties, and doing other things like this. I warn you now like I warned you before: The people who do these things will not be in God’s kingdom. But the Spirit gives love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. There is no law that can say these things are wrong.

Those people who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their own sinful selves. They have given up their old selfish feelings and the evil things they wanted to do. We get our new life from the Spirit. So we should follow the Spirit. We must not be vain. We must not make trouble with each other. And we must not be jealous of each other.

Help Each Other

6 Brothers and sisters, a person in your group might do something wrong. You people who are spiritual should go to the

circumcised, circumcision: Cutting off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9-14.


yeast: Used here as a symbol of evil or bad influence.

Just ... rise: A proverb meaning that a small thing (like a little wrong teaching) can make a big problem or that just one person can have a bad influence on the whole group.

castration: To cut off part of the male sex organs. Paul uses this word because it is like “circumcision.” Paul shows that he is very upset with the false teachers.

law: God’s law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

“Love other people ... yourself”: Quote from Lev. 19:18.

law: A law system, like the law of Moses.

witchcraft: Using magic or the power of Satan.
person who is sinning. You should help to make him right again. You should do this in a gentle way. But be careful! You might be tempted to sin, too. 2 Help each other with your troubles. When you do this, you truly obey the law of Christ. 3 If a person thinks that he is important when he is really not important, he is only fooling himself. 4 A person should not compare himself with other people. Each person should judge his own actions. Then he can be proud for what he himself has done. 5 Each person must accept his own responsibility.

Never Stop Doing Good

6 The person who is learning the teaching of God should share all the good things he has with the person who is teaching him.

7 Don’t be fooled: You cannot cheat God. A person harvests only the things he plants. 8 If a person plants (lives) to satisfy his sinful self, then his sinful self will bring him eternal death. But if a person plants to please the Spirit, he will get eternal life from the Spirit.

9 We must not become tired of doing good. We will receive our harvest of eternal life at the right time. We must not give up! 10 When we have the opportunity to do good to any person, we should do it. But we should give special attention to the people that are in the family of believers (the church).

Paul Ends His Letter

11 I am writing this myself. See what big letters I use. 12 Some men are trying to force you to be circumcised.* They do these things so that other people (the Jews) will accept them. Those men are afraid they will be criticized if they follow only the cross of Christ.* 13 Those men are circumcised, but they don’t obey the law* themselves. They want you to be circumcised. Then they can boast about what they forced you to do. 14 I hope I will never boast about things like that. The cross (death) of our Lord Jesus Christ is my only reason for boasting. Through Jesus’ death on the cross the world is dead* to me; and I am dead to the world. 15 It is not important if a person is circumcised or not circumcised. The important thing is being the new people God has made. 16 Peace and mercy to the people who follow this rule—to all of God’s people.

17 So don’t give me any more trouble. I have scars on my body. These scars show* that I belong to Jesus.

18 My brothers and sisters, I pray that the grace (kindness) of our Lord Jesus Christ will be with your spirits. Amen.

harvests only the things he plants  Paul uses these words about farming to show that life is like a farmer planting a field. A farmer will get from the field only what he plants.

Spirit, Holy Spirit  Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

circumcised, circumcision  Cutting off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.

cross of Christ  Paul uses the cross as a picture of the Good News, the story of Christ’s death to pay for men’s sins.

law  God’s law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

is dead  Literally, “has been crucified.”

These scars show  Many times Paul was beaten by people who were against him because he was teaching about Christ. The scars were from these beatings.
Greetings from Paul, an apostle* of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle because that is what God wanted.

To God’s holy people* living in Ephesus,* believers in Christ Jesus.

Grace (kindness) and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, God has given us every spiritual blessing in heaven. In Christ, God chose us before the world was made. God chose us in love to be his holy people*—people with no wrong in us before him. And before the world was made, God decided to make us his own children through Jesus Christ. That was what God wanted to do. That pleased him. And this brings praise to God because of his wonderful grace (kindness). God gave that grace to us freely. He gave us that grace in Christ, the One he loves. In Christ we are made free by Christ’s blood (death). We have forgiveness of sins because of God’s rich grace. God gave us that grace fully and freely. God, with full wisdom and understanding, let us know his secret plan. This was what God wanted. And he planned to do it through Christ. God’s goal was to finish his plan when the right time came. God planned that all things in heaven and on earth be joined together with Christ as the head.

11In Christ we were chosen to be God’s people. God had already planned for us to be his people, because that is what God wanted. And God is the One who makes everything agree with what he decides and wants. We Jews were the first people who hoped in Christ. And we were chosen so that we would bring praise to God’s glory. It is the same with you people. You heard the true teaching—the Good News* about your salvation. When you heard that Good News, you believed in Christ. And in Christ, God put his special mark on you by giving you the Holy Spirit* that he promised.

14That Holy Spirit is the guarantee that we will get the things God promised for his people. This will bring full freedom to those people who belong to God. The goal of all this is to bring praise to God’s glory.

Paul’s Prayer

15–16That is why I always remember you in my prayers and always thank God for you. I have always done this since the time I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people. I always pray to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ—to the glorious Father. I pray that he will give you the Spirit that will show you things about God and help you understand them. Then you will really know God. I pray that God will open your minds to see his truth. Then you will know the hope that God has chosen us to have. You will know that the blessings God has

apostle A person Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

holly people Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.
in Ephesus Some Greek copies omit the words “in Ephesus.”

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
promised his holy people* are rich and glorious. 19 And you will know that God’s power is very great for us who believe. That power is the same as the great strength 20 that God used to raise Christ from death. God put Christ at his right side in the heavenly places. 21 God made Christ more important than all rulers, authorities, powers, and kings. Christ is more important than anything that has power in this world or in the next world. 22 God put everything under Christ’s power. And God gave him to be the head (ruler) over everything for the church. 23 The church is Christ’s body. The church is filled with Christ. He makes everything complete in every way.

From Death to Life

In the past, your spiritual lives were dead because of your sins and the things you did wrong against God. 2 Yes, in the past you lived doing those sins. You lived the way the world lives. You followed the ruler of the evil powers over the earth. That same spirit is now working in those people who refuse to obey God. 3 In the past, all of us lived like those people. We lived trying to please our sinful selves. We did all the things our bodies and minds wanted. We were evil people. We should have suffered God’s anger because of the way we were. We were the same as all other people.

But God’s mercy is very great, and God loved us very much. 5 We were spiritually dead. We were dead because of the things we did wrong against God. But God gave us new life with Christ. You have been saved by God’s grace (kindness). 6 And God raised us up with Christ and gave us a seat with him in the heavenly places. God did this for us who are in Christ Jesus. 7 God did this so that for all future time he could show the very great riches of his grace. God shows that grace by being kind to us in Christ Jesus. 8 I mean that you are saved by grace. And you got that grace by believing. You did not save yourselves. It was a gift from God. 9 No! You are not saved by the things you have done. So no person can boast that he saved himself. 10 God has made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us new people so that we would do good things. God had already planned those good things for us. God had planned for us to live our lives doing those good things.

One in Christ

You were born non-Jews. You are the people the Jews call “uncircumcised.” Those Jews who call you “uncircumcised” call themselves “circumcised.” (Their circumcision is only something they themselves do on their bodies.) 12 Remember that in the past you were without Christ. You were not citizens of Israel. And you did not have the agreements with the promise that God made to his people. You had no hope, and you did not know God. 13 Yes, at one time you were far away from God. But now in Christ Jesus you are brought near to him. You are brought near to God through the blood (death) of Christ. 14 Because of Christ we now have peace. Christ made us both (Jews and non-Jews) one people. The Jews and the non-Jews were separated like there was a wall between them. They hated each other. But Christ broke down that wall of hate by giving his own body.

The Jewish law had many commands and rules. But Christ ended that law. Christ’s purpose was to make the two groups of people (Jews and non-Jews) become one new people in him. By doing this Christ would make peace. 16 Through the cross Christ ended the hate between the two groups. And after the two groups became one body, Christ wanted to bring them both back to God. Christ did this with his death on the cross. 17 Christ came and preached peace to you people (non-Jews) who were far from God.
away from God. And he preached peace to the people (Jews) who were near to God. 18 Yes, through Christ we all have the right to come to the Father in one Spirit.*

19 So now you non-Jews are not visitors or strangers. Now you are citizens together with God’s holy people.* You belong to God’s family. 20 You believers are like a building that God owns. That building was built on the foundation that the apostles* and prophets* prepared. Christ himself is the most important stone* in that building. 21 That whole building is joined together in Christ. And Christ makes it grow and become a holy temple* in the Lord. 22 And in Christ you people are being built together with the other people (the Jews). You are being made into a place where God lives through the Spirit.*

Paul’s Work for the Gentiles

3 So I (Paul) am a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am a prisoner for you people who are not Jews. 2 Surely you know that God gave me this work through his grace (kindness). God gave me this work to help you. 3 God let me know his secret plan. He showed it to me. I have already written a little about this. 4 And if you read these things I wrote, then you can see that I truly understand the secret truth about the Christ. 5 People who lived in other times were not told that secret truth. But now, through the Spirit,* God has shown that secret truth to his holy apostles* and prophets.* 6 This is that secret truth: that the non-Jews will get the things God has for his people, the same as the Jews. The non-Jews are together with the Jews in the same body. And they share together in the promise that God made in Christ Jesus.

The non-Jews have all these things because of the Good News.*

7 By God’s special gift of grace (kindness), I became a servant to tell that Good News.* God gave me that grace by using his power. 8 I am the least important of all of God’s people. But God gave me this gift—to tell the non-Jewish people the Good News about the riches Christ has. Those riches are too great to understand fully. 9 And God gave me the work of telling all people about the plan for God’s secret truth. That secret truth has been hidden in God since the beginning of time. God is the One who created everything. 10 God’s purpose was that all the rulers and powers in the heavenly places will now know the many different ways God shows his wisdom. They will know this because of the church.* 11 This agrees with the plan God had since the beginning of time. God did what he planned. He did it through Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 In Christ we can come before God with freedom and without fear. We can do this through faith in Christ. 13 So I ask you not to become discouraged and lose hope because of the sufferings I am having for you. My sufferings bring honor to you.

The Love of Christ

14 So I bow in prayer before the Father. 15 Every family in heaven and on earth gets its true name from him. 16 I ask the Father with his great glory to give you the power to be strong in your spirits. He will give you that strength through his Spirit.* 17 I pray that Christ will live in your hearts because of your faith. I pray that your life will be strong in love and be built on love. 18 And I pray that you and all God’s holy people* will have the power to understand the greatness of Christ’s love. I pray that you can understand how wide and how long and how high and how deep that love is. 19 Christ’s love is greater than any person can ever know. But I pray that you will be able to know that love. Then you can be filled with the fullness of God.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

holy people Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.
apostles The men Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.
prophets People that spoke for God.
most important stone Literally, “cornerstone.” The first and most important rock in a building.
temple God’s house—the place where God’s people worship him. Here, it means that God lives in his people.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

church God’s church—his people in Christ.
With God’s power working in us, God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or think of. To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever. Amen.

### The Unity of the Body

I am in prison because I belong to the Lord. And God chose you to be his people. I tell you now to live the way God’s people should live. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient and accept each other with love. You are joined together with peace through the Spirit. Do all you can to continue together in this way. Let peace hold you together. There is one body and one Spirit. And God called you to have one hope. There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. There is one God and Father of everything. He rules everything. He is everywhere and in everything.

Christ gave each one of us a special gift. Each person received what Christ wanted to give that person. That is why it says in the Scriptures,

> “He went up high into the sky; he took prisoners with him, and he gave gifts to people.”

Psalm 68:18

When it says, “He went up,” what does it mean? It means that he first came down low to earth. So Jesus came down, and he is the same One who went up. He went up above all the sky. Christ did that to fill everything with himself. And that same Christ gave gifts to people—he made some people to be apostles, some people to be prophets, some people to go and tell the Good News, and some people to have the work of caring for and teaching God’s people. Christ gave those gifts to prepare God’s holy people for the work of serving. He gave those gifts to make the body of Christ stronger. This work must continue, until we are all joined together in the same faith and in the same knowledge about the Son of God. We must become like a mature (perfect) person—we must grow until we become like Christ and have all his perfection.

Then we will not still be babies. We will not be people who change like a ship that the waves carry one way and then another. We will not be influenced by every new teaching we hear from people who try to fool us. Those people make plans and try any kind of trick to fool people into following the wrong way. No! We will speak the truth with love. We will grow to be like Christ in every way. Christ is the head and we are the body. The whole body depends on Christ. And all the parts of the body are joined and held together. Each part of the body does its own work. And this makes the whole body grow and be strong with love.

### The Way You Should Live

For the Lord I tell you this. I warn you: Don’t continue living like those people who don’t believe. Their thoughts are worth nothing. Those people don’t understand. They know nothing, because they refuse to listen. So they cannot have the life that God gives. They have lost their feeling of shame. And they use their lives doing things that are morally wrong. More and more they want to do all kinds of evil. But the things you learned in Christ were not like those bad things. I know that you heard about him. And you are in him, so you were taught the truth. Yes, the truth is in Jesus. You were taught to leave your old self. This means that you must stop living the evil way you lived before. That old self becomes worse and worse, because people are fooled by the evil things they want to do. You must be made new in your hearts and in your thinking. You must become a new person, made to be like God—made to be truly good and holy.

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**Spirit, Holy Spirit** Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

**baptism** A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

**Scripture(s)** Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

**apostles** The men Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

**prophets** People that spoke for God.

**Good News** The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

**holy people** Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

**holy** A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.
So you must stop telling lies. You must always speak the truth to each other, because we all belong to each other in the same body. When you become angry, don’t let that anger make you sin. And don’t continue to be angry all day. Don’t give the devil a way to defeat you. If a person is stealing, he must stop stealing. That person must start working. He must use his hands for doing something good. Then he will have something to share with those people who are poor.

When you talk, don’t say any bad things. But say things that people need—things that will help other people become stronger. Then the things you say will help the people who listen to you. And don’t make the Holy Spirit* sad. The Spirit is God’s proof that you belong to God. God gave you that Spirit to show that God will make you free at the right time. Never be bitter or angry or mad. Never shout angrily or say things to hurt other people. Never do anything evil. Be kind and loving to each other. Forgive each other the same as God forgave you in Christ.

You are God’s children that he loves. So try to be like God. Live a life of love. Love other people the same as Christ loved us. Christ gave himself for us—he was a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice* to God.

But there must be no sexual sin among you. There must be no kind of evil or selfishly wanting more and more. Why? Because those things are not right for God’s holy people.*

Also, there must be no evil talk among you. You must not speak foolishly or tell evil jokes. These things are not right for you. But you should be giving thanks to God. You can be sure of this: No person will have a place in the kingdom of Christ and of God if that person does sexual sins, or does evil things, or is a person who always wants more and more for himself. A greedy person like that is serving a false god.

Don’t let any person fool you by telling you things that are not true. Those evil things make God angry with the people who don’t obey. So don’t do those things with them. In the past you were full of darkness (sin), but now you are full of light (goodness) in the Lord. So live like children who belong to the light. Light brings every kind of goodness, right living, and truth. Try to learn what pleases the Lord. Don’t do the things that people in darkness do. Doing those things brings nothing good. But do the good things to show that those things in darkness are wrong. It is really very shameful to even talk about the things those people in darkness do in secret. But when we show that those things are wrong, the light makes all those things easy to see. And everything that is made easy to see can become light. This is why we say:

“Wake up, you sleeping person! Rise from death, and Christ will shine on you.”

So be very careful how you live. Don’t live like people who are not wise. But live wisely. I mean that you should use every chance you have for doing good, because these are evil times. So don’t be foolish with your lives. But learn what the Lord wants you to do. Don’t be drunk with wine. That will ruin (destroy) you spiritually. But be filled with the Spirit.* Communicate to each other with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord. Always give thanks to God the Father for everything. Give him thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wives and Husbands

Be willing to serve each other. Do this because you respect Christ.

Wives, be willing to serve your husbands, the same as the Lord. The husband is the head of the wife, the same as Christ is the head of the church. The church is Christ’s body—Christ is the Savior of the body. The church is under the authority of Christ. So it is the same with you wives. You should be under the authority of your husbands in everything.
25Husbands, love your wives the same as Christ loved the church. Christ died for the church. He died to make the church holy. Christ used the telling of the Good News to make the church clean by washing it with water. Christ died so that he could give the church to himself, like a bride, full of glory (beauty). He died so that the church could be pure and without fault, with no evil or sin or any other thing wrong in the church. And husbands should love their wives like that. They should love their wives like they love their own bodies. The man who loves his wife loves himself. Why? Because no person ever hates his own body. Every person feeds and takes care of his body. And that is what Christ does for the church, because we are parts of his body. The Scriptures say, “So a man will leave his father and mother and join his wife. And the two people will become one.” That secret truth is very important—I am talking about Christ and the church. But each one of you must love his wife like he loves himself. And a wife must respect her husband.

Children and Parents

Children, obey your parents the way the Lord wants. That is the right thing to do. The command says, “You must honor (respect) your father and mother.” That is the first command that has a promise with it. That promise is: “Then everything will be fine with you. And you will have a long life on the earth.”

Fathers, don’t make your children angry. But raise your children with the training and teaching of the Lord.

Slaves and Masters

Slaves, obey your masters here on earth. Obey with fear and respect. And do that with a heart that is true, the same as you obey Christ.

6You must do more than just obey your masters to please them while they are watching you. You must obey them like you are obeying Christ. With all your heart you must do what God wants. Do your work, and be happy to do it. Work like you are serving the Lord, not like you are serving only men. Remember that the Lord will give every person a reward for doing good. Every person, slave or free, will get a reward for the good things he does.

9Masters, in the same way, be good to your slaves. Don’t say things to scare them. You know that the One who is your Master and their Master is in heaven. And that Master (God) judges every person the same.

Wear the Full Armor of God

To end my letter I tell you, be strong in the Lord and in his great power. Wear the full armor (protection) of God. Wear God’s armor so that you can fight against the devil’s evil tricks. Our fight is not against people on earth. We are fighting against the rulers and authorities and the powers of this world’s darkness. We are fighting against the spiritual powers of evil in the heavenly places. That is why you need to get God’s full armor. Then on the day of evil you will be able to stand strong. And when you have finished the whole fight, you will still be standing. So stand strong, with the belt of truth tied around your waist. And on your chest wear the protection of right living. And on your feet wear the Good News of peace to help you stand strong. And also use the shield of faith. With that you can stop all the burning arrows of the Evil One (the devil). Accept God’s salvation to be your helmet. And take the sword of the Spirit—that sword is the teaching of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times. Pray with all kinds of prayers, and ask for everything you need. To do this you must always be ready. Never give up. Always pray for all God’s people.

Also pray for me. Pray that when I speak, God will give me words so that I can tell the
secret truth about the Good News\* without fear. 20I have the work of speaking for that Good News. I am doing that now, here in prison. Pray that when I tell people that Good News I will speak without fear like I should.

Final Greetings

21I am sending to you Tychicus, our brother that we love. He is a faithful servant of the Lord’s work. He will tell you everything that is happening with me. Then you will know how I am and what I am doing. 22That is why I am sending him. I want you to know how we are. I am sending him to encourage you.

23Peace and love with faith to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24God’s grace (kindness) to all of you who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love that never ends.
Greetings from Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ.

To all of God’s holy people\(^*\) in Christ Jesus that live in Philippi. And to all your elders\(^*\) and special helpers.\(^*\)

Paul’s Prayer

\(^1\) I thank God every time I remember you.
\(^2\) And I always pray for all of you with joy. \(^3\) I thank God for the help you gave me while I told people the Good News. \(^4\) You helped from the first day you believed until now. \(^5\) God began doing good things with you. And God is continuing that work in you. God will finish that work in you when Jesus Christ comes again. I am sure of that.

\(^6\) And I know that I am right to think like this about all of you. I am sure because I have you in my heart—I feel very close to you. I feel close to you because all of you share in God’s grace (kindness) with me. You share in God’s grace with me while I am in prison, while I am defending the Good News, \(^7\) and while I am proving the truth of the Good News. \(^8\) God knows that I want to see you very much. I love all of you with the love of Christ Jesus.

This is my prayer for you:

\(^9\) that your love will grow more and more;
\(^10\) that you will have knowledge and understanding with your love;
\(^11\) that you will see the difference between good and bad and choose the good;
\(^12\) that you will be pure and without wrong for the coming of Christ;
\(^13\) that you will do many good things with the help of Christ to bring glory and praise to God.

Paul’s Troubles Help the Lord’s Work

\(^14\) Brothers and sisters, I want you to know that those bad things that happened to me have helped to spread the Good News. \(^15\) It is clear why I am in prison. I am in prison because I am a believer in Christ. All the Roman guards know this, and so do all the other people. \(^16\) I am still in prison, but most of the believers feel better about it now. And so they are much braver about telling people the message\(^*\) {about Christ}.

\(^17\) Some people preach about Christ because they are jealous and bitter. Other people preach about Christ because they want to help. These people preach because they have love. They know that God gave me the work of defending the Good News. \(^18\) But those other people preach about Christ because they are selfish. Their reason for preaching is wrong. They want to make trouble for me in prison.

\(^19\) I don’t care if they make trouble for me. The important thing is that they are telling people about Christ. I want them to tell people about Christ. They should do it for the right reasons. But I am happy even if they do it for false and wrong reasons. I am happy because they tell people about Christ, and I will continue to be happy. \(^20\) You are praying for

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holy people Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “overseers” and “pastors” (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:31; Tit. 1:7,9.

special helpers Literally, “deacons,” a Greek word meaning “servants.” They were chosen to serve the church in special ways.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God forever.
me, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me. So I know that this trouble will bring my freedom. 20The thing I want and hope for is that I will not fail Christ in anything. I hope that I will have the courage now, like always, to show the greatness of Christ in my life here on earth. I want to do that if I die or if I live.

21I mean that to me the only important thing about living is Christ. And even death would be profit for me.* 22If I continue living in the body, then I will be able to work for the Lord. But what would I choose—living or dying? I don’t know. 23It is hard to choose between living or dying. I want to leave this life and be with Christ. That is much better. 24But you people need me here in my body. 25I know that you need me. And so I know that I will stay with you. I will help you grow and have joy in your faith. 26You will be very happy in Christ Jesus when I am with you again.

27Be sure that you live in a way that fits the Good News of Christ. Then if I come and visit you or if I am away from you, I will hear good things about you. I will hear that you continue strong with the same purpose and work together like a team for the faith that comes from the Good News. 28And you will not be afraid of those people who are against you. All of these things are proof from God that you are being saved and that your enemies will be lost. 29God gave you the honor of believing in Christ. But that is not all. God also gave you the honor of suffering for Christ. Both these things bring glory to Christ. 30When I was with you, you saw the struggles I had with people who were against our work. And now you hear about the struggles I am having. You yourselves are having the same kind of struggles.

**Be United and Care for Each Other**

2Is there any way in Christ that I can ask you to do something? Does your love make you want to comfort me? Do we share together in the Spirit? Do you have mercy and kindness? 3If you have these things, then I ask you to do something for me. This will make me very happy. I ask that all your minds be joined together by believing the same things. Be joined together in your love for each other. Live together by agreeing with each other and having the same goals. 3When you do things, don’t let selfishness or pride be your guide. Be humble and give more honor to other people than to yourselves. 4Don’t be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of other people, too.

**Learn from Christ to be Unselfish**

5In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus.

6Christ himself was like God in everything. Christ was equal with God. But Christ did not think that being equal with God was something that he must keep.

7He gave up his place with God and agreed to be like a servant. He was born to be a man and became like a servant. 8And when he was living as a man, he humbled himself by being fully obedient to God. He obeyed even when that caused him to die. And he died on a cross.

9Christ obeyed God, so God raised Christ to the most important place. God made the name of Christ greater than every other name. 10God did this because he wants every person to bow for the name of Jesus. Every person in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth will bow. 11Every person will confess, “Jesus Christ is Lord (Master).” When they say this, it will bring glory to God the Father.

**Be the People God Wants You to Be**

12My dear friends, you have always obeyed. You obeyed God when I was with you. It is even more important that you obey now while I am not there to help you. You yourselves must live in a way that moves you toward your salvation. Do this with respect and fear for God. 13Yes, God is working in you. God helps you want to do the things that please him. And he gives you the power to do these things.

14Do everything without complaining or arguing. 15Then you will be innocent and without anything wrong in you. You will be
PHILIPPIANS 2:16–3:9

God’s children without fault. But you are living with evil people all around you who have become very bad. Among those people you shine like lights in the dark world. You offer those people the teaching that gives life. So I can be happy when Christ comes again. I can be happy because my work was not wasted. I ran in the race and won.

Your faith makes you give your lives as a sacrifice in serving God. Maybe I will have to offer my own blood (death) with your sacrifice. But if that happens, I will be happy and full of joy with all of you. You also should be happy and full of joy with me.

**News About Timothy and Epaphroditus**

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon. I will be happy to learn how you are. I have no other person like Timothy. He truly cares for you. Other people are interested only in their own lives. They are not interested in the work of Christ Jesus. You know the kind of person Timothy is. You know that he has served with me in telling the Good News like a son serves his father. I plan to send him to you quickly. I will send him when I know what will happen to me. I am sure that the Lord will help me to come to you soon.

Epaphroditus is my brother in Christ. He works and serves with me in the army of Christ. When I needed help, you sent him to me. I think now that I must send him back to you. I sent him because he wants very much to see all of you. He is worried because you heard that he was sick. He was sick and was near death. But God helped him and me too, so that I would not have more sadness. So I want very much to send him to you. When you see him, you can be happy. And I can stop worrying about you. Welcome him in the Lord with much joy. Give honor to people like Epaphroditus. He should be honored because he almost died for the work of Christ. He put his life in danger so that he could help me. This was help that you could not give me.

**Christ Is More Important Than Anything**

And now, my brothers and sisters, be happy in the Lord. It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it will help you to be more ready. Be careful of those people who do evil. They are like dogs. They demand to cut the body. But we are the people who are truly circumcised.* We worship (serve) God through his Spirit.* We are proud to be in Christ Jesus. And we don’t trust in ourselves or anything we can do. Even if I am able to trust in myself, still I don’t trust in myself. If any other person thinks that he has a reason to trust in himself, then he should know that I have a greater reason for trusting in myself. I was circumcised eight days after my birth. I am from the people of Israel* and the family group of Benjamin. I am a Hebrew (Jew), and my parents were Hebrews. The law of Moses was very important to me. That is why I became a Pharisee.* I was so excited about my Jewish religion that I persecuted* the church (the believers). No person could find fault with the way I always obeyed the law of Moses. At one time all these things were important to me. But I decided that those things are worth nothing because of Christ. Not only those things, but now I think that all things are worth nothing compared with the greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Christ, I lost all those things I thought were important. And now I know that all those things are worthless trash. This allows me to have Christ. It allows me to be in Christ. In Christ I am right with God, and this being right does not come from my following the law. It comes from God through faith. God uses my faith in Christ to make me right with

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*sacrifice An offering or gift to God.

**God News, message** The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God forever.

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cut The word in Greek is like the word “circumcise,” but it means “to cut completely off.”

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9–14). Paul uses the idea here in a spiritual sense of Christians who share in the new agreement God gave his people through Jesus.

**Spirit, Holy Spirit** Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

**Israel** The Jewish nation (people).

**Pharisee** Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

**persecute** To hurt, bother, or do bad things to.
him. 10 All I want is to know Christ and the power of his rising from death. I want to share in Christ’s sufferings and become like him in his death. 11 If I have those things, then I have hope that I myself will be raised from death.

Trying to Reach the Goal

12 I don’t mean that I am already exactly like God wants me to be. I have not yet reached that goal. But I continue trying to reach that goal and to make it mine. Christ wants me to do that. That is the reason Christ made me his. 13 Brothers and sisters, I know that I have not yet reached that goal. But there is one thing I always do: I forget the things that are past. I try as hard as I can to reach the goal that is before me. 14 I keep trying to reach the goal and get the prize. That prize is mine because God called me through Christ to the life above.

15 All of us who have grown spiritually to be mature (perfect) should think this way too. And if there is any of these things you don’t agree with, God will make it clear to you. 16 But we should continue following the truth we already have.

17 Brothers and sisters, all of you should try to live like me. And copy those people who live the way we showed you. 18 Many people live like enemies of the cross of Christ. I have often told you about these people. And it makes me cry to tell you about them now. 19 The way these people live is leading them to destruction. They don’t serve God. Those people live only to please themselves. They do shameful things, and they are proud of those things. They think only about earthly things. 20 But our homeland is in heaven. We are waiting for our Savior to come from heaven. Our Savior is the Lord Jesus Christ. 21 He will change our humble bodies and make them like his own glorious body. Christ can do this by his power. With that power Christ is able to rule all things.

Some Things to Do

4 My dear brothers and sisters, I love you and want to see you. You bring me joy and make me proud of you. Continue following the Lord like I have told you.

2 I ask Euodia and Syntyche to agree in the Lord. 3 And because you serve faithfully with me, my friend, I ask you to help these women do this. These women served with me in telling people the Good News.* They served together with Clement and the other people who worked with me. Their names are written in the book of life.* 4 Always be happy in the Lord. I will say it again. Be happy.

5 Let all people see that you are gentle and kind. The Lord is coming soon. 6 Don’t worry about anything. But pray and ask God for everything you need. And when you pray, always give thanks. 7 And God’s peace will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. That peace which God gives is so great that we cannot understand it.

8 Brothers and sisters, continue to think about the things that are good and worthy of praise. Think about the things that are true and honorable and right and pure and beautiful and respected. 9 And do the things that you learned and received from me. Do the things I told you and the things you saw me do. And the God who gives peace will be with you.

Paul Thanks the Philippian Christians

10 I am very happy in the Lord that you have shown your care for me again. You continued to care about me, but there was no way for you to show it. 11 I am telling you these things, but it is not because I need something. I have learned to be satisfied with the things I have and with everything that happens. 12 I know how to live when I am poor. And I know how to live when I have plenty. I have learned the secret of being happy at any time in everything that happens. I have learned to be happy when I have enough to eat and when I don’t have enough to eat. I have learned to be happy when I have all the things I need and when I don’t have the things I need. 13 I can do all things through Christ, because he gives me strength.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God forever.

book of life God’s book that has the names of all God’s chosen people. See Rev. 3:5; 21:27.
PHILIPPIANS 4:14–23

14 But it was good that you helped me when I needed help. 15 You people in Philippi remember when I first told the Good News there. When I left Macedonia, you were the only church that gave me help. 16 Several times you sent me things I needed when I was in Thessalonica. 17 Really, it is not that I want to get gifts from you. But I want you to have the good that comes from giving. 18 I have all the things I need. I have even more than I need. I have all I need because Epaphroditus brought your gift to me. Your gift is like a sweet-smelling sacrifice offered to God. God accepts that sacrifice and it pleases him. 19 My God is very rich with the glory of Christ Jesus. God will use his riches in Christ Jesus to give you everything you need. 20 Glory to our God and Father forever and ever. Amen.

21 Say hello to each of God’s people in Christ. Those in God’s family who are with me say hello to you. 22 All of God’s people say hello to you. And those believers from Caesar’s palace say hello, too.

23 The grace (kindness) of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.
Greetings from Paul, an apostle* of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle because that is what God wanted.

Greetings also from Timothy, our brother in Christ.

To the holy* and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ that live in Colossae. Grace (kindness) and peace from God our Father.

In our prayers we always thank God for you. God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank God because we have heard about the faith you have in Christ Jesus and the love you have for all of God’s people. You have faith in Christ and love God’s people because of the hope you have. You know that the things you hope for are saved for you in heaven. You learned about this hope when you heard the true teaching, the Good News* that was told to you. Everywhere in the world that Good News is bringing blessings and growing. This same thing has happened with you since the time you heard that Good News and understood the truth about the grace (kindness) of God. You learned about the grace of God from Epaphras. Epaphras works together with us, and we love him. He is a faithful servant of Christ for us. Epaphras also told us about the love you have from the Holy Spirit.*

Since the day we heard these things about you, we have continued praying for you. We pray these things for you:

that you will know fully the things that God wants;
that with your knowledge you will also have great wisdom and understanding in spiritual things;
that you will use these things to live in a way that brings honor to the Lord and pleases him in every way;
that you will do all kinds of good things and grow in the knowledge of God;
that God will strengthen you with his own great power;
that God will strengthen you, so that you will be patient and not quit when troubles come.

Then you will be happy and give thanks to the Father. He has made you able to have the things he prepared for you. He has prepared these things for all his people who live in the light (good). God made us free from the power of darkness (evil). And he brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son (Jesus). The Son paid the price to make us free. In him we have forgiveness of our sins.

When We Look at Christ, We See God

No person can see God. But Jesus is exactly like God. Jesus is ruler over all the things that have been made. Through his power all things were made—things in heaven and on earth, things seen and not seen, all spiritual powers, authorities, lords, and rulers. All things were made through Christ and for Christ. Christ was there before anything was made. And all things continue because of him. Christ is the head of the body. (The body is the church.) Everything comes from him. And

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**Colossians**

*apostle: A person Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

*holy: God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

**Good News, message:** The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

**Spirit, Holy Spirit:** Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
COLOSSIANS 1:19–2:12

he is the Lord* who was raised from death. So in all things Jesus is most important. 19God was pleased for all of himself to live in Christ. 20And through Christ, God was happy to bring all things back to himself again—things on earth and things in heaven. God made peace by using Christ’s blood (death) on the cross. 21At one time you were separated from God. You were God’s enemies in your minds, because the evil things you did were against God. 22But now Christ has made you God’s friends again. Christ did this by his death while he was in his body. Christ did this so that he could bring you before God. He brings you before God as people who are holy,* with no wrong in you, and with nothing that God can judge you guilty of. 23Christ will do this if you continue to believe in the Good News* you heard. You must continue strong and sure in your faith. You must not be moved away from the hope that Good News gave you. That same Good News has been told to all people in the world. I, Paul, help in telling that Good News.

Paul’s Work for the Church

24I am happy in my sufferings for you. There are many things that Christ must still suffer through his body, the church. I am accepting my part of these things that must be suffered. I accept these sufferings in my body. 25I became a servant of the church because God gave me a special work to do. This work helps you. My work is to tell fully the teaching of God. 26This teaching is the secret truth that was hidden since the beginning of time. This truth was hidden from all people. But now that secret truth is made known to God’s holy people.* 27God decided to let his people know that rich and glorious truth. That great truth is Christ himself, who is in you. He is our only hope for glory. 28So we continue to tell people about Christ. We use all wisdom to counsel every person and teach every person. We are trying to bring all people before God as people who have grown to be spiritually mature (perfect) in Christ. 29To do this, I work and struggle using the great strength that Christ gives me. That strength is working in my life.

2I want you to know that I am trying very hard to help you. And I am trying to help the people in Laodicea and other people who have never seen me. 2I want them to be strengthened and joined together with love. I want them to have the full confidence that comes from understanding. I mean I want them to know fully the secret truth that God has made known. That truth is Christ himself. 3In Christ all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are safely kept.

4I tell you these things so that no person can fool you by telling you ideas that seem good, but are false. 5I am not there with you, but my heart is with you. I am happy to see your good lives and your strong faith in Christ.

Continue to Live in Christ

6You received Christ Jesus the Lord. So continue to live following him without changing anything. 7You must depend on Christ only. Life and strength come from him. You were taught the truth. You must continue to be sure of that true teaching. And always be thankful. 8Be sure that no person leads you away with false ideas and words that mean nothing. Those ideas come from people, not Christ. Those ideas are the worthless ideas of people in the world. 9All of God lives in Christ fully (even in Christ’s life on earth). 10And in Christ you are full. You need nothing else. Christ is ruler over all rulers and powers. 11In Christ you had a different kind of circumcision.* That circumcision was not done by the hands of any person. I mean you were made free from the power of your sinful self. That is the kind of circumcision Christ does. 12When you were baptized,* your old

Lord  Literally, “firstborn.”

holy  Holy people are pure and belong only to God.

Good News, message  The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

holy people  Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

circumcision  Cutting off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.

baptized, baptism  A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.
baptized, baptism A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

New Moon celebrations Holy days for the Jewish people on the first day of each Jewish month.

Sabbath days The Sabbath day (seventh day of the week) was a special religious day for the Jews.

visions A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

1379 COLOSSIANS 2:13–3:11

I mean, why do you follow rules like these: 21 “Don’t eat this,” “Don’t taste that,” “Don’t touch that thing”? 22 These rules are talking about earthly things that are gone after they are used. These rules are only commands and teachings from people, not God. 23 These rules seem to be wise. But these rules are only part of a man-made religion that makes people pretend to be humble and makes them punish their bodies. But these rules don’t help people to stop doing the evil things their sinful selves want to do.

Your New Life in Christ

3 You were raised from death with Christ. So try to get the things in heaven. I mean the things where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Think only about the things in heaven, not the things on earth. 3 Your old sinful self has died, and your new life is kept with Christ in God. 4 Christ is your life. When he comes again, you will share in his glory.

5 So put all evil things out of your life: sexual sinning, doing evil, letting evil thoughts control you, wanting things that are evil, and selfishly wanting more and more. This wanting really means to live serving a false god. 6 These things make God angry.

7 In your evil life in the past, you also did these things. 8 But now put these things out of your life: anger, being very mad, doing or saying things to hurt other people, and using evil words when you talk. 9 Don’t lie to each other. Why? Because you have left your old sinful life and the things you did before. 10 You have begun to live the new life. In your new life you are being made new. You are becoming like the One who made you. This new life brings you the true knowledge of God. 11 In the new life there is no difference between Greeks and Jews. There is no difference between people that are circumcised* and people that are not circumcised, or people that are from some foreign country, or Scythians.* There is no
difference between slaves and free people. But Christ is in all those believers. And Christ is
all that is important.

12God has chosen you and made you his holy people.* He loves you. So always do
these things: Show mercy to people; be kind, humble, gentle, and patient. 13Don’t be angry
with each other, but forgive each other. If another person does something wrong against
you, then forgive that person. Forgive other people because the Lord forgave you. 14Do all
these things; but most important, love each other. Love is the thing that holds you all
together in perfect unity. 15Let the peace that Christ gives control your thinking. You were
all called together in one body to have peace. Always be thankful. 16Let the teaching of
Christ live inside you richly. Use all wisdom
to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms,
hymns, and spiritual songs with thankfulness
in your hearts to God. 17Everything you say
and everything you do should all be done for
Jesus your Lord (Master). And in all you do,
give thanks to God the Father through Jesus.

Your New Life with Other People

18Wives, be willing to serve your husbands. This is the right thing to do in following the
Lord.

19Husbands, love your wives, and be gentle
to them.

20Children, obey your parents in all things. This pleases the Lord.

21Fathers, don’t frustrate your children. If
you are too hard to please, they might want to
quit trying.

22Servants, obey your masters in all things. Obev all the time, even when your masters
can’t see you. But it is not people you are really
trying to please—you are trying to please the
Lord. So serve your masters honestly because
you respect the Lord. 23In all the work you are
doing, work the best you can. Work like you
are working for the Lord, not for people.

Paul Tells Christians Some Things to Do

2Continue praying. And when you pray,
always thank God. 3Also pray for us. Pray that
God will give us an opportunity to tell people
his message.* I am in prison for doing this. But
pray that we can continue to tell people the
secret truth that God has made known about
Christ. 4Pray that I can make this truth clear to
people. That is what I must do.

5Be wise in the way you act with those
people who are not believers. Use your time in
the best way you can. 6When you talk, you
should always be kind and wise. Then you
will be able to answer every person in the way
you should.

News About the People with Paul

7Tychicus is my dear brother in Christ. He
is a faithful helper and he serves the Lord with
me. He will tell you all the things that are
happening to me. 8That is why I am sending
him. I want you to know how we are. And I
am sending him to encourage you. 9I am
sending him with Onesimus. Onesimus is a
faithful and dear brother in Christ. He is from
your group. Tychicus and Onesimus will tell
you all that has happened here.

10Aristarchus says hello. He is a prisoner
with me. And Mark, the cousin of Barnabas,
also says hello. (I have already told you what
to do about Mark. If he comes, welcome him.)

11Jesus (the one that is also called Justus) also
says hello. These are the only Jewish believers
who work with me for the kingdom of God.
They have been a comfort to me.

12Epaphras also says hello. He is a servant
of Jesus Christ. And he is from your group. He

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* holy people  Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are
called holy because they are made pure through Christ and
belong only to God.
body  Christ’s spiritual body, meaning the church—his people.

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Good News, message  The news that God has made a way
for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
always prays for you. He prays that you will grow to be spiritually mature (perfect) and have everything that God wants for you. 

I know that he has worked hard for you and the people in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. Demas and our dear friend Luke, the doctor, say hello. 

Say hello to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea. And say hello to Nympha and to the church that meets in her house. After this letter is read to you, be sure that it is also read to the church in Laodicea. And you read the letter that I wrote to Laodicea. Tell Archippus, “Be sure to do the work the Lord gave you.”

I say hello and write this with my own hand—Paul. Remember me in prison. God’s grace (kindness) be with you.
Greetings from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. To the church (group of believers) that lives in Thessalonica. That church is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. God’s grace (kindness) and peace be yours.

The Life and Faith of the Thessalonians

We always remember you when we pray and we thank God for all of you. When we pray to God our Father we always thank him for the things you have done because of your faith. And we thank him for the work you have done because of your love. And we thank him that you continue to be strong because of your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters, God loves you. And we know that he has chosen you to be his people. We brought the Good News to you. But we did not use only words. We brought that Good News with power. We brought it with the Holy Spirit and with sure knowledge that it was true. Also you know how we lived when we were with you. We lived that way to help you. And you became like us and like the Lord. You suffered much, but still you accepted the teaching with joy. The Holy Spirit gave you that joy. You became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord’s teaching spread from you in Macedonia and Achaia. And also your faith in God has become known everywhere. So we don’t need to say anything about your faith. People everywhere tell about the good way you accepted us when we were there with you. Those people tell about how you stopped worshiping idols and changed to serve the living and true God. You began waiting for God’s Son to come from heaven. God raised that Son from death. He is Jesus, who saves us from God’s angry judgment that is coming.

Paul’s Work in Thessalonica

Brothers and sisters, you know that our visit to you was not a failure. Before we came to you, we suffered in Philippi. People there said bad things against us. You know all about that. And when we came to you, many people were against us. But our God helped us to be brave. He helped us to tell you his Good News. We encourage (teach) people. No person has fooled us. We are not evil. We are not trying to trick people. Those are not our reasons for doing what we do. No. We speak the Good News because God tested us and trusted us to tell the Good News. So when we speak, we are not trying to please men. We are trying to please God. God is the One who tests (looks closely at) our hearts. You know that we never tried to influence you by saying nice things about you. We were not trying to get your money. We had no greed to hide from you. God knows that this is true. We were not looking for praise from people. We were not looking for praise from you or any other people. We are apostles of Christ. And so when we were with you, we could have used our authority to make you do things. But we were...
very gentle* with you. We were like a mother caring for her little children. 8We loved you very much. So we were happy to share God’s Good News* with you; but not only that—we were also happy to share even our own lives with you. 9Brothers and sisters, I know that you remember how hard we worked. We worked night and day. We did not want to burden you by making you pay us, while we did the work of telling God’s Good News to you.

10When we were with you believers, we lived in a holy and right way, without fault. You know that this is true, and God knows that this is true. 11You know that we treated each one of you like a father treats his own children. 12We encouraged you, we comforted you, and we told you to live good lives for God. God calls you to his kingdom and glory.

13Also, we always thank God because of the way you accepted God’s message (teaching). You heard that message from us, and you accepted it like it was God’s words, not the words of men. And it really is God’s message (teaching). And that message works in you people who believe. 14Brothers and sisters, you are like God’s churches (people) in Christ Jesus that are in Judea.* God’s people in Judea suffered bad things from the other Jews there. And you suffered the same bad things from the people of your own country. 15Those Jews killed the Lord Jesus. And they killed the prophets.* And those Jews forced us to leave that country (Judea). God is not pleased with them. They are against all people. 16Yes. They try to stop us from teaching the non-Jews. We teach the non-Jews so that the non-Jews can be saved. But those Jews are adding more and more sins to the sins they already have. The anger of God has fully come to them now.

Paul’s Desire to Visit Them Again

17Brothers and sisters, we were separated from you for a short time. (We were not there with you, but our thoughts were still with you.) We wanted very much to see you, and we tried very hard to do this. 18Yes, we wanted to come to you. Truly I, Paul, tried to come many times, but Satan (the devil) stopped us. 19You are our hope, our joy, and the crown we will be proud of when our Lord Jesus Christ comes. 20Truly you are our glory and our joy.

31–2We couldn’t come to you, but it was very hard to wait any longer. So we decided to send Timothy to you and stay in Athens alone. Timothy is our brother. He works with God to tell people the Good News* about Christ. We sent Timothy to strengthen and encourage you in your faith. We sent Timothy so that none of you would be upset by these troubles we have now. You yourselves know that we must have these troubles. 4Even when we were with you, we told you that we all would have to suffer. And you know that it happened the way we said. 5This is why I sent [Timothy] to you, so that I could know about your faith. I sent him when I could not wait any more. I was afraid that the one (the devil) who tempts people might have defeated you with temptations. Then our hard work would have been wasted.

6But Timothy came back to us from you. He told us good news about your faith and love. Timothy told us that you always remember us in a good way. He told us that you must have these troubles. 7So, brothers and sisters, we are comforted about you, because of your faith. We have much trouble and suffering, but still we are comforted. 8Our life is really full if you stand strong in the Lord. 9We have so much joy before our God because of you! So we thank God for you. But we cannot thank him enough for all the joy we feel. 10We continue praying very strongly for you night and day. We pray that we can be there and see you again and give you all the things you need to make your faith strong.

11We pray that our God and Father and our Lord Jesus will prepare the way for us to come to you. 12We pray that the Lord will make your love grow. We pray that he will give you more and more love for each other and for all people. We pray that you will love
all people like we love you. 13 We pray this so that your hearts will be made strong. Then you will be holy and without fault before our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy people.

A Life That Pleases God

Brothers and sisters, now I have some other things to tell you. We taught you how to live in a way that will please God. And you are living that way. Now we ask you and encourage you in the Lord Jesus to live that way more and more. 2 You know the things we told you to do. We told you those things by the authority (power) of the Lord Jesus. 3 God wants you to be holy. He wants you to stay away from sexual sins. 4 God wants each one of you to learn to control your own body. Use your body in a way that is holy and that gives honor to God. 5 Don’t let your physical desires control you. The people of the world who don’t know God do that. 6 None of you should do wrong to your brother in Christ or cheat him in this way. The Lord will punish people who do those things. We have already told you and warned you about that. 7 God called us to be holy. He does not want us to live in sin. 8 So the person who refuses to obey this teaching is refusing to obey God, not man. And God is the One who gives you his Holy Spirit.

The Lord’s Coming

13 Brothers and sisters, we want you to know about those people who have died. We don’t want you to be sad like other people—people who have no hope. 14 We believe that Jesus died. But we believe that Jesus rose again. So, because of Jesus, God will raise to be with Jesus those people who have died. 15 What we tell you now is the Lord’s own message. We who are living now might still be living when the Lord comes again. We who are living at that time will be with the Lord, but not before those people who have already died. 16 The Lord himself will come down from heaven. There will be a loud command. That command will be given with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God. And the people who have died and were in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we people who are still alive at that time will be gathered up with those people who have died. We will be taken up in the clouds and meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with the Lord forever. 18 So encourage each other with these words.

Be Ready for the Lord’s Coming

5 Now, brothers and sisters, we don’t need to write to you about times and dates. 2 You know very well that the day the Lord comes again will be like a thief who comes at night. 3 People will say, “We have peace and we are safe.” At that time destruction will come to them quickly. Destruction will come like the pains of a woman who is having a baby. And those people will not escape. 4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not living in darkness. And so that day will not surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all people who belong to the light (goodness). You belong to the day. We don’t belong to the night or to darkness. 6 So we should not be like other people. We should not be sleeping. We should be awake and have self-control. 7 People who sleep, sleep at night. People who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But you, brothers and sisters, are not living in darkness (sin). And so we should not be like other people. We should not be sleeping. We should be awake and have self-control. 7 People who sleep, sleep at night. People who get drunk, get drunk at night.
should be our helmet. God did not choose us to suffer his anger. God chose us to have salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus died for us so that we can live together with him. It is not important if we are alive or dead when Jesus comes. So encourage each other and make each other stronger in faith. And you are doing that now.

Final Instructions and Greetings

Now brothers and sisters, we ask you to respect those people who work hard with you—those who lead you in the Lord and teach you. Respect those people with a very special love because of the work they do with you.

Live in peace with each other. We ask you, brothers and sisters, to warn those people who don’t work. Encourage the people who are afraid. Help the people who are weak. Be patient with every person. Be sure that no person pays back wrong for wrong. But always try to do what is good for each other and for all people.

Always be full of joy. Never stop praying. Give thanks to God at all times. That is what God wants for you in Christ Jesus.

Don’t stop the work of the Holy Spirit. Don’t treat prophecy like it is not important. But test everything. Keep what is good. And stay away from everything that is evil.

We pray that God himself, the God of peace, will make you pure—belonging only to him. We pray that your whole self—spirit, soul, and body—will be kept safe and be without wrong when our Lord Jesus Christ comes.

The One (God) who calls you will do that for you. You can trust him.

Brothers and sisters, please pray for us.

Give all the brothers and sisters a holy kiss when you meet. I tell you by the authority (power) of the Lord to read this letter to all the brothers and sisters.

The grace (kindness) of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
Greetings from Paul, Silas, and Timothy.

To the church (group of believers) that lives in Thessalonica. You people are in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Grace (kindness) and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 We thank God for you always. And we should do that because that is right for us to do. It is right because your faith is growing more and more. And the love that every one of you has for each other is also growing. 4 So we boast about you to the other churches of God. We tell the other churches the way you continue to be strong and have faith. You are being persecuted and are suffering many troubles, but you continue with strength and faith.

Paul Tells About God's Judgment

5 That is proof that God is right in his judgment. God wants you to be worthy of his kingdom. Your suffering is for that kingdom. God will do what is right. He will give trouble to those people who trouble you. 7 And God will give peace to you people who are troubled. And he will give peace to us. God will give us this help when the Lord Jesus is shown to us. Jesus will come from heaven with his powerful angels. 8 He will come from heaven with burning fire to punish those people who don’t know God. He will punish those people who refuse to accept the Good News* about our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 Those people will be punished with a destruction that continues forever. They will not be allowed to be with the Lord. Those people will be kept away from his great power. 10 This will happen on the day when the Lord Jesus comes. Jesus will come to receive glory with his holy people.* And all the people who have believed will be amazed at Jesus. You will be in that group of believers, because you believed the things we told you.

11 That is why we always pray for you. We ask our God to help you live the good way that he called you to live. The goodness you have makes you want to do good. And the faith you have makes you work. We pray that with his power God will help you do these things more and more. 12 We pray all this so that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ can have glory in you. And you can have glory in him. That glory comes from the grace (kindness) of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Evil Things Will Happen

2 Brothers and sisters, we have something to say about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We want to talk to you about that time when we will meet together with him. 2 Don’t become easily upset in your thinking or afraid if you hear that the day of the Lord has already come. Some person may say this in a prophecy* or in some message. Or you may read it in a letter that some person tells you came from us. 3 Don’t let any person fool you in any way. That day of the Lord will not come until the turning away from God happens. And that day will not come until the Man of Evil appears (comes). That Man of Evil will come with burning fire.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

holy people Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

prophecy Here, false teaching by a person who claims to speak for God.
belongs to hell. 4That Man of Evil is against anything called God or anything that people worship. And that Man of Evil puts himself above anything called God or anything that people worship. And that Man of Evil even goes into God’s temple* and sits there. Then he says that he is God.

5I told you before that all these things would happen. Remember? 6And you know what is stopping that Man of Evil now. He is being stopped now so that he will appear (come) at the right time. 7The secret power of evil is already working in the world now. But there is one who is stopping that secret power of evil. And he will continue to stop it until he is removed (taken out of the way). 8Then that Man of Evil will appear (come). And the Lord Jesus will kill that Man of Evil with the breath that comes from his mouth. The Lord Jesus will destroy that Man of Evil with the glory of his coming. 9The Man of Evil will come by the power of Satan (the devil). He will have great power, and he will do many different false miracles, signs, and wonders.* 10The Man of Evil will use every kind of evil to trick those people who are lost. Those people are lost because they refused to love the truth. (If they loved the truth, they would be saved.) 11But those people refused to love the truth, so God sends them something powerful that leads them away from the truth. God sends them that power so that they will believe something that is not true. 12So all those people who don’t believe the truth will be condemned (judged guilty). They did not believe the truth, and they enjoyed doing evil things.

**You Are Chosen for Salvation**

13Brothers and sisters, the Lord loves you. God chose you from the beginning to be saved. So we should always thank God for you. You are saved by the Spirit* making you holy* and by your faith (believing) in the truth. 14God called you to have that salvation. He called you by using the Good News* that we told you. God called you so that you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15So, brothers and sisters, stand strong and continue to believe the teachings we gave you. We taught you those things in our speaking and in our letter to you.

16–17We pray that the Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father will comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say. God loved us. Through his grace (kindness) he gave us a good hope and comfort that continues forever.

**Pray for Us**

3And now, brothers and sisters, pray for us. Pray that the Lord’s teaching will continue to spread quickly. And pray that people will give honor to that teaching, the same as happened with you. 2And pray that we will be protected from bad and evil people. (Not all people believe in the Lord,)* 3But the Lord is faithful. He will give you strength and protect you from the Evil One (the devil). 4The Lord makes us feel sure that you are doing the things we told you. And we know that you will continue to do those things. 5We pray that the Lord will lead your hearts into God’s love and Christ’s patience.

**The Obligation to Work**

6Brothers and sisters, by the authority (power) of our Lord Jesus Christ we command you to stay away from any believer who refuses to work. People who refuse to work are not following the teaching that we gave them. 7You yourselves know that you should live like we live. We were not lazy when we were with you. 8And when we ate another person’s food, we always paid for it. We worked and worked so that we would not be trouble to any of you. We worked night and day. 9We had the right (to ask you to help us),

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**Notes:**

- **belongs to hell** Literally, “He is the son of destruction.”
- **temple** Probably the special building in Jerusalem where God commanded the Jews to worship.
- **false miracles, signs, and wonders** Here, this means amazing acts done by the devil’s power.
- **Spirit, Holy Spirit** Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
- **holy** God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.
- **Good News, message** The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
But we worked to take care of ourselves so that we would be an example for you to follow. When we were with you, we gave you this rule: “If a person will not work, then he will not eat.”

We hear that some people in your group refuse to work. They do nothing. And they make themselves busy in other people’s lives. We command those people to stop bothering other people. We command them to work and earn their own food. In the Lord Jesus Christ we beg them to do this. Brothers and sisters, never become tired of doing good.

If any person does not obey what we tell you in this letter, then remember who that person is. Don’t associate with them. Then maybe they will feel ashamed. But don’t treat them like an enemy—counsel them like a brother.

Final Words

We pray that the Lord of peace will give you peace. We pray that he will give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

I am Paul, and I end this letter now with my own writing. All my letters have this to show they are from me. This is the way I write.

The grace (kindness) of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.
Greetings from Paul, an apostle* of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle by the command of God our Savior and Christ Jesus our hope.

2To Timothy. You are, like, a true son to me because you believe.

Grace (kindness), mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Warnings Against False Teachings

3I want you to stay in Ephesus. I asked you to do that when I went into Macedonia. Some people there in Ephesus are teaching false things. Stay there so that you can command those people not to teach those false things.

4Tell those people not to give their time to stories that are not true and to long lists of names in family histories. Those things only bring arguments. Those things don’t help God’s work. God’s work is done by faith. The goal of this command is for people to have love. To have this love people must have a pure heart, they must do what they know is right, and they must have true faith. Some people have not done these things. They have wandered away, and now they talk about things that are worth nothing. Those people want to be teachers of the law.* But they don’t know what they are talking about. They don’t even understand the things that they say they are sure about.

5We know that the law* is good if a person uses it right. We also know that the law is not made for good people. The law is made for people who are against the law and for people who refuse to follow the law. The law is for people who are against God and are sinful, people who are not holy and have no religion, people who kill their fathers and mothers, murderers, people who do sexual sins, homosexuals, people who sell slaves, people who tell lies, people who speak falsely, and people who do anything that is against the true teaching of God.* That teaching is part of the Good News* that God gave me to tell. That glorious Good News is from the blessed God.

Thanks for God’s Mercy

12I thank Christ Jesus our Lord because he trusted me and gave me this work of serving him. He gives me strength. 13In the past I spoke against Christ and persecuted him and did things to hurt him. But God gave me mercy because I did not know what I was doing. I did those things when I did not believe. 14But the grace (kindness) of our Lord was fully given to me. And with that grace came the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

15What I say is true, and you should fully accept it: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the worst of those sinners. 16But I was given mercy. I was given mercy so that in me Christ Jesus could show that he has patience without limit. Christ showed his patience with me, the worst of all sinners. Christ wanted me to be an example for those people who would believe in him and have life forever. 17Honor and glory to the King that rules forever. He cannot be destroyed and cannot be seen. Honor and glory forever and ever to the only God. Amen.

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* apostle: A person Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.
* law: Probably the Jewish law that God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. Read Ex. 19 and 20.
* Good News: The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
18Timothy, you are like a son to me. I am giving you a command. This command agrees with the prophecies* that were told about you in the past. I tell you these things so that you can remember those prophecies and fight the good fight of faith. 19Continue to have faith and do what you know is right. Some people have not done this. Their faith has been destroyed. 20Hymenaeus and Alexander are men like that. I have given those men to Satan (the devil) so that they will learn not to speak against God.

Some Rules for Men and Women

2 First, I tell you to pray for all people. Talk to God about them. Ask him for the things people need, and be thankful to him. 2You should pray for kings and for all people who have authority (power). Pray for those leaders so that we can have quiet and peaceful lives—lives full of worship and respect for God. 3This is good and it pleases God our Savior. 4God wants all people to be saved. And he wants all people to know the truth. 5There is only one God. And there is only one way that people can reach God. That way is through Jesus Christ, who is also a man. 6Jesus gave himself to pay for the sins of all people. Jesus is proof that God wants all people to be saved. And he came at the right time. 7That is why I was chosen to tell the Good News.* That is why I was chosen to be an apostle.* (I am telling the truth. I am not lying.) I was chosen to be a teacher of the non-Jewish people. I teach them to believe and know the truth.

8I want men everywhere to pray. These men who lift up their hands in prayer must be pleasing to God. They must not be men who become angry and have arguments.

9I also want women to wear clothes that are right for them. Women should dress with respect and right thinking. They should not use fancy braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes to make themselves beautiful. 10But they should make themselves beautiful by doing good things. Women who say they worship God should make themselves beautiful in that way.

11A woman should learn while listening quietly and while being fully ready to obey. 12I don’t allow a woman to teach a man. And I don’t allow a woman to have authority (power) over a man. The woman must continue in quietness. Why? 13Because Adam was made first. Eve was made later. 14Also, Adam was not the one the devil tricked.* It was the woman who was tricked and became a sinner. 15But women will be saved in their work of having children. They will be saved if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, and control themselves in the right way.

Leaders in the Church

3 What I say is true: If any person is trying hard to become an elder,* that person is wanting a good work. 2An elder* must be good enough that people cannot rightly criticize him. He must have only one wife. An elder must have self-control and be wise. He must be respected by other people. He must be ready to help people by accepting them into his home. He must be a good teacher. 3He must not drink too much wine, and he must not be a person who likes to fight. He must be gentle and peaceful. He must not be a person who loves money. 4He must be a good leader of his own family. This means that his children obey him with full respect. 5(If a man does not know how to be a leader over his own family, then he will not be able to take care of God’s church.) 6But an elder must not be a new believer. It might make a new believer be too proud of himself if he were made an elder. Then he would be judged (condemned) for his pride the same as the devil was. 7An elder must also have the respect of people who are not in the church. Then he will

prophecies Things that prophets said about Timothy’s life before those things happened.
Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
apostle A person Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.
elder Here (verse 1), literally, “overseer.”
elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “overseers” and “pastors” (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.
not be criticized by other people and be caught in the devil’s trap.

Helpers in the Church

In the same way, the men who serve as special helpers must be men that people can respect. These men must not say things they don’t mean, and they must not use their time drinking too much wine. They must not be men who are always trying to get rich by cheating others. They must follow the faith that God made known to us and always do what they know is right. You should test those men first. If you find nothing wrong in them, then they can serve as special helpers. In the same way, the women must have the respect of other people. They must not be women who talk evil about other people. They must have self-control and be women who can be trusted in everything. The men who serve as special helpers must have only one wife. They must be good leaders of their children and their own families. Those persons who serve in a good way are making an honorable place for themselves. And they will feel very sure of their faith in Christ Jesus.

The Secret of Our Life

I hope I can come to you soon. But I am writing these things to you now. Then, even if I cannot come soon, you will know about the things that people must do in the family of God. That family is the church of the living God. And God’s church is the support and foundation of the truth. Without any doubt, the secret of our life of worship is great:

He (Christ) was shown to us in a human body;
the Spirit proved that he was right;
he was seen by angels.

Men who serve as special helpers: Literally, “deacons,” a Greek word meaning “servants.” These people, it seems, were chosen to serve the church in special ways.

Women: This can mean women who serve as special helpers, or it might mean the wives of the special helpers.

Family: Literally, “house.” This could mean that God’s people are like God’s temple.


A Warning About False Teachers

The Holy Spirit clearly says that in the later times some people will stop believing the faith. Those people will obey spirits that tell lies. And those people will follow the teachings of demons. Those teachings come through people that tell lies and trick other people. Those bad people cannot see what is right and what is wrong. It is like their understanding was destroyed by a hot iron. Those bad people say that it is wrong to marry. And they say that there are some foods that people must not eat. But God made those foods. And the people who believe and who know the truth can eat those foods with thanks. Everything that God made is good. Nothing that God made should be refused if it is accepted with thanks to God.

Good News

The Good News about him was preached to the nations (non-Jews); people in the world believed in him; he was taken up to heaven in glory.

Be A Good Servant of Christ Jesus

Tell these things to the brothers and sisters there. This will show that you are a good servant of Christ Jesus. You will show that you are made strong by the words of faith and good teaching that you have followed.

People tell silly stories that don’t agree with God’s truth. Don’t follow those stories. But teach yourself to truly serve God. Training (teaching) your body helps you in some ways. But serving God helps you in every way. Serving God brings you blessings in this life and in the future life too. What I say is true, and you should fully accept it.

We hope in the living God. He is the Savior of all people. And in a special way, he is the Savior of all those people who believe in him. This is why we work and struggle.

Command and teach these things. You are young, but don’t let any person treat you...
like you are not important. Be an example to show the believers how they should live. Show them with the things you say, with the way you live, with your love, with your faith, and with your pure life. 13 Continue to read the Scriptures* to the people, strengthen them, and teach them. Do those things until I come. 14 Remember to use the gift that you have. That gift was given to you through a prophecy* when the group of elders* put their hands on* you. 15 Continue to do those things. Give your life to doing those things. Then all the people can see that your work is progressing (continuing). 16 Be careful in your life and in your teaching. Continue to live and teach rightly. Then you will save yourself and those people who listen to your teaching.

Some Rules for Living with Other People

5 Don’t speak angrily to an older man. But talk to him like he was your father. Treat the younger men like brothers. 2 Treat the older women like mothers. And treat the younger women with respect like sisters.
3 Give honor to (take care of) widows* who are really alone. 4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren, the first thing they need to learn is this: to show respect for their own family, by helping their parents. When they do this, they will be repaying their parents or grandparents. That pleases God. 5 If a widow is really alone and without help, then she hopes in God, to take care of her. That woman prays all the time, night and day. She asks God for help. 6 But the widow who uses her life to please herself is really dead while she is still living. 7 Tell the believers there to do these things (take care of their family) so that no other person can say they are doing wrong. 8 A person should take care of all his own family. Most important, he should take care of his own family. If a person does not do that, then he does not accept the true faith (teaching). That person is worse than a person who does not believe.

9 To be added to your list of widows,* a woman must be 60 years old or older. She must have been faithful to her husband. 10 She must be known as a woman who has done good things. I mean good things like raising her children, accepting visitors in her home, washing the feet of God’s people, helping people in trouble, and using her life to do all kinds of good things.

11 But don’t put younger widows* on that list. When they give themselves to Christ, they are often pulled away from him by their strong physical needs. Then they want to marry again. 12 And they will be judged for that. They will be judged for not doing what they first promised to do. 13 Also, those younger widows begin to waste their time going from house to house. They also begin to gossip and be busy with other people’s lives. They say things they should not say. 14 So I want the younger widows to marry, have children, and take care of their homes. If they do this, then our enemy will not have any reason to criticize them. 15 But some of the younger widows have already turned away to follow Satan (the devil).

16 If any woman who is a believer has widows* in her family, then she* should care for them herself. The church should not be troubled to care for them. Then the church will be able to care for the widows who have no living family.

17 The elders* who lead the church in a good way should receive double honor. This is especially true for those elders who do the work of counseling and teaching. 18 Why? Because the Scriptures* say, “When a work animal is doing the work of separating grain, don’t cover its mouth, and stop it from eating the grain.”* And the Scriptures also say, “A worker should be given his pay.”*

19 Don’t listen to a person who accuses an elder.* You should listen to that person only if...

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Scriptsures The Holy Writings—God’s message to people through the writers of the Bible.
prophecy Something said about Timothy’s life before that thing happened.
elder(s) A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “oversseers” and “pastors” (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.
put their hands on A sign to show that Timothy was being given a special work of God.
widows A widow is a woman whose husband has died.
there are two or three other people who can say what the elder did wrong. 20Tell those who sin that they are wrong. Do this in front of the whole church. In that way the others will have a warning.

21Before God and Jesus Christ and the chosen angels I command you to do these things. But don't judge people before you know the truth. And do these things equally to every person.

22Think carefully before you put your hands on any person, making him an elder. Don't share in the sins of other people. Keep yourself pure.

23Timothy, stop drinking only water, and drink a little wine. This will help your stomach, and you will not be sick so often.

24The sins of some people are easy to see. Their sins show that they will be judged. But the sins of some other people are seen only later. 25It is the same with the good things people do. The good things people do are easy to see. But even when those good things are not easy to see, they cannot stay hidden.

6All people who are slaves should show full respect to their masters. When they do that, then God's name and our teaching will not be criticized. 2Some slaves have masters who are believers. So those slaves and those masters are brothers. But the slaves should not show them any less respect. No! Those slaves should serve those believing masters even better. Why? Because those slaves are helping believers that they love.

False Teaching and True Riches

These are the things you must teach and tell the people to do. 3Some people will teach things that are false. Those people will not agree with the true teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. And they will not accept the teaching that agrees with the true way to serve God. 4Those people are proud of what they know, but they understand nothing. Those people are sick with a love for arguing and fighting about words. And that brings jealousy, quarrels, insults, and evil mistrust. 5They are always making trouble, because they are people whose thinking has been confused. They have lost their understanding of the truth. They think that serving God is a way to get rich.

6It is true that serving God makes a person very rich, if that person is satisfied with what he has. 7When we came into the world, we brought nothing. And when we die, we can take nothing out. 8So, if we have food and clothes, we will be satisfied with that. 9People who want to become rich bring temptations to themselves. They are caught in a trap. They begin to want many foolish things that will hurt them. Those things ruin and destroy people. 10The love of money causes all kinds of evil. Some people have left the true faith (teaching) because they want to get more and more money. But they have caused themselves to be very, very sad.

Some Things You Should Remember

11But you are a man of God. So you should stay away from all those things. Try to live in the right way, serve God, have faith, love, patience, and gentleness. 12Keeping your faith is like running a race. Try as hard as you can to win that race. Be sure you get that life that continues forever. You were called to have that life. And you confessed the great truth about Christ, in a way that many people heard you. 13Before God and Christ Jesus I give you a command. Christ Jesus is the One that confessed that same great truth when he stood before Pontius Pilate. And God is the One that gives life to everything. Now I tell you: 14Do the things you were commanded to do. Do those things without wrong or blame until the time when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. 15God will make that happen at the right time. God is the blessed and only Ruler. God is the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords (rulers). 16God is the only One who never dies. God lives in light so bright that men cannot go near it. No person has ever seen God. No person is able to see God. Honor to God and power forever. Amen.

17Give this command to the people who are rich with the things this world has. Tell them not to be proud. Tell those rich people to hope
1 TIMOTHY 6:18–21

in God, not their money. Money cannot be trusted. But God takes care of us richly. He gives us everything to enjoy. 18Tell the rich people to do good. Tell them to be rich in doing good things. And tell them to be happy to give and ready to share. 19By doing that they will be saving a treasure for themselves in heaven. That treasure will be a strong foundation—their future life can be built on that treasure. Then they will be able to have the life that is true life.

20Timothy, God has trusted you with many things. Keep those things safe. Stay away from people who talk about useless things that are not from God. Stay away from people who argue against the truth. Those people use something they call “knowledge”—but it is really not knowledge. 21Some people say that they have that “knowledge.” Those people have left the true faith (teaching).

God’s grace (kindness) be with you all.

foundation The bottom part or first part of a house that the rest of the house is built on.
Greetings from Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle because God wanted me to be. God sent me to tell people about the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.

To Timothy. You are like a dear son to me. Grace (kindness), mercy, and peace to you from God the Father and from Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thanksgiving and Encouragement

I always remember you in my prayers day and night. I thank God for you in those prayers. He is the God my ancestors served. I have always served him, doing what I know is right. I remember that you cried for me. I want very much to see you so that I can be filled with joy. I remember your true faith. That kind of faith first belonged to your grandmother Lois and to your mother Eunice. I know that you now have that same faith. That is why I want you to remember the gift God gave you. God gave you that gift when I put my hands on you. Now I want you to use that gift and let it grow more and more, like a small flame grows into a fire. The Spirit God gave us does not make us afraid. He is our source of power and love and self control. So don’t be ashamed to tell people about our Lord Jesus. And don’t be ashamed of me—I am in prison for the Lord. But suffer with me for the Good News. God gives us the strength to do that. God saved us and made us his holy people. That happened not because of anything we did ourselves. No! God saved us and made us his people because that was what he wanted and because of his grace (kindness). That grace was given to us through Christ Jesus before time began. That grace was not shown to us until now. It was shown to us when our Savior Christ Jesus came. Jesus destroyed death and showed us the way to have life. Yes! Through the Good News Jesus showed us the way to have life that cannot be destroyed. I was chosen to tell that Good News. I was chosen to be an apostle and a teacher of that Good News. And I suffer now because I tell that Good News. But I am not ashamed. I know the One (Jesus) that I have believed. I am sure that he is able to protect the things that he has trusted me with until that Day. Follow the true teachings you heard from me. Follow those teachings with the faith and love we have in Christ Jesus. Those teachings are an example that shows you what you should teach. Protect the truth that you were given. Protect those things with the help of the Holy Spirit. That Holy Spirit lives inside us.

You know that every person in the country of Asia has left me. Even Phygelus and Hermogenes have left me. I pray that
the Lord will show mercy to the family of Onesiphorus. Many times Onesiphorus encouraged me. He was not ashamed that I was in prison. 17 No. He was not ashamed. When he came to Rome, he looked and looked for me until he found me. 18 I pray that the Lord will allow Onesiphorus to have mercy from the Lord on that Day.* You know how many ways Onesiphorus helped me in Ephesus.

A Loyal Soldier of Christ Jesus

2 Timothy, you are, like, a son to me. Be strong in the grace (kindness) that we have in Christ Jesus. 2 You have heard the things that I have taught. Many other people heard those things too. You should teach those same things. Give those teachings to some people you can trust. Then they will be able to teach those things to other people. 3 Share in the troubles that we have. Accept those troubles like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 A person that is a soldier wants to please his commanding officer. So that soldier does not use his time doing the things that most people do. 5 If an athlete is running a race, he must obey all the rules to win. 6 The farmer who works hard should be the first person to get some of the food that he grew. 7 Think about what I am saying. The Lord will help you understand it all.

8 Remember Jesus Christ. He is from the family of David.* After Jesus died, he was raised from death. This is the Good News* that I tell people. 9 And I am suffering because I tell that Good News. I am even bound with chains like a person who has really done wrong. But God's teaching is not bound. 10 So I patiently accept all these troubles. I do this to help all the people that God has chosen. I accept these troubles so that those people can have the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. With that salvation comes glory that never ends.

An Approved Worker

14 Continue telling the people these things. And warn those people before God not to argue about words. Arguing about words does not help any person. And it ruins those people who listen. 15 Do the very best you can to be the kind of person that God will accept, and give yourself to him. Be a worker who is not ashamed of his work—a worker who uses the true teaching in the right way. 16 Stay away from people who talk about useless things that are not from God. That kind of talk will lead a person more and more against God. 17 Their evil teaching will spread like a sickness inside the body. Hymenaeus and Philetus are men like that. 18 They have left the true teaching. They say that the rising from death of all people has already happened. And those two men are destroying the faith of some people. 19 But God's strong foundation* continues to be the same. These words are written on that foundation: "The Lord knows those people who belong to him."* Also, these words are written on that foundation: "Every person who says that he believes in the Lord must stop doing wrong."

20 In a large house there are things made of gold and silver. But also there are things made of wood and clay. Some things are used for special purposes. Other things are made for dirty jobs. 21 The Lord wants to use you for special purposes. So make yourself clean from all those evil things. Then you will be holy,* and the Master can use you. You will be ready to do any good work.

Day The day Christ will come to judge all people and take his people to live with him.
David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.
Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

foundation The bottom part or first part of a house that the rest of the house is built on.
“The Lord knows ... him” Quote from Num. 16:5.
holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.
22 Stay away from the evil things a young person wants to do. Try very hard to live right and to have faith, love, and peace. Do these things together with those who have pure hearts and trust in the Lord. 23 Stay away from foolish and stupid arguments. You know that those arguments grow into bigger arguments. 24 A servant of the Lord must not argue! He must be kind to every person. A servant of the Lord must be a good teacher. He must be patient. 25 The Lord’s servant must gently teach those people that don’t agree with him. Maybe God will let those people change their hearts so that they can accept the truth.

The Last Days

3 Remember this! There will be many troubles in the last days. 2 In those times people will love only themselves and money. They will be boastful and proud. They will say bad things against other people. They will not obey their parents. They will not be thankful. They will not be the kind of people God wants.

4 In the last days people will turn against their friends. They will do foolish things without thinking. They will be conceited and proud. People will love pleasure—they will not love God. 5 Those people will continue to act like they serve God. But the way they live shows that they don’t really serve God. Timothy, stay away from those people. 6 Some of those people go into homes and get women who are weak. Those women are full of sin. Those women are led to sin by the many evil things they want to do. 7 Those women always try to learn new teachings, but they are never able to fully understand the truth. 8 Remember Jannes and Jambres. It is the same with these people. They are against the truth. They are people whose thinking has been confused. They have failed in trying to follow the faith. 9 But they will not be successful in the things they do. All the people will see that they are foolish. That is what happened to Jannes and Jambres.

Last Instructions

10 But you know all about me. You know what I teach and the way I live. You know my goal in life. You know my faith, my patience, and my love. You know that I never stop trying. 11 You know about my persecutions (troubles) and my sufferings. You know all the things that happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. You know the persecutions I suffered in those places. But the Lord saved me from all those troubles. 12 Every person who wants to live the way God wants, in Christ Jesus, will be persecuted. 13 People who are evil and cheat other people will become worse and worse. They will fool other people, but they will also be fooling themselves.

14 But you should continue following the teachings you learned. You know that those teachings are true. You know you can trust the people who taught you those things. 15 You have known the Holy Scriptures since you were a child. Those Scriptures are able to make you wise. And that wisdom leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is given by God. And all Scripture is useful for teaching and for showing people the things that are wrong in their lives. It is useful for correcting faults and teaching how to live right. 17 Using the Scriptures, the person who serves God will be ready and will have everything he needs to do every good work.

Before God and Jesus Christ I give you a command. Christ Jesus is the One who will judge the people who are living and the people who have died. Jesus has a kingdom, and he is coming again. So I give you this
command: 2Tell people God's message.* Be ready at all times. Tell people the things they need to do, tell them when they are wrong, and encourage them. Do these things with great patience and careful teaching. 3The time will come when people will not listen to the true teaching. But people will find more and more teachers that please them. People will find teachers that say the things those people want to hear. 4People will stop listening to the truth. They will begin to follow the teaching in false stories. 5But you should control yourself at all times. When troubles come, accept those troubles. Do the work of telling the Good News. Do all the duties of a servant of God.

6My life is being given as an offering for God. The time has come for me to leave this life here. 7I have fought the good fight. I have kept the faith. 8Now, a crown (reward) is waiting for me. I will get that crown for being right with God. The Lord is the judge who judges rightly. He will give me the crown on that Day.* Yes! He will give that crown to me. He will give that crown to all people who have wanted him to come again and have waited for him.

Personal Words

9Do your best to come to me as soon as you can. 10Demas loved this world too much. That is why he left me. He went to Thessalonica. Crescens went to Galatia. And Titus went to Dalmatia. 11Luke is the only one still with me. Get Mark and bring him with you when you come. He can help me in my work here. 12I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

13When I was in Troas, I left my coat there with Carpus. So when you come, bring it to me. Also, bring my books. The books written on parchment* are the ones I need.

14Alexander the metalworker did many bad things against me. The Lord will punish Alexander for the things he did. 15You should be careful that he doesn't hurt you too. He fought strongly against our teaching.

16The first time I defended myself, no person helped me. Every person left me. I pray that God will forgive them. 17But the Lord stayed with me. The Lord gave me strength so that I could tell the Good News* everywhere. The Lord wanted all the non-Jews to hear that Good News. So I was saved from the lion's (enemy's) mouth. 18The Lord will save me when any person tries to hurt me. The Lord will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. Glory forever and ever be the Lord's.

Final Greetings

19Say hello to Priscilla and Aquila and to the family of Onesiphorus. 20Erastus stayed in Corinth. And I left Trophimus in Miletus—he was sick. 21Try as hard as you can to come to me before winter.

Eubulus says hello to you. Also Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers in Christ say hello to you.

22The Lord be with your spirit. Grace (kindness) be with you.
Greetings from Paul, a servant of God and an apostle* of Jesus Christ. I was sent to help the faith of God’s chosen people. I was sent to help those people to know the truth. And that truth shows people how to serve God. That faith and that knowledge come from our hope for life forever. God promised that life to us before time began—and God does not lie. At the right time God let the world know about that life. God did this through the telling of the Good News* message.* And he trusted me with that work. I told people that message because God our Savior commanded me to.

To Titus. You are a true son to me in the faith we share together. Grace (kindness) and peace to you from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Titus’ Work in Crete

I left you in Crete so that you could finish doing the things that still needed to be done. And I also left you there so that you could choose men to be elders* in every town. To be an elder, a man must not be guilty of living in a wrong way. He must have only one wife. His children must be dependable.* They must not be known as children that are wild and don’t obey. An elder* has the job of taking care of God’s work. So people should not be able to say that he lives in a wrong way. He must not be a person who is proud and selfish or who becomes angry quickly. He must not drink too much wine. He must not be a person who likes to fight. And he must not be a person who always tries to get rich by cheating people. An elder must be ready to help people by accepting them into his home. He must love what is good. He must be wise. He must live right. He must be pleasing to God. And he must be able to control himself. An elder must faithfully follow the truth the same as we teach it. An elder must be able to help people by using true and right teaching. And he must be able to show the people who are against the true teaching that they are wrong.

There are many people who refuse to obey—people who talk about worthless things and lead other people into the wrong way. I am talking mostly about those people who say that all non-Jewish people must be circumcised.* An elder* must be able to show that those people are wrong and stop them from talking about those worthless things. Those people are destroying whole families by teaching things that they should not teach. They teach those things only to cheat people and make money. Even one of their own prophets (teachers) from Crete said, “Cretan people are always liars. They are evil animals and lazy people who do nothing but eat.” The words that prophet said are true. So tell those people that they are wrong. You must be strict with them. Then they will become strong in the faith. Then those people will stop accepting Jewish stories. And they will stop following the commands of those people who don’t

*apostle* A person Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.
*Good News, message* The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
*elders* A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “overseers” and “pastors” (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.
*dependable* This word can also mean “believers”.
*elder* Here (verse 7), literally, “overseer.”

To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.
TITUS 1:15–3:8

accept the truth. 15To people that are pure, all things are pure. But to people who are full of sin and don’t believe, nothing is pure. Really, those people’s thinking has become evil and their knowledge of what is right has been ruined. 16Those people say they know God. But the evil things those people do show that they don’t accept God. They are disgusting people. They refuse to obey and are useless for doing anything good.

Following the True Teaching

2You must tell the people there the things they must do to follow the true teaching. 2Teach the older men to have self-control, to be serious, and to be wise. They should be strong in the faith, strong in love, and strong in patience.

3Also, teach the older women to be holy* in the way they live. Teach them not to speak against other people or have the habit of drinking too much wine. Those women should teach what is good. 4In that way they can teach the younger women to love their husbands and children. 5They can teach the younger women to be wise and to be pure, to take care of their homes, to be kind, and to be willing to serve their husbands. Then no person will be able to criticize the teaching God gave us.

6In the same way, tell the young men to be wise. 7You should do good things to be an example in every way for the young men. When you teach, be honest and serious. 8And your teaching should be clearly right so that you cannot be criticized. Then any person who is against you will be ashamed because he has nothing bad that he can say against us.

9And tell these things to the people who are slaves: They should be willing to serve their masters at all times; they should try to please their masters; they should not argue with their masters; 10they should not steal from their masters; and they should show their masters that they can be trusted. The slaves should do these things so that in everything they do, they will show that the teaching of God our Savior is good.

11That is the way we should live, because God’s grace (kindness) has come. That grace can save every person. And that grace has been given to us. 12That grace teaches us not to live against God and not to do the bad things the world wants to do. That grace teaches us to live on earth now in a wise and right way—a way that shows that we serve God. 13We should live like that while we are waiting for the coming of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. He is our great hope, and he will come with glory. 14He gave himself for us. He died to free us from all evil. He died to make us pure people that belong only to him—people that are always wanting to do good things.

Tell the people these things. You have full authority (power). So use that authority to help the people and to correct them when they are wrong. And don’t let any person treat you like you are not important.

The Right Way to Live

3Tell the people to remember always to do these things: to be under the authority of rulers and government leaders; to obey those leaders and be ready to do good; 2to speak no evil against any person; to live in peace with other people; to be gentle and polite to all people.

3In the past we were foolish people too. We did not obey, we were wrong, and we were slaves to the many things our bodies wanted and enjoyed. We lived doing evil and being jealous. People hated us and we hated each other. 4But then the kindness and love of God our Savior was made known. 5He saved us because of his mercy (love), not because of any good things we did. He saved us through the washing that made us new people. He saved us by making us new through the Holy Spirit.* 6God poured out (gave) to us that Holy Spirit fully through Jesus Christ our Savior. 7We were made right with God by his grace (kindness). God saved us so that we could be his children and look forward to receiving life that never ends. 8This teaching is true.

And I want you to be sure that the people understand these things. Then the people who

holy Showing reverence and respect for God.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
believe in God will be careful to use their lives for doing good. These things are good and will help all people.

9*Stay away from people who have foolish arguments, people who talk about useless family histories, people who make trouble and fight about what the law of Moses teaches. Those things are worth nothing and will not help people.* 10*If a person causes arguments, then give him a warning. If that person continues to cause arguments, then warn him again. If he still continues causing arguments, then don’t associate with him.* 11*You know that a person like that is evil and sinful. His sins prove that he is wrong.*

**Final Instructions and Greetings**

12*I will send Artemas and Tychicus to you. When I send them, try hard to come to me at Nicopolis. I have decided to stay there this winter.* 13*Zenas the lawyer and Apollos will be traveling from there. Do all that you can to help them on their trip. Be sure that they have everything they need.* 14*Our people must learn to use their lives for doing good things. They should do good for people who need it. Then our people will not have empty lives.*

15*All the people with me here say hello to you. Say hello to those people who love us in the faith.*

*Grace (kindness) be with you all.*
Greetings from Paul, a prisoner for Jesus Christ, and from Timothy, our brother.

To Philemon, our dear friend and worker with us. 2Also to Apphia, our sister; to Archippus, a worker with us; and to the church that meets in your home.

3Grace (kindness) and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philemon’s Love and Faith

4I remember you in my prayers. And I always thank my God for you. 5I thank God because I hear about the love you have for all God’s holy people* and the faith you have in the Lord Jesus. 6I pray that the faith you share will make you understand every good thing that we have in Christ. 7My brother, you have shown love to God’s people. You have made them feel happy. And this has given me great joy and comfort.

Accept Onesimus Like a Brother

8There is something that you should do. And because of the authority I have in Christ, I feel free to command you to do it. 9But I am not commanding you; I am asking you to do it out of love. I am Paul. I am an old man now, and I am a prisoner for Christ Jesus. 10I am asking you for my son Onesimus. He became my son while I was in prison. 11In the past he was useless to you. But now he has become useful* for both you and me.

12I am sending him back to you. With him I am sending my own heart. 13I wanted to keep him with me to help me while I am in prison for telling the Good News.* By helping me he would be serving you. 14But I did not want to do anything without asking you first. Then the good thing you do for me will be because you want to do it, not because I forced you to do it.

15Onesimus was separated from you for a short time. Maybe that happened so that you could have him back forever—16not to be a slave, but better than a slave, to be a brother that is loved. I love him very much. But you will love him even more. You will love him as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

17If you accept me to be your friend, then accept Onesimus back. Welcome him like you would welcome me. 18If Onesimus has done anything wrong to you, charge that to me. If he owes you anything, charge that to me. 19I am Paul, and I am writing this with my own hand. I will pay back anything Onesimus owes. And I will say nothing about what you owe me for your own life. 20So, my brother, I ask that you do something for me in the Lord. Comfort my heart in Christ. 21I write this letter knowing that you will do what I ask you. I know that you will do even more than I ask.

22Also, please prepare a room for me to stay in. I hope that God will answer your prayers and I will be able to come to you.

Final Greetings

23Epaphras is a prisoner with me for Christ Jesus. He says hello to you. 24And also Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke say hello to you. They are workers together with me.

25The grace (kindness) of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God forever.
Hebrews

God Has Spoken Through His Son

1 In the past God spoke to our people through the prophets.* God spoke to them many times and in many different ways. 2And now in these last days God has spoken to us again. God has spoken to us through his Son. God made the whole world through his Son. And God has chosen his Son to have all things. 3The Son shows the glory of God. He is a perfect copy of God’s nature. The Son holds everything together with his powerful command. The Son made people clean from their sins. Then he sat down at the right side of the Great One (God) in heaven. 4God gave him a name that is a much greater name than any of the angels have. And he became that much greater than the angels.

5God never said these things to any of the angels:
   “You are my Son; Today I have become your Father.”  
Psalm 2:7

God also never said to an angel,
   “I will be his Father, and he will be my son.”  
2 Samuel 7:14

6And when God brings his firstborn* Son into the world, he says,
   “Let all God’s angels worship the Son.”*
Deuteronomy 32:43

7This is what God said about the angels:
   “God makes his angels become like winds.* And God makes his servants become like flames of fire.”  
Psalm 104:4

8But God said this about his Son:
   “Your throne, O God, will continue forever and ever. You will rule your kingdom with right judgments.
9 You love the right, and you hate the wrong. So God, your God, has given you a greater joy than he gave the people with you.”  
Psalm 45:6–7

10God also says,
   “O Lord, in the beginning you made the earth. And your hands made the sky.
11 These things will disappear, but you will stay. All things will become old like clothes.
12 You will fold them like a coat. And they will be changed like clothes. But you never change. And your life will never end.”  
Psalm 102:25–27

13And God never said this to an angel:
   “Sit at my right side until I put your enemies under your power.*”  
Psalm 110:1

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.
right side The place of honor and authority (power).
firstborn This word means that Christ was the first and most important of all God’s children.
“Let ... Son” These words are found in Deuteronomy 32:43 in the Septuagint, the Greek Version of the Old Testament, and in a Hebrew copy among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

winds This can also mean “spirits.”
until I put ... power Literally, “until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”
14 All the angels are spirits who serve God and are sent to help those people who will receive salvation.

Our Salvation Is Greater than the Law

So we must be more careful to follow the things that we were taught. We must be careful so that we will not be pulled away from the true way. The teaching that God spoke through angels was shown to be true. And every time the Jewish people did something against that teaching they were punished for what they did. They were punished when they did not obey that teaching. The salvation that was given to us is very great. So surely we also will be punished if we live like this salvation is not important. It was the Lord who first told people about this salvation. And the people who heard him proved to us that this salvation is true. God also proved it by using wonders, great signs, and many kinds of miracles. And he proved it by giving people gifts through the Holy Spirit. He gave those gifts the way he wanted.

Christ Became Like People to Save Them

God did not choose angels to be the rulers over the new world that was coming. That future world is the world we have been talking about. It is written some place in the Scriptures, “Why are people so important to you? Why do you care about the son of man? Is he so important? For a short time you made him lower than the angels. You gave him glory and honor to be his crown. You put everything under his control.”

Psalm 8:4–6

If God put everything under his control, then there was nothing left that he did not rule. But we don’t yet see him ruling over everything. For a short time Jesus was made lower than the angels, but now we see him wearing a crown of glory and honor because he suffered and died. Because of God’s grace Jesus died for every person.

God is the One who made all things. And all things are for his glory. God wanted to have many people to be his children and share his glory. So God did what he needed to do. He made perfect the One who leads those people to salvation. God made Jesus perfect through Jesus’ suffering.

The One who makes people holy and those people who are made holy are from the same family. So he is not ashamed to call those people his brothers and sisters. Jesus says, “God, I will tell my brothers about you. Before all your people I will sing your praises.”

Psalm 22:22

And he says, “I am here. And with me are the children that God has given me.”

Isaiah 8:17

Those children are people with physical bodies. So Jesus himself became like those people and had the same experiences people have. Jesus did this so that, by dying, he could destroy the one who has the power of death. That one is the devil. Jesus became like those people and died so that he could free them. They were like slaves all their lives because of their fear of death. Clearly, it is not angels that Jesus helps. Jesus helps the people who

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miracle(s) Amazing works done by God’s power.
Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
son of man This can mean any man (person), but the name “Son of Man” is often used to mean Jesus. Jesus showed what God planned for all men (people) to be.

control Literally, “feet.”
holy God’s people are holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.
are from Abraham.* 17For this reason Jesus had to be made like us his brothers and sisters in every way. Jesus became like people so that he could be their merciful and faithful high priest* in service to God. Then Jesus could bring forgiveness for the people’s sins. 18And now Jesus can help those people who are tempted. Jesus is able to help because he himself suffered and was tempted.

Jesus Is Greater Than Moses

3 So all of you should think about Jesus. God sent Jesus to us, and he is the high priest* of our faith. I tell you to think about him, my brothers and sisters, because God chose you to be his holy* people. 2God sent Jesus to us and made him our high priest. And Jesus was faithful to God like Moses was. He did everything God wanted him to do in God’s house (family). 3When a man builds a house, people will honor the man more than the house. It is the same with Jesus. Jesus should have more honor than Moses. 4Every house is built by someone, but God built everything. 5Moses was faithful as a servant in God’s whole house. He told people what God would say in the future. 6But Christ is faithful in ruling God’s house as the Son. And we are God’s house if we remain confident of the great hope we are glad to say we have.

We Must Continue to Follow God

7So it is like the Holy Spirit* says:

“If you hear God’s voice today,

8 don’t be stubborn like in the past,

when you were against God.

That was the day you tested God
in the desert.

9 For 40 years in the desert your people
saw the things I did.

But they tested me and my patience.

Abraham  The most respected ancestor of the Jews.  
high priest  Most important priest for God’s people.  
holy  God’s people are holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.  
Spirit, Holy Spirit  Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

rest  A place of rest God promised to give his people.  
today  This word is taken from verse 7. It means that it is important to do these things now, while we still have the opportunity.  
Scripture  Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.  
way to be saved  Literally, “Good News.” See Rom. 1:16.
faith. Only we people who believe are able to enter and have God’s rest. Like God said,

“I was angry and made a promise:
‘Those people will never enter
and have my rest.”’”  Psalm 95:11

God said this. But God’s work was finished from the time he made the world. Some place in the Scriptures God talked about the seventh day of the week: “So on the seventh day God rested from all his work.” And in that other Scripture God also said, “Those people will never enter and have my rest.”

It is still true that some people will enter and have God’s rest. But those people who first heard the way to be saved did not enter. They did not enter because they did not obey. So God planned another special day. It is called “today.” God spoke about that day through David a long time later. It is the same Scripture we used before:

“If you hear God’s voice today,
don’t be stubborn like in the past.”

Psalm 95:7–8

We know that Joshua did not lead the people into the rest God promised. We know this because God spoke later about another day for rest (“today”). This shows that the seventh-day rest for God’s people is still coming. God rested after he finished his work. So the person who enters and has God’s rest is the person who has finished his work like God did. So let us try as hard as we can to enter God’s rest. We must try hard so that none of us will be lost by following the example of those people who refused to obey God.

God’s word (message) is alive and working. His word is sharper than the sharpest sword. God’s word cuts all the way into us, like a sword. It cuts deep to the place where the soul and the spirit are joined. God’s word cuts to the center of our joints and our bones. It judges the thoughts and feelings in our hearts. Nothing in all the world can be hidden from God. He can clearly see all things. Everything is open before him. And to him we must explain the way we have lived.

Jesus Is the High Priest who Helps Us

We have a great high priest who has gone to live with God in heaven. He is Jesus the Son of God. So let us continue strongly in the faith we have. Jesus, the high priest that we have, is able to understand our weaknesses. When Jesus lived on earth, he was tempted in every way. He was tempted in the same ways that we are tempted, but he never sinned. With Jesus as our high priest we can feel free to come before God’s throne where there is grace (forgiveness). There we receive mercy and kindness to help us when we need it.

Every Jewish high priest is chosen from among men. That priest is given the work of helping people with the things they must do for God. That priest must offer to God gifts and sacrifices for sins. The high priest himself is weak, like all people. So he is able to be gentle with those people who don’t understand and who are doing wrong things. The high priest offers sacrifices for the sins of the people. But the high priest has weaknesses himself. So he also must offer sacrifices for his own sins.

To be a high priest is an honor. But no person chooses himself for this work. That person must be called by God like Aaron was. It is the same with Christ. He did not choose himself to have the glory of becoming a high priest. But God chose him. God said to Christ,

“You are my Son;
today I have become your Father.”

Psalm 2:7

rest A place of rest God promised to give his people.
Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
“So ... his work” Quote from Gen. 2:2.
way to be saved Literally, “Good News.” See Rom. 1:16.
Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
Joshua After Moses died. Joshua became leader of the Jewish people. Joshua led them into the land that God promised to give them.
seventh-day rest Literally, “sabbath rest,” meaning a sharing in the rest God began after he created the world.
God’s word God’s teachings and commands.

high priest Most important priest for God’s people.
sacrifice(s) A sacrifice is a gift or offering to God. Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people’s sins.
Aaron The first Jewish high priest. He was Moses’ brother.
6 And in another part of the Scriptures God says,

>“You will be a priest forever, the same as Melchizedek.”

Psalm 110:4

7 While Christ lived on earth he prayed to God and asked God for help. God is the One who could save him from death, and Jesus prayed to God with loud cries and tears. And God answered Jesus’ prayers because Jesus was humble and did everything God wanted. Jesus was the Son of God. But Jesus suffered and learned to obey by the things that he suffered.

9 Then Jesus was perfect. And Jesus is the reason that all those people who obey him can have salvation forever. And God made Jesus the high priest*, the same as Melchizedek.*

**Warning Against Falling Away**

11 We have many things to tell you about this. But it is hard to explain because you have stopped trying to understand. You have had enough time that by now you should be teachers. But you need some person to teach you again the first lessons of God’s teaching. You still need the teaching that is like milk. You are not ready for solid food. Any person who lives on milk is still a baby. That person knows nothing about right teaching. But solid food is for people who have stopped being like babies. It is for people who are grown-up in their spirits. Those people have practiced and taught themselves to know the difference between good and evil.

6 So we should be finished with the beginning lessons about Christ. We should not go back to the things we started with. We began our life in Christ, by turning away from the evil things we did before and by believing in God. At that time we were taught about baptisms,* and about the special act of a person putting his hands on people.* We were taught about people rising from death and about the judgment that will continue forever. But now we need to go forward to more mature (advanced) teaching.* And we will do this if God allows.

4–6 After people have left the way of Christ*, can you make them change their life again? I am talking about people who have learned the truth. They received God’s gift and also shared in the Holy Spirit.* Those people heard the things God said, and they saw the great powers of God’s new world. And they saw for themselves that those things are very good. But then those people left the way of Christ*. It is not possible to make those people change their lives and come to Christ*. Why? Because those people that leave Christ’s way are really nailing Christ to the cross again. Those people bring shame to Christ before all people.

7 Those people are like land that gets plenty of rain. A farmer plants and cares for that land so that it will give food for people. If that land grows plants that help people, then that land has the blessing of God. But if that land grows thorns and weeds, it is worthless. That land is in danger that it will be cursed by God. And that land will be destroyed by fire.

4 Dear friends, we are saying these hard things, but we really we expect better things from you. We feel sure that you will do the things that are a part of salvation. God is fair. God will remember all the work you have done. And God will remember that you showed your love to him by helping his people. And God will remember that you continue to help his people.

11 We want each of you to continue with the same hard work all your lives. Then you will surely get that great thing you hope for. We don’t want you to become lazy. We want you to be like those people who get the things that God promised. Those people get God’s promises because they have faith and patience.
13 God made a promise to Abraham.* And there is no one greater than God, so God used himself to vow (promise) that he would do what he said. 14 God said, “I will truly bless you. I will give you many, many descendants.”* 15 Abraham waited patiently for this to happen. And later Abraham received what God promised.

16 People always use the name of someone greater than themselves to make a vow (promise). The vow proves that what they say is true. And this ends all arguing about what they say. 17 God wanted to prove that his promise was true. God wanted to prove this to those people who would get what he promised. God wanted those people to understand clearly that his purposes (plans) never change. So God said something would happen, and he proved what he said by also making a vow (promise).

18 Those two things cannot change. God cannot lie when he says something and he cannot lie when he makes a vow. So those things give great comfort to us who came to God for safety. Those two things give us comfort and strength to continue in the hope that God gives us. 19 We have this hope. And it is like an anchor. It is strong and sure and keeps us safe. It goes behind the curtain* in the heavenly temple. 20 Jesus has already entered there and opened the way for us. Jesus has become the high priest* forever, the same as Melchizedek.*

The Priest Melchizedek

7 Melchizedek* was the king of Salem and a priest for God the Most High. Melchizedek met Abraham* when Abraham was coming back after defeating the kings. That day Melchizedek blessed Abraham. 2 And Abraham gave Melchizedek one-tenth of everything he had. (The name Melchizedek, king of Salem, has two meanings. First, Melchizedek means “king of goodness.” Also, “king of Salem” means “king of peace.”) 3 No person knows who Melchizedek’s father or mother was or where he came from. 4 And no person knows when he was born or when he died. Melchizedek is like the Son of God and he continues being a priest forever.

4 You can see that Melchizedek* was very great. Abraham,* our great father,* gave Melchizedek one-tenth of everything that Abraham won in battle. 5 Now the law says that people in the family group* of Levi who become priests must get one-tenth from the people. The priests collect it from their own people (the Jews), even though the priests and their people are both from the family of Abraham. 6 Melchizedek was not from the family group of Levi. But he got one-tenth from Abraham. And he blessed Abraham—the man who had God’s promises. 7 And all people know that the more important person blesses the less important person. 8 Those priests get one-tenth, but they are only men who live and then die. But Melchizedek, who got one-tenth from Abraham, continues living, like the Scriptures* say. 9 It is Levi who gets one-tenth from the people. But we can say that when Abraham paid Melchizedek one-tenth, then Levi also paid it. 10 Levi was not yet born. But Levi was in the body of his ancestor Abraham when Melchizedek met Abraham.

11 People were given the law* under the system of priests from the Levi family group.* But people could not be made spiritually perfect through that system of priests. So there was a need for another priest to come. I mean a priest that is like Melchizedek,* not Aaron.* 12 And when a different kind of priest comes, then the law must be changed too. 13 We are saying these things about Christ. He belonged to a different family group. No person from

Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.

descendants A person’s children and all their future families.

I will ... descendants Quote from Gen. 22:17.
curtain A curtain divided the “Most Holy Place” from the other part of the Jewish temple. When Jesus died, the curtain was torn open, meaning the way was opened into God’s presence. Read Mt. 27:51.

high priest Most important priest for God’s people.


No person ... came from Literally, “Melchizedek was without father, without mother, without genealogy.”
father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews, especially the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups.

family group One of the twelve “tribes” of the Jewish people, named after Jacob’s twelve sons.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

law The law of Moses.

Aaron The first Jewish high priest. He was Moses’ brother.
that family group ever served as a priest at the altar.\textsuperscript{14} It is clear that our Lord (Christ) came from the family group of Judah. And Moses\textsuperscript{15} said nothing about priests belonging to that family group.

**Jesus Is a Priest like Melchizedek**

\textsuperscript{15} And these things become even more clear. We see that another priest (Jesus) comes who is like Melchizedek.\textsuperscript{16} He was made a priest not by any law or rules about his human family. He became a priest through the power of his life which continues forever. \textsuperscript{17} The Scriptures\textsubscript{1} say this about him: “You are a priest forever—the kind of priest Melchizedek was.”\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{18} The old rule (law) is now ended because it was weak and worthless. \textsuperscript{19} The law of Moses\textsubscript{2} could not make anything perfect. And now a better hope has been given to us. And with that hope we can come near to God.

\textsuperscript{20} Also, it is important that God made a vow (promise) when he made Jesus high priest.\textsuperscript{21} When those other men became priests, there was no vow. \textsuperscript{22} But Christ became a priest with God’s vow. God said to him:

> The Lord has made a vow (promise) and will not change his mind:

> ‘You are a priest forever.’” (Ps. 110:4)

\textsuperscript{22} So this means that Jesus is the guarantee of a better agreement\textsuperscript{23} from God to his people.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{23} Also, when one of those other priests died, he could not continue being a priest. So there were many of those priests. \textsuperscript{24} But Jesus lives forever. He will never stop serving as priest. \textsuperscript{25} So Christ can save those people who come to God through him. Christ can do this forever, because he always lives, ready to help people when they come before God.

\textsuperscript{26} So Jesus is the kind of high priest\textsuperscript{2} that we need. He is holy.\textsuperscript{27} He has no sin in him. He is pure and not influenced by sinners. And he is raised above the heavens. \textsuperscript{28} He is not like those other priests. Those other priests had to offer (give) sacrifices\textsuperscript{2} every day. They had to offer sacrifices first for their own sins and then for the sins of the people. But Christ doesn’t need to do that. Christ offered only one sacrifice for all time. Christ offered himself. \textsuperscript{28} The law chooses high priests who are people and have the same weaknesses as people. But God made a promise that came after the law. God spoke those words with a vow (promise), and those words made the Son of God to be the high priest. And that Son has been made perfect forever.

**Jesus Our High Priest**

\textsuperscript{8} Here is the point of what we are saying: We have a high priest\textsuperscript{3} like we have been telling you about. That high priest now sits on the right side\textsuperscript{4} of God’s throne in heaven. \textsuperscript{2} Our high priest serves in the Most Holy Place.\textsuperscript{5} He serves in the true place of worship that was made by God, not by people.

\textsuperscript{3} Every high priest\textsuperscript{6} has the work of offering gifts and sacrifices\textsuperscript{7} to God. So our high priest must also offer something to God. \textsuperscript{4} If our high priest were now living on earth, then he would not be a priest. \textsuperscript{5} I say this because there are already priests here who follow the law by offering gifts to God. \textsuperscript{6} The work that these priests do is really only a copy and a shadow of the things that are in heaven. That is why God warned Moses\textsuperscript{8} when Moses was ready to build the Holy Tent: “Be sure to make everything exactly like the pattern I showed you on the mountain.”\textsuperscript{9} \textsuperscript{6} But the work that has been

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**Terms and Notes**

- **altar**: A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered to God.
- **Moses**: One of the most important leaders of the Jewish people during the time of the Old Testament.
- **Scriptures**: Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
- **You ... Melchizedek was** Quote from Ps. 110:4.
- **high priest**: Most important priest for God’s people.
- **agreement**: God gives a contract or agreement to his people. For the Jews, the agreement was the law of Moses. Now God has given a better agreement to his people through Christ.
- **holy**: Living in a way that pleases God.
- **sacrifices**: A sacrifice is a gift or offering to God. Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people’s sins.
- **right side**: The place of honor and authority (power).
- **Most Holy Place**: Literally, “holies,” for “holy of holies,” the spiritual place where God lives and is worshiped.
- **place of worship**: Literally, “tabernacle” or “tent.”
- **Holy Tent**: Or, “tabernacle.” The special tent where God lived among his people and where the Jewish priests worshiped.
- **Be sure ... mountain** Quote from Exodus 25:40.
given to Jesus is much greater than the work that was given to those priests. In the same way, the new agreement that Jesus brought from God to his people is much greater than the old one. And the new agreement is based on promises of better things.

7If there was nothing wrong with the first agreement, then there would be no need for a second agreement. But God found something wrong with the people. God said:

“The time is coming, says the Lord, when I will give a new agreement to the people of Israel and to the people of Judah.”

9 It will not be like the agreement that I gave to their fathers. That is the agreement I gave when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. They did not continue following the agreement I gave them, and I turned away from them, says the Lord.

10 This is the new agreement I will give the people of Israel. I will give this agreement in the future, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write my laws on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

11 Never again will a person have to teach his brother or God’s other people. He will not need to tell them to know the Lord. Why? Because all people—the greatest people and the least important people—will know me.

12 And I will forgive the wrong things they do against me, and I will not remember their sins.”

Jeremiah 31:31–34

13 God called this a new agreement, so God has made the first agreement old. And anything that is old and useless is ready to disappear.

Worship Under the Old Agreement

9 The first agreement had rules for worship. And it had a man-made place for worship. This place was inside a tent. The first area in the tent was called the Holy Place. In the Holy Place were the lamp and the table with the special bread offered to God. Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place. In the Most Holy Place was a golden altar for burning incense. And also there was the Holy Box of the Agreement. The box was covered with gold. Inside this box was a golden jar of manna and Aaron’s rod (stick)—the rod that once grew leaves. Also in the box were the flat rocks with the Ten Commandments of the old agreement written on them. Above the box were the Cherub angels that showed God’s glory. These Cherub angels were over the mercy seat. But we cannot say everything about these things now.

6 Everything in the tent was made ready in the way I have explained. Then the priests went into the first room every day to do their worship. But only the high priest could go into the second room. And the high priest went into that room only once a year. And the high priest could never enter that room without taking blood with him. The priest offered that blood to God for himself and for the people’s sins. Those sins were the sins the people did without knowing that they were sinning.

Most Holy Place Literally, “holy of holies,” the place in the Jewish tabernacle or temple where God met the high priest.

altar A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered to God.

incense Special dried tree sap used for a sacrifice. It was burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke.

Box of the Agreement Wooden box covered with gold that had in it God’s law on two flat stones.

manna The food God gave to the Jewish people in the desert.

Cherub angels Two images or statues of angels.

mercy seat A place on top of “the Holy Box of the Agreement,” where the high priest put the blood of an animal once a year to pay for the sins of the people.

high priest Most important priest for God’s people.
Holy Spirit uses those two separate rooms to teach us this: that the way into the Most Holy Place was not open while that first room was still there. This is an example for us today. This shows that the gifts and sacrifices that were offered to God were not able to fully cleanse the person who was worshiping God. Those sacrifices could not make that person perfect in his heart. Those gifts and sacrifices were only about food and drink and special washings. Those things were only rules about the body—not about things inside people’s hearts. God gave those rules for his people to follow until the time of God’s new way.

Worship Under the New Agreement

But Christ has already come to be the high priest. He is the high priest of the good things we now have. But Christ does not serve in a place like the tent that those other priests served in. Christ serves in a place that is better than that tent. It is more perfect. And that place is not made by men. It does not belong to this world. Christ entered the Most Holy Place only one time—enough for all time. Christ entered the Most Holy Place by using his own blood (death), not the blood of goats or young bulls. Christ entered there and got for us freedom forever. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a cow were sprinkled on those people who were no longer pure enough to enter that place of worship. That blood and those ashes made those people pure again—but only their bodies. So surely the blood of Christ can do much, much more. Christ offered himself through the eternal Spirit as a perfect sacrifice to God. His blood will make us fully clean from the evil things we have done. His blood will make us pure even in our hearts. We are made pure so that we can worship (serve) the living God.

So Christ brings a new agreement from God to his people. Christ brings this new agreement so that those people that are called by God can have the things that God promised. God’s people can have those things forever. They can have those things because Christ died to pay for the sins that people did under the first agreement. Christ died to make people free from those sins.

When a man dies, he leaves a will (agreement). But people must prove that the man who wrote that will is dead. A will means nothing while the man who wrote it is still living. The will can be used only after the man dies. It is the same with the first agreement, between God and his people. There had to be blood (death) before the agreement could be made good. First, Moses told all the people every commandment in the law. Then Moses took the blood of calves and mixed it with water. Then he used red wool and a branch of hyssop to sprinkle the blood and water on the book of the law and on all the people. Then Moses said, “This is the blood that makes the agreement good—the agreement that God commanded you to follow.” In the same way, Moses sprinkled the blood on the Holy Tent. He sprinkled the blood over all the things used in worship. The law says that almost everything must be made clean by blood. And sins cannot be forgiven without blood (death).

Christ’s Sacrifice Takes Away Sins

These things are copies of the real things that are in heaven. These copies had to be made clean by animal sacrifices. But the real things in heaven must have much better

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

Most Holy Place Literally, “holy of holies,” for “holy of holies,” the spiritual place where God lives and is worshiped.

sacrifice(s) A sacrifice is a gift or offering to God. Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people’s sins.

high priest Most important priest for God’s people.


new agreement This is the “better agreement” that God has given to his people through Jesus.

first agreement The contract God gave to the Jewish people when he gave them the law of Moses.

will The paper a person signs to show which people he wants to have his things after he dies.

Moses One of the most important leaders of the Jewish people during the time of the Old Testament.

hyssop A plant used like a brush for sprinkling liquid.

“This is the blood … follow” Quote from Ex. 24:8.

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle.” The special tent where God lived among his people and where the Jewish priests worshiped.
sacrifices. \(^{24}\)Christ went into the Most Holy Place. \(^{25}\)But Christ did not go into the Most Holy Place that was made by people. That Most Holy Place is only a copy of the real one. Christ went into heaven. Christ is there now before God to help us. \(^{26}\)The high priest enters the Most Holy Place once every year. He takes with him blood to offer. But he does not offer his own blood like Christ did. Christ went into heaven, but not to offer himself many times like the high priest offers blood again and again. \(^{26}\)If Christ had offered himself many times, then he would have needed to suffer many times since the time the world was made. But Christ came and offered himself only once. And that once is enough for all time. Christ came at a time when the world is nearing an end. Christ came to take away all sin by offering himself as a sacrifice. \(^{27}\)Every person must die once. After a person dies, he is judged. \(^{28}\)So Christ was offered as a sacrifice one time to take away the sins of many people. And Christ will come a second time, but not for people’s sin. Christ will come the second time to bring salvation to those people who are waiting for him.

Christ’s Sacrifice Makes Us Perfect

\(^{10}\)The law gave us only an unclear picture of the good things coming in the future. The law is not a perfect picture of the real things. The law tells people to offer the same sacrifices every year. The people who come to worship God continue to offer those sacrifices. But the law can never make those people perfect. \(^{2}\)If the law could make people perfect, then those sacrifices would have already stopped. Those people would already be clean from their sins. And they would not still feel guilty for their sins. But the law cannot do that. \(^{3}\)Those people’s sacrifices make them remember their sins every year, \(^{4}\)because it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

\(^{5}\)So when Christ came into the world he said:

“You (God) don’t want sacrifices and offerings, but you have prepared a body for me.

\(^{6}\)You are not pleased with the sacrifices of animals killed and burned. And you are not pleased with sacrifices to take away sins.

\(^{7}\)Then I said, ‘Here I am, God. It is written about me in the book of the law. I have come to do the things you want.’”

Psalm 40:6–8

\(^{8}\)In this Scripture, he (Christ) first said, “You don’t want sacrifices and offerings. You are not pleased with animals killed and burned or with sacrifices to take away sin.” (These are all sacrifices that the law commands.) \(^{9}\)Then he (Christ) said, “Here I am, God. I have come to do the things you want.” So God ends that first system of sacrifices and starts his new way.

\(^{10}\)Jesus Christ did the things God wanted him to do. And because of that, we are made holy through the sacrifice of Christ’s body. Christ made that sacrifice one time—enough for all time.

\(^{11}\)Every day the priests stand and do their religious service. Again and again the priests offer the same sacrifices. But those sacrifices can never take away sins. \(^{12}\)But Christ offered only one sacrifice for sins, and that sacrifice is enough for all time. Then Christ sat down at the right side of God. \(^{13}\)And now Christ waits there for his enemies to be put under his power. \(^{14}\)With one sacrifice Christ made his people perfect forever. Those people are the ones who are being made holy.

\(^{15}\)The Holy Spirit also tells us about this. First he says:

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**Scripture** Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.  
**to be put under his power** Literally, “to be made a footstool for his feet.”  
**holy** God’s people are holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.  
**Spirit, Holy Spirit** Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
16 “This is the agreement* I will make with my people in the future, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts. I will write my laws in their minds.”

Jeremiah 31:33

Then he says:

17 “I will forgive their sins and the evil things they do— I will never remember those things again.”

Jeremiah 31:34

18And after all these things are forgiven, there is no more need for a sacrifice* to pay for sins.

Come Near to God

19 And so, brothers and sisters, we are completely free to enter the Most Holy Place. We can do this without fear because of the blood (death) of Jesus. 20 We can enter through a new way that Jesus opened for us. It is a living way. This new way leads through the curtain”—Christ’s body. 21And we have a great priest who rules the house (people) of God. 22We have been cleansed and made free from feelings of guilt. And our bodies have been washed with pure water. So come near to God with a sincere (true) heart, feeling sure because of our faith. 23 We should hold strongly to the hope that we have. And we should never fail to tell people about our hope. We can trust God to do what he promised.

Help Each Other Be Strong

24We should think about each other and see how we can help each other to show love and do good things. 25We should not quit meeting together. That’s what some people are doing.

Day  Probably the time Christ will come again.

new agreement  This is the “better agreement” that God has given to his people through Jesus.

Spirit, Holy Spirit  Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

“I will punish … repay them”  Quote from Deut. 32:35.

“The Lord … people”  Quote from Deut. 32:36.

persecuted  To be hurt or bothered by other people.

— The new and better agreement that God has given to his people through Jesus.

agreement  A sacrifice is a gift or offering to God. Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people’s sins.

sacrifice(s)  This is the “better agreement” that God has given to his people through Jesus.

Most Holy Place  Literally, “holies,” for “holy of holies,” the spiritual place where God lives and is worshiped.

curtain  A curtain divided the “Most Holy Place” from the other part of the Jewish temple. When Jesus died, the curtain was torn open, meaning the way was opened into God’s presence. Read Mt. 27:51.
HEBREWS 10:35–11:15

you. You continued to be happy, because you knew that you had something much better—something that would continue forever.

35 So don’t lose the courage that you had in the past. Your courage will be rewarded richly.

36 You must be patient. After you have done what God wants, then you will get the things that he promised you. 37 In a very short time, “The One who is coming will come. He will not be late.

38 The person who is right with me (God) will have life because of his faith. But if that person turns back in fear, I will not be pleased with him.”

Habakkuk 2:3–4

39 But we are not those people who turn back and are lost. No. We are the people who have faith and are saved.

Faith

1 Faith means being sure of the things we hope for. And faith means knowing that something is real even if we don’t see it. 2 God was pleased with those people who lived a long time ago, because they had faith like this.

3 Faith helps us understand that God created the whole world with his command. This means that the things we see were made by something that cannot be seen.

4 Cain and Abel both offered sacrifices* to God. But Abel offered a better sacrifice to God because Abel had faith. God said he was pleased with the things Abel offered. And so God called Abel a good man because Abel had faith. Abel died, but through his faith he is still speaking.

5 Enoch was carried away from this earth. He never died. The Scripture* says that, before Enoch was carried off, he was a man who truly pleased God. Later, people could not find Enoch, because God took Enoch to be with him. This happened to Enoch because he had faith. 6 Without faith, a person cannot please God. Any person who comes to God must believe that God is real. And any person who comes to God must believe that God rewards those people who truly want to find him.

7 Noah was warned by God about things that Noah could not yet see. But Noah had faith and respect for God. So Noah built a large boat to save his family. With his faith, Noah showed that the world was wrong. And Noah became one of those people who are made right with God through faith.

8 God called Abraham to travel to another place that God promised to give Abraham. Abraham did not know where that other place was. But Abraham obeyed God and started traveling, because Abraham had faith.

9 Abraham lived in that country that God promised to give him. Abraham lived there like a visitor who did not belong. Abraham did this because he had faith. Abraham lived in tents with Isaac and Jacob. Isaac and Jacob also received that same promise from God.

10 Abraham was waiting for the city* that has real foundations. He was waiting for the city that is planned and built by God.

11 Abraham was too old to have children. And Sarah was not able to have children. But Abraham had faith in God, and so God made them able to have children. Abraham trusted God to do the things he promised. 12 This man was so old that he was almost dead. But from that one man came as many descendants* (people) as there are stars in the sky. So many people came from that one man that they are like grains of sand on the seashore.

13 All those great men continued living with faith until they died. Those men did not get the things that God promised his people. The men only saw those things coming far in the future and were glad. Those men accepted the fact that they were like visitors and strangers on earth. 14 When people accept something like that, then those people show that they are waiting for a country that will be their own country. 15 If those men were thinking about that country they had left, then they could have

“The One ... him” This quote of Habakkuk 2:3–4 is from the Septuagint, the Greek Version of the Old Testament.

sacrifice(s) A sacrifice is a gift or offering to God. Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people’s sins.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
16But those men were waiting for a better country—a heavenly country. So God is not ashamed to be called their God. And God has prepared a city for those men.

17–18God tested Abraham’s faith. God told Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice.* Abraham obeyed because he had faith. Abraham already had the promises from God. And God had already said to Abraham, “It is through Isaac that your descendants* will come.”* But Abraham was ready to offer his only son (Isaac). Abraham did this because he had faith.

19Abraham believed that God could raise people from death. And really, *when God stopped Abraham from killing Isaac,* it was like Abraham got Isaac back from death.

20Isaac blessed the future of Jacob and Esau. Isaac did that because he had faith.

21And Jacob blessed each one of Joseph’s sons. Jacob did this while he was dying. He was leaning on his rod and worshiping God. Jacob did those things because he had faith.

22And when Joseph was almost dead, he spoke about the Israelites* (the Jews) leaving Egypt. And Joseph told the people what they should do with his body. Joseph said those things because he had faith.

23And the mother and father of Moses hid Moses for three months after he was born. They did this because they had faith. They saw that Moses was a beautiful baby. And they were not afraid to disobey the king’s (Pharaoh’s) order.

24Moses grew up and became a man. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. 25Moses chose not to enjoy the pleasures of sin. Those pleasures end quickly. Instead, Moses chose to suffer bad things with God’s people. Moses did this because he had faith.

26Moses thought that it was better to suffer for the Christ* than to have all the treasures of Egypt. Moses was waiting for the reward that God would give him. 27Moses left Egypt. He left because he had faith. Moses was not afraid of the king’s (Pharaoh’s) anger. Moses continued strong like he could see the God that no person can see. 28Moses prepared the Passover* and spread the blood on the doors. This blood was spread on the doors so that the Angel of Death* would not kill the firstborn* sons of the Jewish people. Moses did this because he had faith.

29And the people that Moses led all walked through the Red Sea like it was dry land. They were able to do this because they had faith. The Egyptians also tried to walk through the Red Sea, but they were all drowned.

30And the walls of Jericho fell because of the faith of God’s people. The people marched around the walls of Jericho for seven days, and then the walls fell.

31And Rahab, the prostitute,* welcomed the Israelite spies and helped them like friends. And because of her faith she was not killed with those other people who refused to obey.

32Do I need to give you more examples? I don’t have enough time to tell you about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets.* 33All those people had great faith. And with that faith they defeated kingdoms. They did the things that are right, and they got the things that God promised. With their faith some people closed the mouths of lions. 34Some people stopped great fires, and other people were saved from being killed with swords. They did those things because they had faith. Weak people were made strong because of their faith. They became powerful in battle and defeated other armies. 35People that had died were raised from death, and they were given back to the women in their family. Other people were

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses’ time.

Angel of Death Literally, “the destroyer.” To punish the Egyptian people, God sent an angel to kill the oldest son in each home. Read Ex. 12:29–32.

firstborn The first child born into a family.

prostitute(s) Women paid by men for sexual sin.

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.
tortured* and refused to accept their freedom. They did this so that they could be raised from death to a better life. 36 Some people were laughed at and beaten. Other people were tied and put into prison. 37 They were killed with stones and they were cut in half. They were killed with swords. The only clothes some of these people had were sheep skins or goat skins. They were poor, persecuted,* and treated badly by other people. 38 The world was not good enough for these great people. These people wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and holes in the ground.

39 All these people are known for their faith. But none of these people got God’s great promise. 40 God planned to give us something better. Then those people could be made perfect, but only together with us.

We Should Also Follow Jesus’ Example

12 We have those many people {of faith} around us. Their lives tell us what faith means. So we should be like them. We too should run the race that is before us and never stop trying. We should take away {from our lives} anything that would stop us. And we should take away the sin that so easily catches us. 2We should always follow the example of Jesus. Jesus is the leader in our faith. And he makes our faith perfect. He suffered death on the cross. But Jesus accepted the shame of the cross like it was nothing. He did this because of the joy that God put before him. And now he is sitting at the right side of God’s throne. 3 Think about Jesus. He was patient while sinful men were doing bad things against him. Think about him, so that you also will be patient and not stop trying.

God Is Like a Father

4 You are struggling against sin, but your struggles have not yet caused you to be killed. 5 You are children of God, and he speaks words of comfort to you. You have forgotten those words:

“My child, don’t think it is worth nothing when the Lord punishes you, and don’t stop trying when the Lord corrects you.

6 The Lord punishes every person he loves, and he punishes every person he accepts as a child.”

Proverbs 3:11–12

7 So accept sufferings like those sufferings are a father’s punishment. God does these things to you like a father punishing his children. All children are punished by their fathers. 8 Every child must be punished. So, if you are never punished, then you are not true children and don’t really belong to God. 9 We have all had fathers here on earth who punished us. And we respected our fathers. So it is even more important that we accept punishment from the Father of our spirits. If we do this we will have life. 10 Our fathers on earth punished us for a short time. They punished us the way they thought was best. But God punishes us to help us, so that we can become holy* like him. 11 We don’t enjoy punishment when we get it. Being punished is painful. But later, after we have learned from being punished, we have peace, because we start living right.

Be Careful How You Live

12 You have become weak. So make yourselves strong again. 13 Walk (live) in the right way so that you will be saved and your weakness will not cause you to be lost. 14 Try to live in peace with all people. And try to live lives free from sin. If a person’s life is not holy,* then he will never see the Lord. 15 Be careful that no person fails to get God’s grace (kindness). Be careful that no person does sexual sin. And be careful that no person is like Esau and never thinks about God. Esau was the oldest son and he would have inherited (received) everything from his father. But Esau

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tortured* To be bound or tied and then hurt or punished.
persecuted* To be hurt or bothered by other people.
 holy To be pure and live only for God.
sold all that for a single meal. 17 You remember that after Esau did this, he wanted to get his father’s blessing. Esau wanted that blessing so much that he cried. But his father refused to give him the blessing, because Esau could find no way to change the thing he had done.

18 You have come to a new place. It is not a place like the mountain that the people of Israel came to. You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire. You have not come to a place with darkness, sadness, and storms.

19 There is no sound of a trumpet or a voice speaking words like those people heard. When the people heard the voice, they begged to never hear another word. 20 They did not want to hear the command: “If anything, even an animal, touches the mountain, it must be killed with stones.” 21 The things those people saw were so terrible that Moses said, “I am shaking with fear.”

22 But you have not come to that kind of place. The new place you have come to is Mount Zion.* You have come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.* You have come to an excited gathering of thousands of angels. 23 You have come to the meeting of God’s firstborn* children. Their names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all people. And you have come to the spirits of good people who have been made perfect. 24 You have come to Jesus—the One that brought the new agreement* from God to his people. You have come to the sprinkled blood* that tells us about better things than the blood of Abel.*

25 Be careful and don’t refuse to listen when God speaks. Those people (Israelites) refused to listen to him when he warned them on earth. And those people did not escape. Now God is speaking from heaven. So now it will be worse for those people who refuse to listen to him.

26 When he spoke before, his voice shook the earth. But now he has promised, “Once again I will shake the earth. But I will also shake heaven.” 27 The words “once again” clearly show us that everything that was made will be destroyed. Those are the things that can be shaken. And only the things that cannot be shaken will continue.

28 So we should be thankful because we have a kingdom that cannot be shaken. We should be thankful and worship God in a way that will please him. We should worship him with respect and fear, 29 because our God is like a fire that can destroy.

13 You are brothers and sisters in Christ, so continue loving each other. Always remember to help people by accepting them into your home. Some people have done that and have helped angels without knowing it.

3 Don’t forget those people in prison. Remember them like you are in prison with them. And don’t forget those people who are suffering. Remember them like you are suffering with them.

4 Marriage should be honored by all people. And every marriage should be kept pure between only two people. God will judge guilty those people who do sexual sins and adultery. 5 Keep your lives free from the love of money. And be satisfied with the things you have. God has said,

“I will never leave you; I will never run away from you.”  
Deuteronomy 31:6

6 So we can feel sure and say,  
“The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. People can do nothing to me.”  
Psalm 118:6

“You are brothers and sisters in Christ, so continue loving each other. Always remember to help people by accepting them into your home. Some people have done that and have helped angels without knowing it. Don’t forget those people in prison. Remember them like you are in prison with them. And don’t forget those people who are suffering. Remember them like you are suffering with them.

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Psalm 118:6

“Once again ... heaven” Quote from Hag. 2:6.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.
Remember your leaders. They taught God’s message to you. Remember how they lived and died, and copy their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Don’t let all kinds of strange teachings lead you into the wrong way. Your hearts should be strengthened by God’s grace, not by obeying rules about foods. Obeying those rules doesn’t help people.

We have a sacrifice. And those priests who serve in the Holy Tent cannot eat from our sacrifice. The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place. He offers that blood for sins. But the bodies of those animals are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the city. Jesus died to make his people holy with his own blood. So we should go to Jesus outside the camp. We should accept the same shame that Jesus had. Here on earth we don’t have a city that continues forever. But we are waiting for the city that we will have in the future. So through Jesus we should never stop offering our sacrifice to God. That sacrifice is our praise, coming from lips that speak his name. And don’t forget to do good for other people. And share with other people. These are the sacrifices that please God.

Obey your leaders and be under their authority. Those men are responsible for you. So they are always watching to protect your souls. Obey those men so that they can be happy in this work. It won’t help you to make it hard for them.

Continue praying for us. We feel right about the things we do, because we always try to do the best thing. And I beg you to pray that God will send me back to you soon. I want this more than anything else.

I pray that the God of peace will give you every good thing you need so that you can do the things he wants. God is the One who raised our Lord Jesus from death. He raised Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep. God raised Jesus because of his blood. His blood began the new agreement that continues forever. I pray that God will do the things in us that please him. I ask that he will do those things through Jesus Christ. To Jesus be glory forever. Amen.

My brothers and sisters, I beg you to listen patiently to these things I have said. I said these things to strengthen you. And this letter is not very long. I want you to know that our brother Timothy is out of prison. If he comes to me soon, we will both come to see you.

Say hello to all your leaders and to all God’s people. All God’s people in Italy say hello to you.

God’s grace be with you all.

sacrifice Here, the sacrifice (offering) of Jesus. He gave his life to pay for people’s sins.

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle.” The special tent where God lived among his people and where the Jewish priests worshiped.

high priest Most important priest for God’s people.

Most Holy Place Literally, “holy of holies,” the place in the Jewish tabernacle or temple where God met the high priest.

holy God’s people are holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

close agreement This is the “better agreement” that God has given to his people through Jesus.
Greetings from James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.
To all of God’s people* that are scattered everywhere in the world.

**Faith and Wisdom**

2 My brothers and sisters, you will have many kinds of troubles. But when these things happen, you should be very happy. 3 Why? Because you know that these things are testing your faith. And this will give you patience. 4 Let that patience work in you to give the result God wants. Then you will be mature and complete. You will be all that God wants you to be. 5 But if any of you needs wisdom, then you should ask God for it. God is generous. He enjoys giving to all people. So God will give you wisdom. 6 But when you ask God, you must believe. Don’t doubt God. The person who doubts is like a wave in the sea. The wind blows the wave up and down. The person who doubts is like that wave. 7–8 The person who doubts is thinking two different things at the same time. He cannot decide about anything he does. A person like that should not think that he will receive anything from the Lord.

**True Riches**

9 Believers who are poor should be glad that God considers them so important. 10 Believers who are rich should be glad when bad things happen that make them humble. Why? Because even rich people will die as quickly as wild flowers: 11 The sun rises and becomes hotter and hotter. The sun’s heat makes the plants very dry. The flowers fall off. The flowers were beautiful, but now they are dead. It is the same with rich people. While they are still making plans for their business, they will die.

**Temptation Does Not Come from God**

12 What great blessings there are for the person who is tempted and still continues strong. Why? Because after he has proved his faith, God will give him the reward of life forever. God promised this to all people who love him. 13 When a person is being tempted, he should not say, “God is tempting me.” Evil cannot tempt God. And God himself does not tempt any person. 14 It is the evil things a person wants that tempt that person. His own evil desire leads him away and holds him. 15 This desire causes sin. Then the sin grows and brings death.

16 My dear brothers and sisters, don’t be fooled about this. 17 Everything good comes from God. And every perfect gift is from God. These good gifts come down from the Father who made all the lights in the sky (sun, moon, stars). But God never changes like those lights. He is always the same. 18 God decided to give us life through the word of truth. He wanted us to be the most important of all the things he made.

**Listening and Obeying**

19 My dear brothers and sisters, always be more willing to listen than to speak. Don’t become angry easily. 20 A person’s anger does not help him live right like God wants. 21 So put out of your life every evil thing and every kind of wrong thing you do. Be humble and accept God’s teaching that is planted in your hearts. This teaching can save you.
1420

JAMES 1:22–2:17

22Do what God’s teaching says; don’t just listen and do nothing. Why? Because when you only sit and listen, you are fooling yourselves. 23If you hear God’s teaching and do nothing, you are like this: You are like a man that looks at his face in the mirror. 24The man sees himself, but he does nothing. He goes away and quickly forgets how bad he looked. 25But you must not be like that. You must carefully study God’s perfect law that makes people free. You must continue to study it. You must listen to God’s teaching and not forget what you heard. Then you must obey what God’s teaching says. When you do this, it will make you truly happy.

The True Way to Worship God

26You might think you are religious (good). But if you say things you should not say, then you are fooling yourself. Your “religion” is worth nothing. 27The kind of religion (worship) that God accepts is this: caring for orphans* or widows* who need help, and keeping yourself free from the world’s evil influence. This is the kind of religion (worship) that God accepts as pure and good.

Love All People

2My dear brothers and sisters, you are believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. So don’t think that some people are more important than other people. 3Suppose a person comes into your group. This person is wearing very nice clothes and a gold ring. At the same time a poor person comes in wearing old, dirty clothes. 4You show special attention to the person wearing nice clothes. You say, “Sit here in this good seat.” But you say to the poor person, “Stand there!” or, “Sit on the floor by our feet!” 5What are you doing? You are making some people more important than others. With evil thoughts you are deciding which person is better.

6Listen, my dear brothers and sisters! God chose the poor people in the world to be rich with faith. He chose them to receive the kingdom God promised to people who love him. 6But you show no respect to the poor man. And you know that the rich people are the people who always try to control your lives. And they are the people who take you to court. 7And the rich people are the people who say bad things against the good name of the One (Jesus) who owns you.

8One law rules over all other laws. This royal law is found in the Scriptures*: “Love other people the same as you love yourself.”* If you obey this law, then you are doing right. 9But if you are treating one person like he is more important than another person, then you are sinning. That royal law proves that you are guilty of breaking God’s law. 10And you might follow all of God’s law. But if you fail to obey only one command, then you are guilty of breaking all the commands in that law. 11God said, “Don’t do the sin of adultery.”* The same God also said, “Don’t kill.”* So if you don’t do the sin of adultery, but you kill a person, then you are guilty of breaking all of God’s law. 12You will be judged by the law that makes people free. You should remember this in everything you say and do. 13Yes, you must show mercy to other people. If you do not show mercy, then God will not show mercy to you when he judges you. But the person who shows mercy can stand without fear when he is judged.

Faith and Good Works

14My brothers and sisters, if a person says that he has faith, but does nothing, then that faith is worth nothing. Can faith like that save him? No! 15A brother or sister in Christ might need clothes or might need food to eat. 16And you say to that person, “God be with you! I hope you stay warm and get plenty to eat.” You say these things, but you don’t give that person those things he needs. If you don’t help that person, your words are worth nothing. 17It is the same with faith. If faith does nothing, then that faith is dead, because it is alone.

orphans  Children whose mother and father have died.

widows  A woman whose husband has died.

Scriptures  Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

“Love other people … yourself” Quote from Lev. 19:18.

adultery  Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

“Don’t do … adultery” Quote from Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18.

“Don’t kill” Quote from Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17.
A person might say, “You have faith, but I do things. Show me your faith! Your faith does nothing. I will show you my faith by the things I do.” 19You believe there is one God. Good! But the demons* believe, too! And they shake with fear. 20You foolish person! Must you be shown that faith that does nothing is worth nothing? 21Abraham* is our father*. Abraham was made right with God by the things he did. He offered (gave) his son Isaac to God on the altar.* 22So you see that Abraham’s faith and the things he did worked together. His faith was made perfect by the things he did. 23This shows the full meaning of the Scripture* that says: “Abraham believed God. And God accepted Abraham’s faith. That faith made Abraham right with God.”* 24So you see that a person is made right with God by the things he does. He cannot be made right by faith only.

Another example is Rahab. Rahab was a prostitute.* But she was made right with God by something she did: She helped the spies, for God’s people. She welcomed them into her home and helped them escape by a different road.* 25A person’s body that does not have a spirit is dead. It is the same with faith—faith that does nothing is dead!

Controlling the Things We Say

My brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers. Why? Because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly than other people. 2We all make many mistakes. If there were a person who never said anything wrong, then that person would be perfect. A person like that would be able to control their whole body, too. 3We put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us. With these bits in the horses’ mouths, we can control their whole body. 4It is the same with ships. A ship is very big, and it is pushed by strong winds. But a very small rudder controls that big ship. The man who controls the rudder decides where the ship will go. The ship goes where the man wants. 5It is the same with our tongue. It is a small part of the body, but it boasts about doing great things.

A big forest fire can be started with only a little flame. 6The tongue is like a fire. It is a world of evil among the parts of our body. How? The tongue spreads its evil through our whole body. It starts a fire that influences all of life. The tongue gets this fire from hell. 7People can tame every kind of wild animal, bird, reptile, and fish. People have already tamed all these things. 8But no person can tame (control) the tongue. It is wild and evil. It is full of poison that can kill. 9We use our tongues to praise our Lord and Father (God), but then we curse (say bad things to) people. And God made those people like himself. 10Those praises and curses come from the same mouth! My brothers and sisters, this should not happen. 11Do good water and bad water flow from the same spring? No! 12My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree make olives? No! Can a grapevine make figs? No! And a well full of salty water cannot give good water.

True Wisdom

13Is there any person among you who is truly wise and understanding? Then he should show his wisdom by living right. He should do good things with humility. A wise person does not boast. 14If you are selfish and have bitter jealousy in your hearts, then you have no reason to boast. Your boasting is a lie that hides the truth. 15That kind of “wisdom” does not come from God. That “wisdom” comes from the world. It is not spiritual. It is from the devil. 16Where there is jealousy and selfishness, there will be confusion and every kind of evil. 17But the wisdom that comes from God is like this: First, it is pure. It is also peaceful, gentle, and easy to please. This wisdom is always ready to help people who

demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.
father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews; the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups.
altar Place for offering sacrifices (gifts) to God.
Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
“Abraham believed ... right with God” Quote from Gen. 15:6.
“God’s friend” Quote from 2 Chron. 20:7; Is. 41:8.
prostitute(s) Women paid by men for sexual sin.
She helped ... road The story about Rahab is found in Josh. 2:1–21.
You Are Not the Judge

11Brothers and sisters, don’t say things against each other. If you criticize your brother or judge him, then you are criticizing the law he follows. When you judge a brother, you are really judging the law he follows. And when you are judging the law, you are not a follower of the law. You have become a judge! God is the only One who makes laws. He is the only Judge. God is the only One who can save and destroy. So it is not right for you to judge another person.

Let God Plan Your Life

13Some of you say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to some city. We will stay there a year, do business, and make money.” Listen! Think about this: You don’t know what will happen tomorrow! Your life is like a fog. You can see it for a short time, but then it goes away. So you should say, “If the Lord wants, we will live and do this or that.” But now you are proud and you boast. All of this boasting is wrong. And when a person knows how to do good, but does not do good, then he is sinning.

Selfish Rich People Will Be Punished

5You rich people, listen! Cry and be very sad because much trouble will come to you. Your riches will rot and be worth nothing. Your clothes will be eaten by moths. Your gold and silver will rust, and that rust will be a proof that you were wrong. That rust will eat your bodies like fire. You saved your treasure in the last days. People worked in your fields, but you did not pay them. Those people are crying out against you. Those people harvested your crops. Now the Lord (God) of heaven’s armies has heard the things they are shouting. Your life on earth was full of rich living. You pleased yourselves with everything you wanted. You made yourselves fat, like an animal ready for the day of slaughter. Your life must end because you have not been humble.

part Literally, “friend.”
Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
“The Spirit ... himself” Other possible translations: “God strongly desires the spirit that he made to live in us.”
See Ex. 20:5.
“God is against ... humble” Quote from Prov. 3:34.
So clean sin out of your lives Literally, “So wash your hands.”
Lord of heaven’s armies Literally, “Lord Sabaoth,” meaning ruler of all heavenly powers.
You made yourselves fat ... slaughter Literally, “You fattened your hearts for the day of slaughter.”
showed no mercy to good people. They were not against you, but you killed them.

**Be Patient**

7Brothers and sisters, be patient; the Lord Jesus will come. So be patient until that time. Farmers are patient. A farmer waits for his valuable crop to grow up from the earth. A farmer waits patiently for his crop to receive the first rain and the last rain.* 8You must be patient, too. Don’t stop hoping. The Lord is coming soon. 9Brothers, and sisters, don’t complain against each other. If you don’t stop complaining, you will be judged guilty. And the Judge is ready to come! 10Brothers and sisters, follow the example of the prophets* who spoke for the Lord (God). They suffered many bad things, but they were patient. 11We say that those people who accepted their troubles with patience now have God’s blessing. You have heard about Job’s patience.* You know that after all Job’s trouble, the Lord helped him. This shows that the Lord is full of mercy and is kind.

**Be Careful What You Say**

12My brothers and sisters, it is very important that you not use an oath when you make a promise. Don’t use the name of heaven, earth, or anything else to prove what you say. When you mean yes, say only “yes.” When you mean no, say only “no.” Do this so that you will not be judged guilty.

**The Power of Prayer**

13Are you having troubles? You should pray. Are you happy? You should sing. 14Are you sick? You should call the church’s elders.* The elders should rub oil on you* in the name of the Lord and pray for you. 15The prayer that is said with faith will make the sick person well. The Lord will heal that person. And if that person has sinned, then God will forgive those sins. 16Always tell each other the wrong things you have done. Then pray for each other. Do this so that God can heal you. When a good person prays hard, great things happen. 17Elijah* was a person the same as us. He prayed that it would not rain. And it did not rain on the land for three and a half years! 18Then Elijah prayed that it would rain. And the rain came down from the sky, and the land grew crops again.

**Helping People When They Sin**

19My brothers and sisters, one of you may wander away from the truth. And another person may help him come back to the truth. 20Remember this: Any person who brings a sinner back from the wrong way will save that sinner from death (hell). By doing this, that person will cause many sins to be forgiven.

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first rain, last rain  The “first rain” came in the Fall, and the “last rain” came in the Spring.
prophets  People that spoke for God. They often told things that would happen in the future.
Job’s patience  Read the book of Job in the Old Testament.
edgers  A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “overseers” and “pastors” (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.
rub oil on you  Oil was used like medicine.
Elijah  A man that spoke for God about 850 B.C.
Greetings from Peter, an apostle* of Jesus Christ.
To God’s chosen people who are away from their homes—people scattered all over the areas of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. God planned long ago to choose you by making you his holy people.* Making you holy is the Spirit’s* work. God wanted you to obey him and to be made clean by the blood (death) of Jesus Christ. Grace (kindness) and peace be yours more and more.

A Living Hope

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has great mercy, and because of his mercy he gave us a new life. This new life brings us a living hope through Jesus Christ’s rising from death. Now we wait to get the blessings God has for his children. Those blessings are kept for you in heaven. Those blessings cannot ruin or be destroyed or lose their beauty. God’s power protects you through your faith, and it keeps you safe until your salvation comes. That salvation is ready to be given to you at the end of time. This makes you very happy. But now for a short time different kinds of troubles may make you sad. Why do these troubles happen? To prove that your faith is pure (true). This purity of faith is worth more than gold. Gold can be proved to be pure by fire, but gold will ruin. The purity of your faith will bring you praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ appears (comes). You have not seen Christ, but still you love him. You can’t see him now, but you believe in him. You are filled with a joy that cannot be explained. And that joy is full of glory. Your faith has a goal. And you are receiving that goal—your salvation.

The prophets* studied carefully and tried to learn about this salvation. Those prophets spoke about the grace (kindness) that was coming to you. The Spirit* of Christ was in those prophets. And the Spirit was telling about the sufferings that would happen to Christ and about the glory that would come after those sufferings. Those prophets tried to learn about what the Spirit was showing them. They tried to learn when those things would happen and what the world would be like at that time. It was shown to those prophets that their service was not for themselves. The prophets were serving you. They were serving you when they told about the things that you have heard. You heard those things from the men who told you the Good News.* They told you with the help of the Holy Spirit* that was sent from heaven. The things you were told are things that even the angels want very much to know about.

A Call to Holy Living

So prepare your minds for service, and have self-control. All your hope should be for the gift of grace (kindness) that will be yours when Jesus Christ appears (comes). In the past you did not understand about these

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*List of terms and definitions:
- **apostle**: A person Jesus chose to represent him in special way.
- **holy people**: Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.
- **Spirit, Holy Spirit**: Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
- **prophets**: People that spoke for God. Sometimes prophets told things that would happen in the future.
- **Good News**: The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
things, so you did the evil things you wanted. But now you are children of God, who obey. So don’t live like you lived in the past. 15 But be holy in all the things you do, the same as God is holy. God is the One who called you. 16 The Scriptures say, “Be holy, because I (God) am holy.”

17 You pray to God and call him Father. God judges each man’s work equally. So while you are visiting here on earth, you should live with fear (respect) for God. 18 You know that in the past you were living in a worthless way. You got that way of living from the people who lived before you. But you were saved from that way of living. You were bought, but not with things that ruin like gold or silver. 19 But you were bought with the precious blood (death) of Christ—a pure and perfect lamb. 20 Christ was chosen before the world was made. But he was shown to the world in these last times for you. 21 You believe in God through Christ. God raised Christ from death. Then God gave glory to him. So your faith and your hope are in God.

22 Now you have made yourselves pure by obeying the truth. Now you can have true love for your brothers and sisters. So love each other deeply—with all your heart. 23 You have been born again. This new life did not come from something that dies. It came from something that cannot die. You were born again through God’s living message that continues forever. 24 The Scriptures say,

“Our lives are like the grass of spring, and any glory we enjoy is like the beauty of a wildflower. The grass dries up and dies, and the wildflower falls to the ground. But the word of the Lord lives forever.”

Isaiah 40:6–8

And this is the word (teaching) that was told to you.

**holy** A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.
**Scriptures** Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
**“Be ... holy”** Quote from Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:7.
**message** The news that God has made a way through Christ for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
9But you are chosen people. You are the King’s priests. You are a holy* nation of people. You are people who belong to God. God chose you to tell about the wonderful things he has done. He called (brought) you out of darkness (sin) into his wonderful light. 10At one time you were not God’s people. But now you are God’s people. In the past you had never received mercy. But now you have received mercy {from God}.

Live for God

11Dear friends, you are like visitors and strangers {in this world}. So I beg you to stay away from the evil things your bodies want to do. These things fight against your soul. 12People who don’t believe are living all around you. Those people may say that you are doing wrong. So live good lives. Then they will see the good things you do, and they will give glory to God on that day when he comes.

Obey Every Human Authority

13Obey the people who have authority* in this world. Do this for the Lord. Obey the king who is the highest authority. 14And obey the leaders who are sent by the king. They are sent to punish people who do wrong and to praise those people who do good. 15So when you do good, you stop foolish people from saying stupid things about you. This is what God wants. 16Live like free men. But don’t use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. Live like you are serving God. 17Show respect for all people. Love all the brothers and sisters of God’s family. Fear (respect) God, and honor the king.

The Example of Christ’s Suffering

18Slaves, be willing to serve your masters. Do this with all respect. You should obey the masters that are good and kind, and you should obey the masters that are bad. 19A person might have to suffer even when he has done nothing wrong. If that person thinks of God and bears the pain, then this pleases God. 20But if you are punished for doing wrong, there is no reason to praise you for bearing that punishment. But if you suffer for doing good, and you are patient, then that pleases God. 21That is what you were called to do. Christ gave you an example to follow. You should do the same as he did. You should be patient when you suffer, because Christ suffered for you.

22 “He (Christ) did no sin, and no lies were found in his mouth.”

Isaiah 53:9

23People said bad things to Christ, but he did not say bad things to them. Christ suffered, but he did not threaten (speak against) the people. No! Christ let God take care of him. God is the One who judges rightly. 24Christ carried our sins in his body on the cross. He did this so that we would stop living for sin and live for what is right. By his (Christ’s) wounds you were healed. 25You were like sheep that went the wrong way. But now you have come back to the Shepherd and Protector of your lives.

Wives and Husbands

3In the same way you wives should be willing to serve your husbands. Then, if some of your husbands have not obeyed {God’s} teaching, they will be persuaded to believe. You will not need to say anything. They will be persuaded by the way their wives live. 2Your husbands will see the pure lives that you live with your respect {for God}. 3It is not fancy hair, gold jewelry, or fine clothes that should make you beautiful. 4No, your beauty should come from inside you—the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. That beauty will never disappear. It is worth very much to God. 5It was the same with the holy* women who lived long ago and followed God. They made themselves beautiful in that same way. They were willing to serve their husbands. 6I am talking about women like Sarah. She obeyed Abraham,* her husband, and called him her master. And you women are true children of Sarah if you always do what is right and are not afraid.

holy God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.
people ... authority Rulers, governors, presidents, or other government leaders.
holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.
Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.
In the same way, you husbands should live with your wives in an understanding way. You should show respect to your wives. They are weaker than you. But God gives your wives the same blessing that he gives you—the grace (kindness) that gives true life. Do these things so that nothing will trouble your prayers.

Suffering for Doing Right

So all of you should live together in peace. Try to understand each other. Love each other like brothers. Be kind and humble. Don’t do wrong to a person to pay him back for doing wrong to you. Or don’t say something bad to a person to pay him back for saying something bad to you. But ask God to bless that person. Do this, because you yourselves were called to receive a blessing. The Scripture says, “If a person wants to enjoy life and to have many good days, that person must stop speaking evil and stop telling lies.

That person must stop doing evil and do good; that person should look for peace and try to get it.

The Lord sees the good people, and the Lord listens to their prayers. But the Lord is against those people that do evil.” Psalm 34:12–16

If you are always trying to do good, then no person can really hurt you. But you may suffer for doing right. If that happens, then you are blessed (happy). “Don’t be afraid of those people that make you suffer; don’t be worried.” But you should keep the Lord Christ holy in your hearts. Always be ready to answer every person who asks you to explain about the hope you have. But answer those people in a gentle way with respect. Always be able to feel that you are doing right. When you do that, the people who say bad things about you will be made ashamed. They say these bad things about the good way you live in Christ.

They will be made ashamed for the bad things they said about you. It is better to suffer for doing good than for doing wrong. Yes, it is better if that is what God wants. Christ himself died for you. And that one death paid for your sins. He was not guilty, but he died for people who are guilty. He did this to bring you all to God. His body was killed, but he was made alive in the spirit. And in the spirit he went and preached to the spirits in prison. Those were the spirits who refused to obey God long ago in the time of Noah. God was waiting patiently for them while Noah was building the big boat. Only a few people—eight in all—were saved in that boat. Those people were saved by water. That water is like baptism that now saves you. Baptism is not the washing of dirt from the body. Baptism is asking God for a pure heart. It saves you because Jesus Christ was raised from death.

Now Jesus has gone into heaven. He is at God’s right side. He rules over angels, authorities, and powers.

Christ suffered while he was in his body. So you should strengthen yourselves with the same kind of thinking Christ had. The person who has suffered in his body is finished with sin. Strengthen yourselves so that you will live your lives here on earth doing what God wants, not doing the evil things that people want. In the past you wasted too much time doing the things that the non-believers like to do. You were doing sexual sins. You were doing the evil things you wanted. You were becoming drunk, having wild and wasteful parties, having drunken parties, and doing wrong by worshiping idols (false gods). Those non-believers think that it is strange that you don’t do the many wild and wasteful things that they do. And so they say bad things about you. But those people will have to explain about the things they have done. They will have to explain to the One (Christ) who is ready to judge the people who are living and the people.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

“Don’t be afraid ... worried” Quote from Isa. 8:12.

baptism A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.
who have died. The Good News was told to those people who are now dead, because those people will be judged like all people are judged. They will be judged for the things they did while they were living. But the Good News was told to them so that they could live in the spirit like God lives.

Be Good Managers of God’s Gifts

7 The time is near when all things will end. So keep your minds clear, and control yourselves. This will help you to pray. Most important, love each other deeply. Love hides many, many sins. Share your homes with each other without complaining. Each of you received a spiritual gift from God. God has shown you his grace (kindness) in many different ways. And you are like servants who are responsible for using God’s gifts. So be good servants and use your gifts to serve each other. The person who speaks should speak words from God. The person who serves should serve with the strength that God gives. You should do these things so that in everything God will be praised through Jesus Christ. Power and glory belong to him forever and ever. Amen.

Suffering as a Christian

12 My friends, don’t be surprised at the painful things that you are now suffering. Those things are testing your faith. Don’t think that something strange is happening to you. But you should be happy that you are sharing in Christ’s sufferings. You will be happy and full of joy when Christ shows his glory. When people say bad things to you because you follow Christ, then you are blessed (happy). You are blessed because the Spirit of glory is with you. That is the Spirit of God. Don’t be like a criminal or a person who kills, steals, or bothers other people. A person will suffer for doing those things. None of you should ever suffer like that. But if you suffer because you are a Christian, then don’t be ashamed. You should praise (thank) God for that name (Christian). It is time for judging to begin. That judging will begin with God’s family. If that judgment begins with us, then what will happen to those people who don’t accept the Good News of God?

18 “It is very hard for a good person to be saved. So surely the person who is against God and is full of sin will be lost!”

Proverbs 11:31 (Greek Version)

19 So those people who suffer like God wants them to should trust their lives to him. God is the One who made them, and they can trust him. So they should continue to do good.

The Flock of God

5 Now I have something to say to the elders in your group. I am also an elder. I myself have seen Christ’s sufferings. And I will share in the glory that will be shown to us. I beg you to take care of the group of people that you are responsible for. They are God’s flock. Watch over that flock because you want to, not because you are forced to do it. That is how God wants it. Do it because you are happy to serve, not because you want money. Don’t be like a ruler over those people you are responsible for. But be good examples to those people. Then when the Ruling Shepherd (Christ) comes, you will get a crown. That crown will be very glorious, and it will never lose its beauty.

Young men, I have something to say to you, too. You should accept the authority of the elders. All of you should be very humble with each other.

“God is against the proud people. But he gives grace (kindness) to the humble people.”

Proverbs 3:34

6 So be humble under God’s powerful hand. Then he will lift you up when the right time

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “overseers” and “pastors” (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God’s people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.

God’s flock God’s people. They are like a flock (group) of sheep that need to be cared for.
comes. 7 Give all your worries to him, because he cares for you.

8 Control yourselves and be careful! The devil is your enemy. And he goes around like a roaring lion looking for some person to eat.

9 Refuse to follow the devil. Stand strong in your faith. You know that your brothers and sisters all over the world are having the same sufferings that you have.

10 Yes, you will suffer for a short time. But after that, God will make everything right. He will make you strong. He will support you and keep you from falling. He is the God that gives all grace (kindness). He called you to share in his glory in Christ. That glory will continue forever. 11 All power is his forever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

12 Silas will bring this letter to you. I know that he is a faithful brother in Christ. I wrote this short letter to encourage you. I wanted to tell you that this is the true grace (kindness) of God. Stand strong in that grace.

13 The church in Babylon* says hello to you. Those people were chosen the same as you.

Mark, my son in Christ, also says hello. 14 Give each other a kiss of love when you meet.

Peace to all of you that are in Christ.

*The church in Babylon Literally, “She in Babylon.”
Greetings from Simon Peter, a servant and apostle* of Jesus Christ.

To all you people who have a faith that is so valuable, like ours. You received that faith because our God and Savior Jesus Christ is fair. He does what is right.

Grace (kindness) and peace be given to you more and more, because now you know God and Jesus our Lord.

God Has Given Us Everything We Need

Jesus has the power of God. And his power has given us everything we need to live and to serve God. We have these things because we know him. Jesus called us by his glory and goodness. Through his glory and goodness, Jesus gave us the very great and rich gifts that he promised us. With those gifts you can share in being like God. And so the world will not ruin you with the evil things it wants.

Because you have these blessings, you should try as much as you can to add these things to your life: to your faith add goodness; and to your goodness add knowledge; and to your knowledge add self-control; and to your self-control add patience; and to your patience add service for God; and to your service for God add kindness for your brothers and sisters in Christ; and to this kindness for your brothers and sisters add love. If all these things are in you and they are growing, then these things will help you to never be useless. These things will help you to never be worthless in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if a person does not have these things, then he cannot see clearly. That person is blind. He has forgotten that he was cleansed (forgiven) from his past sins.

My brothers and sisters, God called you and chose you to be his. Do your best to live in a way that shows you really are God’s called and chosen people. If you do all those things, you will never fall. And you will be given a very great welcome into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That kingdom continues forever.

You know these things. You are very strong in the truth you have. But I will always help you to remember these things. I think it is right for me to help you remember these things while I am still living here on earth. I know that I must soon leave this body. Our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me that. I will try the best I can to help you remember these things always. I want you to be able to remember these things after I am gone.

We Saw Christ’s Glory

We told you about the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. We told you about his coming. Those things we told you were not just smart stories that people invented. No! We saw the greatness of Jesus with our own eyes. Jesus heard the voice of the Greatest Glory (God). That was when Jesus received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice said, “This is my Son, and I love him. I am very pleased with him.” And we heard that voice. It came from heaven while we were with Jesus on the holy mountain.

This makes us more sure about the things the prophets* said. And it is good for you to follow closely what the prophets said. The things they said are like a light shining in a dark

prophets People that spoke for God. Sometimes prophets told things that would happen in the future.
place. You have that light until the day begins and the morning star brings new light to your minds. 20 Most important, you must understand this: No prophecy* in the Scriptures* ever comes from a person’s own interpretation. 21 No! No prophecy ever came from what a man wanted to say. But people were led by the Holy Spirit* and spoke things from God.

False Teachers

2 In the past there were false prophets* among God’s people. It is the same now. You will have some false teachers in your group. They will teach things that are wrong—teachings that will make people be lost. And those false teachers will teach in a way that will be hard for you to see that they are wrong. They will even refuse to accept the Master (Jesus) who bought their freedom. And so they will quickly destroy themselves. 2 Many people will follow them in the morally wrong things they do. And other people will say bad things about the Way of truth because of those people. 3 Those false teachers only want your money. So they will use you by telling you things that are not true. But the judgment against those false teachers has been ready for a long time. And they will not escape the One (God) who will destroy them.

4 When angels sinned, God did not let them go free without punishment. No! God sent them to hell. God put those angels in caves of darkness. They are being held there until the judgment. 5 And God punished the evil people who lived long ago. God brought a flood to the world that was full of people who were against God. But God saved Noah and seven other people with Noah. Noah was a man who told people about living right. 6 And God also punished the evil cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.* God burned those cities until there was nothing left but ashes. God made those cities be an example to show what will happen to people who are against God. 7 But God saved Lot from those cities. Lot was a very good man. He was trouble because of the morally bad lives of evil people. 8 (Lot was a good man, but he lived with those evil people every day. Lot’s good heart was hurt by the evil things that he saw and heard.) 9 Yes, God did all these things. So the Lord God will always save the people who serve him. He will save them when troubles come. And the Lord will hold evil people and punish them while waiting for the day of judgment. 10 That punishment is for those people who live by doing the bad things their sinful selves want, and it is for people who hate the Lord’s authority (power).

These false teachers will do anything they want, and they boast about themselves. They are not afraid to say bad things against the glorious angels.* 11 The angels are much stronger and more powerful than these false teachers. But even the angels don’t accuse the false teachers and say bad things about them to the Lord. 12 But these false teachers speak evil against things they don’t understand. These false teachers are like animals that do things without really thinking—like wild animals that are born to be caught and killed. And, like wild animals, these false teachers will be destroyed. 13 These false teachers have made many people suffer. So they themselves will suffer. That is their pay for what they have done. These false teachers think it is fun to do evil things openly where all people can see. They enjoy the evil things that please them. So they are like dirty spots and stains among you—they bring shame to you in the meals that you eat together. 14 Every time they look at a woman they want her. These false teachers are always sinning this way. They lead weaker people into the trap of sin. They have taught themselves well to be greedy. They are under a curse.* 15 These false teachers left the right way and went the wrong way. They followed
the same way that Balaam went. Balaam was the son of Beor. He loved being paid for doing wrong.  16But a donkey told Balaam that he was doing wrong. And the donkey is an animal that cannot talk. But that donkey spoke with a man’s voice and stopped the prophet’s (Balaam’s) crazy thinking.

17Those false teachers are like rivers that have no water. They are like clouds that are blown by a storm. A place in the deepest darkness has been kept for them.  18Those false teachers boast with words that mean nothing. They lead people into the trap of sin. They lead away people who are just beginning to come away from other people who live wrong. Those false teachers do this by using the evil things people want to do in their sinful selves.  19These false teachers promise that those people will have freedom. But the false teachers themselves are not free. They are slaves of things that will be destroyed.

A person is a slave to the thing that controls him.  20Those people were made free from the evil things in the world. They were made free by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But if those people go back into those evil things and those things control them, then it is worse for them than it was before.  21Yes, it would be better for those people to have never known the right way. That would be better than to know the right way and then to turn away from the holy teaching that was given to them.  22What those people did is like this true saying: “When a dog vomits, he comes back to his vomit.” And, “After a pig is washed, the pig goes back and rolls in the mud again.”

Jesus Will Come Again

3My friends, this is the second letter I have written to you. I wrote both letters to you to help your honest minds remember something.  2I want you to remember the words that the holy prophets* spoke in the past. And remember the command that our Lord and Savior gave us. He gave us that command through your apostles.*  3It is important for you to understand what will happen in the last days. People will laugh at you. Those people will live following the evil things they want to do.  4Those people will say, “He (Jesus) promised to come again. Where is he? Our fathers have died. But the world continues the way it has been since it was made.”  5But those people don’t want to remember what happened long ago. The skies were there, and God made the earth from water and with water. All this happened by God’s word.  6Then that world was flooded and destroyed with water.  7And that same word of God is keeping the skies and the earth that we have now. The skies and the earth are being kept to be destroyed by fire. The skies and the earth are kept for the day of judgment and the destruction of all people who are against God.

8But don’t forget this one thing, dear friends: To the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day.  9The Lord is not being slow in doing what he promised—the way some people understand slowness. But God is being patient with you. God doesn’t want any person to be lost. God wants every person to change his heart and stop sinning.

10But the Day when the Lord comes again will be a surprise like a thief. The sky will disappear with a loud noise. All the things in the sky will be destroyed with fire. And the earth and everything in it will be burned.*  11In that way everything will be destroyed like I told you. So what kind of people should you be? You should live holy lives and do things to serve God.  12You should wait for the Day of God. You should want very much for that Day to come. When that Day comes, the sky will be destroyed with fire, and everything in the sky will melt with heat.  13But God made a promise to us. And we are waiting for what he promised—a new sky and a new earth. That will be the place where goodness lives.

14Dear friends, we are waiting for this to happen. So try as hard as you can to be without sin and without fault. Try to be at

"When a dog ... vomit" Quote from Prov. 26:11.

prophets People that spoke for God. Sometimes prophets told things that would happen in the future.
apostles The men Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

will be burned Many Greek copies say, “will be found.” One copy says, “will disappear.”
holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.
peace with God. 15 Remember that we are saved because our Lord is patient. Our dear brother Paul told you that same thing when he wrote to you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16 Paul writes like this about these things in all his letters. Sometimes there are things in Paul’s letters that are hard to understand. Some people explain those things falsely. Those people are ignorant and weak in faith. Those same people also falsely explain the other Scriptures.* But they are destroying themselves by doing that.

17 Dear friends, you already know about this. So be careful. Don’t let those evil people lead you away by the wrong things they do. Be careful so that you will not fall from your strong faith. 18 But grow in the grace (kindness) and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Glory be to him now and forever! Amen.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
1 John

1 We tell you now about something that has
existed (lived) since before the world began:

   This we heard,
we saw with our own eyes,
we watched,
we touched with our hands.

We write to you about the Word (Christ) that
gives life. 2That Life was shown to us. We saw it.
We can give proof about it. Now we tell
you about that Life. It is Life that continues
forever. This is the Life that was with God the
Father. God showed this Life to us. 3Now we
tell you the things that we have seen and
heard. Why? Because we want you to have
fellowship* together with us. The fellowship
we share together is with God the Father
and his Son Jesus Christ. 4We write these things to
you so that you can be full of joy with us.

God Forgives Our Sins

5We heard the true teaching from God. Now
we tell it to you: God is light* (goodness).
In God there is no darkness (sin). 6So if we say
that we have fellowship* with God, but we
continue living in darkness (sin), then we are
liars—we don’t follow the truth. 7God is in the
light (goodness). We should live in the light,
too. If we live in the light, then we share
fellowship with each other. And when we live
in the light, the blood (death) of Jesus cleanses
us from all sin. (Jesus is God’s Son.)

8If we say that we have no sin, we are
fooling ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9But if we confess (admit) our sins, then God
will forgive our sins. We can trust God to do
this. God does what is right. God will make us
clean from all the wrong things we have done.
10If we say that we have not sinned, then we
are saying that God is a liar—we don’t accept
God’s true teaching.

Jesus Is Our Helper

2 My dear children, I write this letter to you
so that you will not sin. But if any person
sins, we have Jesus Christ to help us. He is the
righteous (good) One. Jesus defends us before
God the Father. 2Jesus is the way our sins are
taken away. And Jesus is the way that all
people can have their sins taken away, too.

3If we obey what God has told us to do,
then we are sure that we truly know God. 4A
person says, “I know God!” But if that person
does not obey God’s commands, then that
person is a liar. The truth is not in him. 5But
when a person obeys God’s teaching, then
God’s love has truly arrived at its goal in that
person. This is how we know that we are
following God: 6If a person says that he lives
in God, then he must live like Jesus lived.

Jesus Told Us to Love Other People

7My dear friends, I am not writing a new
command to you. It is the same command you
have had since the beginning. This command
is the teaching you have already heard. 8But
also I write this command to you as a new
command. This command is true; you can see
its truth in Jesus and in yourselves. The
darkness (sin) is passing away and the true
light is already shining.

9A person says, “I am in the light.” But if
that person hates his brother or sister
Christ, then he is still in the darkness (sin).

10The person that loves his brothers and sisters lives in the light, and there is nothing in that person that will make him do wrong. 11But the person who hates his brother or sister is in darkness. He lives in darkness. That person does not know where he is going. Why? Because the darkness has made him blind.

12I write to you, dear children, because your sins are forgiven through Christ.

13I write to you, fathers, because you know the One who existed (lived) from the beginning. I write to you, young people, because you have defeated the Evil One (the devil).

14I write to you, children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know the One who existed (lived) from the beginning. I write to you, young people, because you are strong; the word of God lives in you, and you have defeated the Evil One.

15Don’t love this evil world or the things in it. If a person loves the world, the love of the Father (God) is not in that person. 16These are the evil things in the world:

Wanting things to please our sinful selves,
Wanting the sinful things we see,
Being too proud of the things we have.

But none of those things come from the Father (God). All of those things come from the world. 17The world is passing away. And all the things that people want in the world are passing away. But the person who does what God wants lives forever.

Don’t Follow the Enemies of Christ

18My dear children, the end is near! You have heard that the Enemy of Christ is coming. And now many enemies of Christ are already here. So we know that the end is near. 19Those enemies of Christ were in our group.

But they left us. They did not really belong with us. If they were really part of our group, then they would have stayed with us. But they left. This shows that none of them really belonged with us.

20You have the gift that the Holy One (God or Christ) gave you. So you all know the truth. 21Why do I write to you? Do I write because you don’t know the truth? No! I write this letter because you do know the truth. And you know that no lie comes from the truth.

22So who is the liar? It is the person that says Jesus is not the Christ. A person that says Jesus is not the Christ is the enemy of Christ. That person does not believe in the Father (God) or in his Son (Christ). 23If a person does not believe in the Son, then he does not have the Father. But the person who accepts the Son has the Father, too.

24Be sure that you continue to follow the teaching that you heard from the beginning. If you continue in that teaching, then you will stay in the Son (Christ) and in the Father (God). 25And this is what the Son promised to us—life forever.

26I am writing this letter about those people who are trying to lead you into the wrong way. 27Christ gave you a special gift. You still have this gift in you. So you don’t need any person to teach you. The gift he gave you teaches you about everything. This gift is true. It is not false. So continue to live in Christ, like his gift taught you.

28Yes, my dear children, live in him. If we do this, we can be without fear (have confidence) on the day when Christ comes back. We will not need to hide and be ashamed when he comes.

29You know that Christ is righteous (good). So you know that all people who do what is right (good) are God’s children.

We Are God’s Children

3The Father (God) has loved us so much! This shows how much he loved us: We are called children of God. And we really are God’s children. But the people in the world (people who don’t believe) don’t understand that

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**Christ** The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.
we are God’s children, because they have not known him (God). Dear friends, now we are children of God. We have not yet been shown what we will be in the future. But we know that when Christ comes again, we will be like him. We will see him like he really is. Christ is pure. And every person who has this hope in Christ keeps himself pure like Christ.

When a person sins, he breaks God’s law. Yes, sinning is the same as living against God’s law. You know that Christ came to take away people’s sins. There is no sin in Christ. So the person who lives in Christ does not continue to sin. If a person continues to sin, he has never really understood Christ and has never known Christ.

Dear children, don’t let any person lead you into the wrong way. Christ is righteous. To be good like Christ, a person must do what is right. The devil has been sinning since the beginning. The person who continues to sin belongs to the devil. The Son of God (Christ) came for this: to destroy the devil’s work.

When God makes a person his child, that person does not continue to sin. Why? Because the new life God gave that person stays in him. So that person is not able to continue sinning. Why? Because he has become a child of God. Also, we can know who the children of the devil are. The people who don’t do what is right are not children of God. And the person who does not love his brothers and sisters in Christ is not a child of God.

We Must Love One Another

This is the teaching you have heard from the beginning: We must love each other. Don’t be like Cain. Cain belonged to the Evil One (the devil). Cain killed his brother Abel. But why did Cain kill his brother? Because the things Cain did were evil, and the things his brother Abel did were good.

Brothers and sisters, don’t be surprised when the people of this world hate you. We know that we have left death (sin) and have come into life. We know this because we love our brothers and sisters in Christ. The person who does not love is still in death. Every person who hates his brother or sister is a murderer. And you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. This is how we know what real love is: Jesus gave his life for us. So we should give our lives for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Suppose a believer is rich enough to have all the things he needs. He sees his brother in Christ who is poor and does not have the things he needs. What if the believer who has things does not help the poor brother? Then the believer who has things he needs does not have God’s love in his heart. My children, our love should not be only words and talk. No! Our love must be true love. We should show our love by the things we do.

That is the way we know that we belong to the way of truth. And when our hearts make us feel guilty, we can still have peace before God. Why? Because God is greater than our heart (conscience). God knows everything.

My dear friends, if we don’t feel that we are doing wrong, then we can be without fear when we come to God. And God gives us the things we ask for. We receive these things because we obey God’s commands and we do the things that please God. This is what God commands: that we believe in his Son Jesus Christ and that we love each other. This is what he commanded. The person who obeys God’s commands lives in God. And God lives in that person. How do we know that God lives in us? We know because of the Spirit that God gave us.

John Warns Against False Teachers

My dear friends, many false prophets are in the world now. So don’t believe every spirit. But test the spirits to see if they are from

Every person ... murderer If a person hates his brother in Christ, then in his mind he has killed his brother. Jesus taught his followers about this sin. Read Mt. 5:21–26.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

false prophets People who say they speak for God but do not really speak God’s truth.
God. 2 This is how you can know God’s Spirit. One spirit says, “I believe that Jesus is the Christ who came to earth and became a man.” That Spirit is from God. 3 Another spirit refuses to say this about Jesus. That spirit is not from God. This is the spirit of the Enemy of Christ. You have heard that the Enemy of Christ is coming. And now the Enemy of Christ is already in the world.

4 My dear children, you belong to God. So you have defeated them (the false teachers). Why? Because the One (God) who is in you is greater than the one (the devil) who is in the people of the world. 5 And those people (the false teachers) belong to the world. So the things they say are from the world, too. And the world listens to what they say. 6 But we are from God. So the people who know God listen to us. But the people who are not from God don’t listen to us. That is how we know the Spirit* that is true and the spirit that is false.

Love Comes from God

7 Dear friends, we should love each other, because love comes from God. The person who loves has become God’s child. And so the person who loves knows God. 8 The person that does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love to us: God sent his only Son into the world to give us life through him. 10 True love is God’s love for us, not our love for God. God sent his Son to be the way that God takes away our sins.

11 That is how much God loved us, dear friends! So we also must love each other. 12 No person has ever seen God. But if we love each other, then God lives in us. If we love each other, then God’s love has reached its goal—it is made perfect in us.

13 We know that we live in God and God lives in us. We know this because God gave us his Spirit.* 14 We have seen that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. That is what we tell people now. 15 If a person says, “I believe that Jesus is the Son of God,” then God lives in that person. And that person lives in God. 16 And so we know the love that God has for us. And we trust that love.

God is love. The person who lives in love lives in God. And God lives in that person. 17 If God’s love is made perfect in us, then we can be without fear on the day when God judges us. We will be without fear, because in this world we are like him (Christ or God). 18 Where God’s love is, there is no fear. Why? Because God’s perfect love takes away fear. It is God’s punishment that makes a person fear. So God’s love is not made perfect in the person who has fear.

19 We love because God first loved us. 20 If a person says, “I love God,” but that person hates his brother or sister in Christ, then that person is a liar. That person can see his brother, but he hates him. So that person cannot love God, because he has never seen God! 21 And he (God) gave us this command: The person who loves God must also love his brothers and sisters in Christ.

God’s Children Win Against the World

5 The people who believe that Jesus is the Christ* are God’s children. The person who loves the Father (God) also loves the Father’s children. 2 How do we know that we love God’s children? We know because we love God and we obey his commands. 3 Loving God means obeying his commands. And God’s commands are not too hard for us. 4 Why? Because every person that is a child of God has the power to win against the world. 5 It is our faith that has won the victory against the world. So who is the person that wins against the world? Only the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

God Told Us About His Son

6 Jesus Christ is the One who came. Jesus came with water and with blood. Jesus did not come by water only. No, Jesus came by both water and blood. And the Spirit* tells us that this is true. The Spirit is the truth. 7 So

Spirit, Holy Spirit  Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

water This probably means the water of Jesus’ baptism.

blood This probably means the blood of Jesus’ death.
there are three witnesses that tell us about Jesus: 8the Spirit, the water, and the blood. These three witnesses agree. 9We believe people when they say something is true. But what God says is more important. And this is what God told us: He told us the truth about his own Son. 10The person who believes in the Son of God has the truth that God told us. The person who does not believe God makes God a liar. Why? Because that person does not believe what God told us about his Son. 11This is what God told us: God has given us eternal life. And this eternal life is in his Son (Jesus). 12The person who has the Son has true life. But the person who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

We Have Eternal Life Now

13I write this letter to you people who believe in the Son of God. I write so that you will know that you have eternal life now. 14We can come to God with no doubts. This means that when we ask God for things (and those things agree with what God wants for us), then God cares about what we say. 15God listens to us every time we ask him. So we know that he gives us the things that we ask from him.

16Suppose a person sees his brother or sister in Christ sinning (sin that does not lead to eternal death). That person should pray for his brother or sister who is sinning. Then God will give the brother or sister life. I am talking about people whose sin does not lead to eternal death. There is sin that leads to death. I don’t mean that a person should pray about that sin. 17Doing wrong is always sin. But there is sin that does not lead to eternal death.

18We know that any person who has been made God’s child does not continue to sin. The Son of God keeps God’s child safe. The Evil One (the devil) cannot hurt that person. 19We know that we belong to God. But the Evil One (the devil) controls the whole world. 20And we know that the Son of God has come. The Son of God has given us understanding. Now we can know God. God is the One who is true. And we live in that true God. We are in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and he is eternal life. 21So, dear children, keep yourselves away from false gods.
Greetings from the Elder.*

To the lady* chosen by God and to her children:

I love all of you in the truth.* Also, all those people who know the truth love you. 2 We love you because of the truth—the truth that lives in us. That truth will be with us forever.

3 Grace (kindness), mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from his Son, Jesus Christ. We receive these blessings through truth and love.

4 I was very happy to learn about some of your children. I am happy that they are following the way of truth, like the Father (God) commanded us. 5 And now, dear lady,* I tell you: We should all love each other. This is not a new command. It is the same command we had from the beginning. 6 And loving means living the way he commanded us to live. And God’s command is this: that you live a life of love. You heard this command from the beginning.

7 Many false teachers are in the world now. These false teachers refuse to confess (say) that Jesus Christ came to earth and became a man. A person who refuses to confess this fact is a false teacher and an enemy of Christ. 8 Be careful! Don’t lose the reward that you have worked for. Be careful, so that you will receive all of your reward.

9 A person must continue to follow only the teaching about Christ. If a person changes that teaching, then that person does not have God. But if a person continues following the teaching of Christ, then that person has both the Father (God) and the Son (Christ). 10 If a person comes to you, but does not bring this teaching, then don’t accept him into your house. Don’t welcome him. 11 If you accept him, then you are helping him with his evil work.

12 I have much to say to you. But I don’t want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come visit you. Then we can be together and talk. That will make us very happy. 13 The children of your sister* who was chosen by God send you their love.
Greetings from the Elder.*

To my dear friend Gaius that I love in the truth*:  

2My dear friend, I know that your soul is doing fine. So I pray that you are doing fine in every way. And I pray that you are feeling well. 3Some brothers in Christ came and told me about the truth* in your life. They told me that you continue to follow the way of truth. This made me very happy. 4It always gives me the greatest joy when I hear that my children are following the way of truth.  

5My dear friend, it is good that you continue to help the brothers in Christ. You are helping brothers that you don’t even know! 6These brothers told the church (group of believers) about the love you have. Please help them to continue their trip. Help them in a way that will please God. 7These brothers went on their trip to serve Christ. They did not accept any help from people who are not believers. 8So we should help these brothers. When we help them, we share with their work for the truth.*  

9I wrote a letter to the church. But Diotrephes will not listen to what we say. He always wants to be their leader. 10When I come, I will talk about what Diotrephes is doing. He lies and says evil things about us. But that is not all he does! He refuses to help those brothers who are working to serve Christ. Diotrephes also stops those people who want to help the brothers. He makes those people leave the church (group of believers). 11My dear friend, don’t follow what is bad; follow what is good. The person who does what is good is from God. But the person who does evil has never known God. 12All the people say good things about Demetrius. And the truth* agrees with what they say. Also, we say good about him. And you know that what we say is true. 13I have many things I want to tell you. But I don’t want to use pen and ink. 14I hope to visit you soon. Then we can be together and talk. 15Peace to you. The friends (believers) here with me send their love. Please give our love to each one of the friends there.

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*Elder* This is probably John the apostle. “Elder” means an older man. It can also mean a special leader in the church (like in Titus 1:5).

*truth* The truth or “Good News” about Jesus Christ that joins all believers together.
Greetings from Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.

To all those people who have been called by God. God the Father loves you, and you have been kept safe in Jesus Christ.

All mercy, peace, and love be yours.

God Will Punish People Who Do Wrong

Dear friends, I wanted very much to write to you about the salvation we all share together. But I felt the need to write to you about something else: I want to encourage you to fight hard for the faith that God gave his holy people. God gave this faith once, and it is good for all time. Some people have secretly entered your group. These people have already been judged guilty for the things they are doing. Long ago [the prophets] wrote about these people. These people are against God. They have used the grace of our God in the wrong way—to do sinful things. These people refuse to accept Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord.

I want to help you remember some things that you already know: Remember that the Lord saved his people by bringing them out of the land of Egypt. But later the Lord destroyed all those people who did not believe. And remember the angels who had power but did not keep it. They left their own home. So the Lord has kept these angels in darkness. They are bound with everlasting chains. He has kept them to be judged on the great day. Also, remember the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah* and the other towns around them. They are the same as those angels. Those towns were full of sexual sin and wrong doing. They suffer the punishment of eternal fire. Their punishment is an example for us to see.

It is the same way with these people who have entered your group. They are guided by dreams. They make themselves dirty with sin. They reject God’s authority and say bad things against the glorious angels. Not even the archangel Michael did this. Michael argued with the devil about who would have the body of Moses. But Michael did not dare to condemn the devil with criticizing words. But Michael said, “The Lord punish you.” But these people criticize things they don’t understand. They do understand some things. But they understand these things not by thinking, but by feeling, the way dumb animals understand things. And these are the things that destroy them. It will be bad for them. These people have followed the way that Cain went. To make money, they have given themselves to following the wrong way that Balaam went. These people have fought against God like Korah did. And like Korah, they will be destroyed.

These people are like dirty spots in the special meals you share together. They eat with you and have no fear. They take care of only themselves. They are clouds without rain. The wind blows them around. They are trees that have no fruit when it is time and are

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**Holy people** Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

**Prophets** People that spoke for God. Sometimes prophets told things that would happen in the future.

**God Will Punish People Who Do Wrong**

* denotes a reference or note in the text.

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**Sodom and Gomorrah** Cities God destroyed to punish the evil people that lived there.

**The glorious angels** Literally, “the glories” or “the glorious ones.”

**Archangel** The leader among God’s angels or messengers.

**Cain** The son of Adam and Eve who killed his brother Abel. Read Gen. 4:1–16.
pulled out of the ground. So they are dead two times. 13They are like wild waves in the sea. The waves make foam. These people do shameful things like the waves make foam. These people are like stars that wander in the sky. 14A place in the blackest darkness has been kept for those people forever.

15Enoch, the seventh descendant* from Adam, said this about these people: “Look, the Lord is coming with thousands and thousands of his holy angels. 15The Lord will judge every person. The Lord is coming to judge all people and to punish all people who are against God. He will punish these people for all the evil things they have done against God. And God will punish these sinners who are against God. He will punish them for all the bad things they have said against God.”

16These people always complain and find wrong in other people. They always do the evil things they want to do. They boast about themselves. The only reason they say good things about other people is to get what they want.

A Warning and Things to Do

17Dear friends, remember what the apostles* of our Lord Jesus Christ said before. 18The apostles said to you, “In the last times there will be people who laugh about God.” These people do only the things they want to do—things that are against God. 19These are the people who divide you. These people do only what their sinful selves want. They don’t have the Spirit.*

20But, dear friends, use your most holy faith to build yourselves up strong. Pray with the Holy Spirit.* 21Keep yourselves in God’s love. Wait for the Lord Jesus Christ with his mercy to give you life forever.

22Help the people that have doubts. 23You need to save some people. You will be pulling them out of the fire. But be careful when you want to help other people that are sinners. Hate even their clothes that are dirty from sin.

Praise God

24He (God) is strong and can help you not to fall. He can bring you before his glory without any wrong in you and give you great joy. 25He is the only God. He is the One who saves us. To him be glory, greatness, power, and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord for all time past, now, and forever. Amen.
Revelation

John Tells About This Book

1 This is the revelation* of Jesus Christ. God gave Jesus these things to show his servants what must happen soon. Christ sent his angel to show these things to his servant John. 2 John has told everything that he saw. It is the truth that Jesus Christ told him; it is the message from God. 3 The person that reads the words of this message from God is blessed (happy). And the people who hear this message and do the things that are written in it are blessed. There is not much time left.

John Writes Jesus’ Messages to the Churches

4 From John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia*:

Grace (kindness) and peace to you from the One (God) who is, who always was, and who is coming; and from the seven spirits before his throne; and from Jesus Christ. Jesus is the faithful witness. He was first among those to be raised from death. Jesus is the ruler of the kings of the earth.

Jesus is the One who loves us. And Jesus is the One who made us free from our sins with his blood (death). Jesus made us to be a kingdom. He made us to be priests who serve God his Father. To Jesus be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.*

7 Look, Jesus is coming with the clouds! Every person will see him, even the people who pierced* him. All people of the earth will cry loudly because of him. Yes, this will happen! Amen.*

8 The Lord God says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega.* I am the One who is, who always was, and who is coming. I am the All-Powerful.”

9 I am John, and I am your brother in Christ. We are together in Jesus, and we share these things: suffering, the kingdom, and patient endurance. I was on the island of Patmos* because I was faithful to God’s message* and to the truth of Jesus. 10 On the Lord’s day the Spirit* took control of me. I heard a loud voice behind me. It sounded like a trumpet. 11 The voice said, “Write in a book all these things you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.”

12 I turned to see who was talking to me. When I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands. 13 I saw someone among the lampstands who was “like a Son of Man.” He was dressed in a long robe. He had a golden sash (belt) tied around his chest. 14 His head and hair were white like wool—wool that is white as snow. His eyes were like flames of fire. 15 His feet were like brass that glows hot in a furnace. His

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revelation An opening, uncovering, or making known of truth that has been hidden.
Asia The western part of modern Turkey.
Amen To say “Amen” means to agree strongly.

voice was like the noise of flooding water. 16He held seven stars in his right hand. A sharp two-edged sword came out of his mouth. He looked like the sun shining at its brightest time.

17When I saw him, I fell down at his feet like a dead man. He put his right hand on me and said, “Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last. 18I am the One who lives. I was dead, but look: I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.” 19So write the things you see. Write the things that happen now and the things that will happen later.

20Here is the hidden meaning of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and the seven golden lampstands that you saw: The seven lampstands are the seven churches. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.

Jesus’ Letter to the Church in Ephesus

2 “Write this to the angel of the church in Ephesus:

“The One who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands is saying these things to you. 2I know what you do. You work hard, and you never quit. I know that you don’t accept evil people. You have tested those people who say that they are apostles but are really not. You found that they are liars. 3You continue to try without quitting. You endured troubles for my name. And you have not become tired of doing this.

4“But I have this against you: You have left the love you had in the beginning. 5So remember where you were before you fell. Change your hearts and do the things you did at first. If you don’t change, I will come to you. I will take away your lampstand from its place. 6But there is something you do that is right: You hate the things that the Nicolaitans do. I also hate what they do.

7“Every person that hears these things should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. To the person that wins the victory I will give the right to eat the fruit from the tree of life. This tree is in the garden of God.

Jesus’ Letter to the Church in Smyrna

8“Write this to the angel of the church in Smyrna:

“The One who is the First and the Last is saying these things to you. He is the One who died and came to life again. 9I know your troubles, and I know that you are poor. But really you are rich! I know the bad things that some people say about you. Those people say they are Jews. But they are not true Jews. They are a synagogue (group) that belongs to Satan (the devil). 10Don’t be afraid of the things that will happen to you. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison. He will do this to test you. You will suffer for ten days. But be faithful, even if you have to die. If you continue faithful, then I will give you the crown of life.

11“Every person that hears these things should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. The person that wins the victory will not be hurt by the second death.

Jesus’ Letter to the Church in Pergamum

12 “Write this to the angel of the church in Pergamum:

“The One who has the sharp two-edged sword is saying these things to you. 13I know where you live. You live where Satan (the devil) has his throne. But you are true to me. You did not refuse to tell about your faith in me even during the time of Antipas. Antipas was my faithful witness who was killed in your city. Your city is where Satan lives.

14“But I have a few things against you: You have people there in your group who follow the teaching of Balaam. Balaam taught Balak how to make the people of Israel sin. Those people sinned by eating food offered to idols and by doing sexual sins. 15It is the same in your group. You have people who follow the
teaching of the Nicolaitans.* 16 So change your hearts! If you don’t change, I will come to you quickly and fight against those people with the sword that comes out of my mouth.

17 “Every person that hears these things should listen to what the Spirit* says to the churches!

“I will give the hidden manna* to every person that wins the victory. I will also give that person a white rock. On this rock a new name is written. No person knows this new name. Only the person that gets the rock will know the new name.

Jesus’ Letter to the Church in Thyatira

18 Write this to the angel of the church in Thyatira:

“The Son of God is saying these things. He is the One who has eyes that blaze like fire and feet like shining brass. This is what he says to you:* 19 I know the things you do. I know about your love, your faith, your service, and your patience. I know that you are doing more now than you did at first. 20 But I have this against you: You let that woman named Jezebel do what she wants. She says that she is a prophet.* But she is leading my people away with her teaching. Jezebel leads my people to do sexual sins and to eat food that is offered to idols.* 21 I have given her time to change her heart and turn away from her sin. But she does not want to change. 22 And so I will throw her on a bed of suffering. And all the people who do the sin of adultery* with her will suffer greatly. I will do this now if they don’t turn away from the things she does. 23 I will also kill her followers. Then all the churches will know that I am the One who knows what people feel and think. And I will repay each of you for the things you have done.

Jesus’ Letter to the Church in Sardis

3 Write this to the angel of the church in Sardis:

“The One who has the seven spirits and the seven stars is saying these things to you:* I know the things you do. People say that you are alive. But really you are dead. 2 Wake up! Make yourselves stronger while you still have something left. Make yourselves stronger before it dies completely. I find that the things you do are not good enough for my God. 3 So don’t forget what you have received and heard. Obey it. Change your hearts and lives! You must wake up, or I will come to you and surprise you like a thief. You will not know when I will come. 4 But you have a few people in your group there in Sardis who have kept themselves clean. Those people will walk with me. They will wear white clothes, because they are worthy. 5 Every person that wins the victory will be dressed in white clothes like these people. I will not take away that person’s name from the book of life. I will say that he belongs to me. I will say this before my Father and before his angels. 6 Every person that hears these things should listen to what the Spirit* says to the churches.

Jesus’ Letter to the Church in Philadelphia

7 Write this to the angel of the church in Philadelphia:

24 “But you other people in Thyatira have not followed her teaching. You have not learned the things that they call Satan’s (the devil’s) deep secrets. This is what I say to you: I will not put any other burden on you. 25 Only continue the way you are until I come.

26 “I will give power to every person that wins the victory and continues until the end to do the things I want. I will give that person power over the nations:

27 ‘He will rule them with an iron rod.
He will break them to pieces like clay pots.’
Psalm 2:9

28 This is the same power I received from my Father. I will also give that person the morning star.

3 Every person that hears these things should listen to what the Spirit* says to the churches.
“The One who is holy and true is saying these words to you. He holds the key of David.” When he opens something, it cannot be closed. And when he closes something, it cannot be opened. 8 I know the things you do. I have put an open door before you. No person can close it. I know that you are weak. But you have followed my teaching. You were not afraid to speak my name. 9 Listen! There is a synagogue (group) that belongs to Satan (the devil). Those people say they are Jews, but they are liars. Those people are not true Jews. I will make those people come before you and bow at your feet. They will know that you are the people I have loved. 10 You followed my command to endure patiently. So I will keep you from the time of trouble that will come to the whole world. This trouble will test the people who live on the earth. 11 “I am coming soon. Continue the way you are now. Then no person will take away your crown (reward). 12 The person that wins the victory will be a pillar in the temple of my God. I will do that for the person that wins the victory. That person will never again have to leave God’s temple. And I will write the name of my God on that person. And I will write the name of the city of my God on that person. That city is the new Jerusalem.* That city is coming down out of heaven from my God. I will also write my new name on that person. 13 Every person that hears these things should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

Jesus’ Letter to the Church in Laodicea

14 “Write this to the angel of the church in Laodicea: “The Amen" is the One saying these things to you. He is the faithful and true witness. He is the ruler of all that God has made. This is what he says: 15 I know what you do. You are not hot or cold. I wish that you were hot or cold! 16 But you are only warm—not hot, not cold. So I am ready to spit you out of my mouth. 17 You say you are rich. You think you have become wealthy and don’t need a thing. But you don’t know that you are really terrible, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. 18 I advise you to buy gold from me—gold made pure in fire. Then you can be truly rich. I tell you this: Buy clothes that are white. Then you can cover your shameful nakedness. I also tell you to buy medicine to put on your eyes. Then you can truly see. 19 “I correct and punish those people that I love. So start trying hard! Change your hearts and lives! 20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If a person hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person. And that person will eat with me. 21 “I will let every person that wins the victory sit with me on my throne. It was the same with me. I won the victory and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 Every person that hears these things should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.”

John Sees Heaven

4 Then I looked, and there before me was an open door in heaven. And I heard the same voice that spoke to me before. It was the voice that sounded like a trumpet. The voice said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after this.” 2 Then the Spirit took control of me. There before me was a throne in heaven. Someone was sitting on the throne. 3 The One who sat on the throne looked like precious stones, like jasper and carnelian. All around the throne were seven lamps burning. These lamps are the seven

David  King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.
pillar  One of the tall, carved stones used to hold up the roof of a building.
temple  God’s house—the place where God’s people worship and serve him.
Jerusalem  The spiritual city God built for his people.
Spirit  The Holy Spirit. He brings God’s message (truth) to God’s people.
Amen  Used here as a name for Jesus, it means to agree strongly that something is true.
elder(s)  Elder means “older.” These are probably great leaders of God’s people. They may be the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups plus Jesus’ twelve apostles.
Spirits of God. Also before the throne there was something that looked like a sea of glass. It was clear like crystal.

In front of the throne and on each side of it there were four living things. These living things had eyes all over them, in front and in back. The first living thing was like a lion. The second was like a cow. The third had a face like a man. The fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of these four living things had six wings. These living things were covered all over with eyes, inside and out. Day and night these four living things never stop saying:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God All-Powerful. He was, and is, and is coming.”

These living things give glory and honor and thanks to the One who sits on the throne. He is the One who lives forever and ever. And every time the living things do this, the 24 elders bow down before the One who sits on the throne. The elders worship him who lives forever and ever. The elders put their crowns down before the throne and say:

“Our Lord and God! You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power. You made all things. Everything existed and was made because you wanted it.”

Who Can Open the Scroll?

Then I saw a scroll in the right hand of the One who sits on the throne. The scroll had writing on both sides. The scroll was kept closed with seven seals. And I saw a powerful angel. The angel called in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” But there was no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth who could open the scroll or look inside it. I cried and cried because there was no one who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. But one of the elders said to me, “Don’t cry! The Lion from Judah’s family group has won the victory. He is David’s descendant. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

Then I saw a Lamb standing in the center of the throne with the four living things around it. The elders were also around the Lamb. The Lamb looked like it had been killed. It had seven horns and seven eyes. These are the seven spirits of God that were sent into all the world. The Lamb came and took the scroll from the right hand of the One sitting on the throne. After the Lamb took the scroll, the four living things and the 24 elders bowed down before the Lamb. Each one of them had a harp. Also they were holding golden bowls full of incense. These bowls of incense are the prayers of God’s holy people.

And they all sang a new song to the Lamb:

“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were killed; and with your blood (death) you bought people for God from every tribe, language, race of people, and nation.

You made these people to be a kingdom, and you made these people to be priests for our God. And they will rule on the earth.”

Then I looked, and I heard the voices of many angels. The angels were around the throne, the four living things, and the elders. There were thousands and thousands of angels—there were 10,000 times 10,000. The angels said with a loud voice:

“All power, wealth, wisdom and strength belong to the Lamb (Jesus) that was killed. He is worthy to receive honor, glory, and praise!”

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.

descendant(s) The people born in a person’s family after that person dies.

harp A musical instrument with strings.

incense Special dried tree sap used for a sacrifice. It was burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke.

holy people Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.
Then I heard every living thing that is in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea. I heard every thing in all these places. I heard them all saying:

“All praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever to the One that sits on the throne and to the Lamb!”

The four living things said, “Amen!” And the elders bowed down and worshiped.

The Lamb Opens the Scroll

Then I watched while the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. I heard one of the four living things speak with a voice like thunder. It said, “Come!” I looked and there before me was a white horse. The rider on the horse held a bow. The rider was given a crown. And he rode out, defeating the enemy. He rode out to win the victory.

The Lamb opened the second seal. Then I heard the second living thing say, “Come!” Then another horse came out. This was a red horse. The rider on the horse was given power to take away peace from the earth. He was given power to make people kill each other. This rider was given a big sword.

The Lamb opened the third seal. Then I heard the third living thing say, “Come!” I looked, and there before me was a black horse. The rider on the horse held a pair of scales in his hand. Then I heard something that sounded like a voice. The voice came from where the four living things were. The voice said, “A quart of wheat for a day’s pay. And three quarts of barley for a day’s pay. And don’t hurt the oil and wine!”

The Lamb opened the fourth seal. Then I heard the voice of the fourth living thing say, “Come!” I looked, and there before me was a pale-colored horse. The rider on the horse was death. Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth. They were given power to kill people by using the sword, by starving, by disease, and with the wild animals of the earth.

The Lamb opened the fifth seal. Then I saw some souls under the altar. They were the souls of those people who had been killed because they were faithful to God’s message and to the truth they had received. These souls shouted in a loud voice, “Holy and true Lord, how long until you judge the people of the earth and punish them for killing us?” Then each one of those souls was given a white robe. They were told to wait a short time longer. There were still some of their brothers in the service of Christ who must be killed like they were. Those souls were told to wait until all of this killing was finished.

Then I watched while the Lamb opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun became dark like black cloth made from hair. The full moon became red like blood. The stars in the sky fell to the earth like a fig tree drops its figs when the wind blows. The sky was divided. It was rolled up like a scroll. And every mountain and island was moved from its place.

Then all the people hid in caves and behind the rocks on the mountains. There were the kings of the world, the rulers, the army commanders, the rich people and the powerful people. Every person, slave and free, hid himself. The people said to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us. Hide us from the face of the One who sits on the throne. Hide us from the anger of the Lamb! The great day for their anger has come. No person can stand against it.”

The 144,000 People of Israel

After this happened I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth. The angels were holding the four winds of the earth. They were stopping the wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. Then I saw another angel coming from the east. This angel had the seal of the living God. The angel called out with a loud voice to the four angels.

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Amen To say “Amen” means to agree strongly.
elders Elder means “older.” These are probably great leaders of God’s people. They may be the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups plus Jesus’ twelve apostles.
Hades Place where people go after they die.
altar Place where sacrifices or gifts are offered to God.
message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
scroll A long roll of paper or leather used for writing on.
These were the four angels that God had given
the power to hurt the earth and the sea. The
angel said to the four angels, *“Don’t hurt the
land or the sea or the trees before we put the
sign on the people who serve our God. We must
put the sign on their foreheads.”* 4Then I heard
how many people were marked with the sign.
There were 144,000. They were from every
family group of the people of Israel.*

5 From Judah’s family group 12,000
   from Reuben’s family group 12,000
   from Gad’s family group 12,000
6 from Asher’s family group 12,000
   from Naphtali’s family group 12,000
   from Manasseh’s family group 12,000
7 from Simeon’s family group 12,000
   from Levi’s family group 12,000
   from Issachar’s family group 12,000
8 from Zebulun’s family group 12,000
   from Joseph’s family group 12,000
   from Benjamin’s family group 12,000

The Great Crowd

9Then I looked, and there were many, many
people. There were so many people that a
person could not count them all. They were
from every nation, tribe, race of people, and
language of the earth. These people were
standing before the throne and before the Lamb
(Jesus). They all wore white robes and had
palm branches in their hands. 10They shouted
with a loud voice, “Victory belongs to our
God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”
11The elders* and the four living things were
there. All the angels were standing around
them and the throne. The angels bowed down
on their faces before the throne and worshiped
God. 12They said, “Amen!* Praise, glory,
wisdom, thanks, honor, power, and strength
belong to our God forever and ever. Amen!*”
13Then one of the elders* asked me, “Who
are these people in white robes? Where did
they come from?”
14I answered, “You know who they are, sir.”

And the elder* said, “These are the people
who have come out of the great suffering.
They have washed their robes* with the blood
of the Lamb. Now they are clean and white.
15So now these people are before the throne of
God. They worship God day and night in his
temple.* And the One (God) who sits on the
throne will protect them. 16They will never be
hungry again. They will never be thirsty again.
The sun will not hurt them. No heat will burn
them. 17The Lamb at the center of the throne
will be their shepherd. He will lead them to
springs of water that give life. And God will
wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

The Seventh Seal

8The Lamb opened the seventh seal. Then
there was silence in heaven for about half
an hour. 2And I saw the seven angels who stand
before God. They were given seven trumpets.
3Another angel came and stood at the altar.*
This angel had a golden holder for incense.*
The angel was given much incense to offer with
the prayers of all God’s holy people. The angel
put this offering on the golden altar before the
throne. 4The smoke from the incense went up
from the angel’s hand to God. The smoke went
up with the prayers of God’s people. 5Then the
angel filled the incense holder with fire from the
altar. The angel threw the incense holder on the
earth. Then there were flashes of lightning,
thunder and other noises, and an earthquake.

The Seven Angels Blow Their Trumpets

6Then the seven angels with the seven
trumpets prepared to blow their trumpets.
7The first angel blew his trumpet. Then
hail and fire mixed with blood was poured
down on the earth. And one third of the earth
and all the green grass and one third of the
trees were burned up.
8The second angel blew his trumpet. Then something that looked like a big mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea. And one third of the sea became blood. And one third of the living things in the sea died, and one third of the ships were destroyed.

10The third angel blew his trumpet. Then a large star, burning like a torch, fell from the sky. The star fell on one third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 11The name of the star is Wormwood.* And one third of all the water became bitter. Many people died from drinking the water that was bitter.

12The fourth angel blew his trumpet. Then one third of the sun and one third of the moon and one third of the stars were struck. So one third of them became dark. A third of the day and night was without light.

13While I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying high in the air. The eagle said with a loud voice, “Trouble! Trouble! Trouble for the people that live on the earth! The trouble will begin after the sounds of the trumpets that the other three angels will blow.”

9The fifth angel blew his trumpet. Then I saw a star fall from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the deep hole that leads down to the bottomless pit. 2Then the star opened the hole leading to the bottomless pit. Smoke came up from the hole like smoke from a big furnace. The sun and sky became dark because of the smoke from the hole. 3Then locusts* came down to the earth out of the smoke. They were given the power to sting like scorpions.* 4The locusts were told not to hurt the grass on the earth or any plant or tree. They could hurt only the people who did not have the sign of God on their foreheads. 5These locusts were given the power to give pain to the people for five months. But the locusts were not given the power to kill the people. And the pain that the people felt was like the pain that a scorpion gives when it stings a person. 6During those days people will look for a way to die, but they will not find it. They will want to die, but death will hide from them.

7The locusts* looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore things that looked like crowns of gold. Their faces looked like human faces. 8Their hair was like women’s hair. Their teeth were like lions’ teeth. 9Their chests looked like iron breastplates. The sound their wings made was like the noise of many horses and chariots hurrying into battle. 10The locusts had tails with stingers like scorpions.* The power they had to give people pain for five months was in their tails. 11The locusts had a ruler. The ruler was the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in the Hebrew language is Abaddon.* In the Greek language his name is Apollyon (Destroyer).

12The first great trouble is past. There are still two other great troubles that will come.

13The sixth angel blew his trumpet. Then I heard a voice coming from the four horns on the golden altar* that is before God. 14The voice said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Free the four angels who are tied at the great river Euphrates.” 15These four angels had been kept ready for this hour and day and month and year. The angels were freed to kill one third of all the people on the earth. 16I heard how many troops on horses were in [their] army. There were 200,000,000.

17In my vision* I saw the horses and the riders on the horses. They looked like this: They had breastplates that were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow like sulfur. The heads of the horses looked like heads of lions. The horses had fire, smoke, and sulfur coming out of their mouths.

18One third of all the people on earth were killed by these three bad things coming out of the horses’ mouths: the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur. 19The horses’ power was in their mouths and also in their tails. Their tails were like snakes that have heads to bite and hurt people.

20The other people on the earth were not killed by these bad things. But these people still did not change their hearts and lives and

Wormwood Name of a very bitter plant, used here to give the idea of bitter sorrow.
locusts Insects like grasshoppers. Sometimes many locusts came and ate all the plants. See Ex. 10.
scorpions Insects that sting with a strong poison.

Abaddon In the Old Testament this was a name for the place of death. See Job 26:6 and Ps. 88:11.
altar Place where sacrifices or gifts are offered to God.
vision(s) Visions are something like dreams that God used to speak to people.
turn away from the things they had made with their own hands. They did not stop worshiping demons* and idols* made of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood—things that cannot see or hear or walk. 21These people did not change their hearts and lives and turn away from killing other people. They did not turn away from their evil magic, their sexual sins, and their stealing.

**The Angel and the Little Scroll**

10Then I saw another powerful angel coming down from heaven. The angel was dressed in a cloud. He had a rainbow around his head. The angel’s face was like the sun, and his legs were like poles of fire. 2The angel was holding a small scroll.* The scroll was open in his hand. The angel put his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land. 3The angel shouted loudly like the roaring of a lion. After the angel shouted, the voices of seven thunders spoke. 4The seven thunders spoke, and I started to write. But then I heard a voice from heaven. The voice said, “Don’t write what the seven thunders said. Keep those things secret.”

5Then the angel I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. 6The angel made a promise by {the power of} the One who lives forever and ever. He (God) is the One who made the skies and all that is in them. He made the earth and all that is in it, and he made the sea and all that is in it. The angel said, “There will be no more waiting! 7In the days when the seventh angel is ready to blow his trumpet, God’s secret plan will be finished. This plan is the Good News* God told to his servants, the prophets.*”

8Then I heard the same voice from heaven again. The voice said to me, “Go and take the open scroll* that is in the angel’s hand. This is the angel that is standing on the sea and on the land.”

9So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll.* The angel said to me, “Take the scroll and eat it. It will be sour in your stomach. But in your mouth it will be sweet like honey.” 10So I took the little scroll from the angel’s hand. I ate the scroll. In my mouth it tasted sweet like honey. But after I ate it, it was sour in my stomach. 11Then I was told, “You must prophesy* again about many races of people, many nations, languages, and rulers.”

**The Two Witnesses**

11Then I was given a measuring rod as long as a walking stick. I was told, “Go and measure the temple* of God and the altar,* and count the people worshiping there. 2But don’t measure the yard outside the temple. Leave that alone. That has been given to the people who are not Jews. Those people will walk on the holy city for 42 months. 3And I will give power to my two witnesses. And they will prophesy* for 1,260 days. They will be dressed in sackcloth.*” 4These two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. 5If a person tries to hurt the witnesses, fire comes from the mouths of the witnesses and kills their enemy. Any person that tries to hurt them will die like this. 6These witnesses have the power to stop the sky from raining during the time they are prophesying. These witnesses have power to make the water become blood. They have power to send every kind of trouble to the earth. They can do this as many times as they want.

7When the two witnesses have finished telling their message, the animal will fight against them. This is the animal that comes up from the bottomless pit. The animal will defeat them and kill them. 8The bodies of the two witnesses will lie in the street of the great city.

demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
idol(s) Idols are statues or other objects that people worshiped as gods.
scroll A long roll of paper or leather used for writing on.
Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
prophets People that spoke for God.
prophesy To speak or teach things from God.
temple God’s house—the place where God’s people worship and serve him. Here, John sees it pictured as the special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
altar Place where sacrifices or gifts are offered to God.
sackcloth A rough cloth made from animal hair. People sometimes wore it to show sadness.
This city is named Sodom and Egypt. These names for the city have a special meaning. This is the city where the Lord was killed. 9 People from every race of people, tribe, language, and nation will look at the bodies of the two witnesses for three and a half days. The people will refuse to bury them. 10 People who live on the earth will be happy because these two are dead. They will have parties and send each other gifts. They will do these things because these two prophets (witnesses) brought much suffering to the people who live on the earth.

11 But after three and a half days God let life enter the two prophets again. They stood on their feet. All the people who saw them were filled with fear. 12 Then the two prophets heard a loud voice from heaven say, “Come up here!” And the two prophets went up into heaven in a cloud. Their enemies watched them go.

13 At that same time there was a great earthquake. One tenth of the city was destroyed. And 7,000 people were killed in the earthquake. The people that did not die were very afraid. They gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second great trouble is finished. The third great trouble is coming soon.

The Seventh Trumpet

15 The seventh angel blew his trumpet. Then there were loud voices in heaven. The voices said:

“We give thanks to you, Lord God All-Powerful.
You are the One who is and who always was.
We thank you because you have used your great power and have begun to rule!

18 The people of the world were angry; but now is the time for your anger. Now is the time for the dead people to be judged.
It is time to reward your servants, the prophets,* and to reward your holy people,* the people, great and small, who respect you.
It is time to destroy those people who destroy the earth!”

19 Then God’s temple* in heaven was opened. The Holy Box of the Agreement* that God gave to his people could be seen in his temple. Then there were flashes of lightning, noises, thunder, an earthquake, and a great hailstorm.

The Woman and the Giant Snake

And then a great wonder appeared in heaven: There was a woman who was clothed with the sun. The moon was under her feet. She had a crown of twelve stars on her head. 2 The woman was pregnant. She cried out with pain because she was about to give birth. 3 Then another wonder appeared in heaven: There was a giant red snake there. The giant snake had seven heads with a crown on each head. The snake also had ten horns. 4 The snake’s tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and threw them down to the earth. The giant snake stood in front of the woman who was...
The archangel—leader of God’s angels. See Jude 9.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen of God.
If any person kills with a sword, then that person will be killed with a sword.

This means that God’s holy people* must have patience and faith.

11Then I saw another animal coming up out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he talked like a giant snake. 12This animal stands before the first animal and uses the same power that the first animal has. He uses this power to make all the people living on the earth worship the first animal. The first animal was the one that had the death wound that was healed. 13This second animal does great miracles. He even makes fire come down from heaven to earth while people are watching. 14This second animal fools the people that live on the earth. He fools them by using the miracles that he has been given the power to do. He does these miracles to serve the first animal. The second animal ordered people to make an idol* to honor the first animal. This was the animal that was wounded by the sword but did not die. 15The second animal was given power to give life to the idol of the first animal. Then the idol could speak and order all the people who did not worship it to be killed. 16The second animal also forced all people, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to have a mark on their right hand or on their forehead. 17No person could buy or sell without this mark. This mark is the name of the animal or the number of his name. 18A person that has understanding can find the meaning of the animal’s number. This requires wisdom. This number is the number of a man. It is 666.

God’s People Sing a New Song

14Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb. He was standing on Mount Zion.* There were 144,000 people with him. They all had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. 2And I heard a sound from heaven like the noise of flooding water and like the sound of loud thunder. The sound I heard was like people playing their harps.* 3The people sang a new song before the throne and before the four living things and the elders.* The only people that could learn the new song were the 144,000 who had been redeemed (saved) from the earth. No one else could learn the song. 4These 144,000 people are the ones who did not do wrong things with women. They kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb every place he goes. These 144,000 were redeemed (saved) from among the people of the earth. They are the first people to be offered to God and the Lamb. 5These people were not guilty of telling lies. They are without fault.

The Three Angels

6Then I saw another angel flying high in the air. The angel had the eternal Good News* to announce to the people that live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and race of people. 7The angel said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him praise. The time has come for God to judge all people. Worship God. He made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water.” 8Then the second angel followed the first angel and said, “She is destroyed! The great city of Babylon is destroyed! She made all the nations drink the wine of her adultery* and of God’s anger.” 9A third angel followed the first two angels. This third angel said in a loud voice: “It will be bad for the person that worships the animal and the animal’s idol* and gets the animal’s mark on his forehead or on his hand. 10That person will drink the wine of God’s anger. This wine is prepared with all its strength in the cup of God’s anger. That person will be

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**Words and Phrases:**
- **holy people**: Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.
- **miracles**: False miracles—powerful acts done by the power of the devil.
- **idol(s)**: Idols are statues or other objects that people worshiped as gods.
- **Mount Zion**: Another name for Jerusalem, here meaning the spiritual city where God’s people live with him.
- **harps**: Musical instruments with strings.
- **elder(s)**: Elder means “older.” These are probably great leaders of God’s people. They may be the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups plus Jesus’ twelve apostles.
- **Good News**: The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.
- **adultery**: Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.
tortured  with burning sulfur before the holy angels and the Lamb. And the smoke from their burning pain will rise forever and ever. There will be no rest, day or night, for those people who worship the animal and his idol or who get the mark of his name.” This means that God’s holy people must be patient. They must obey God’s commands and keep their faith in Jesus.

Then I heard a voice from heaven. The voice said, “Write this: From now on, the dead people who were in the Lord when they died are blessed.” The Spirit says, “Yes, that is true. Those people will rest from their hard work. The things they have done will stay with them.”

The Earth Is Harvested

I looked and there before me was a white cloud. Sitting on the white cloud was One that looked like a Son of Man. He had a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Then another angel came out of the temple. This angel called to the One who was sitting on the cloud, “Take your sickle and gather from the earth. The time to harvest has come. The fruit of the earth is ripe.” So the One that was sitting on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth. And the earth was harvested.

Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven. This angel also had a sharp sickle. And then another angel came from the altar. This angel has power over the fire. This angel called to the angel with the sharp sickle. He said, “Take your sharp sickle and gather the bunches of grapes from the earth’s vine. The earth’s grapes are ripe.” The angel swung his sickle over the earth. The angel gathered the earth’s grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God’s anger. The grapes were squeezed in the winepress outside the city. Blood flowed out of the winepress. It rose as high as the heads of the horses for a distance of 200 miles.

The Angels with the Last Plagues

Then I saw another wonder in heaven. It was great and amazing. There were seven angels bringing seven troubles. These are the last troubles, because after these troubles God’s anger is finished.

I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire. All the people who had won the victory over the animal and his idol and over the number of his name were standing by the sea. These people had harps that God had given them. They sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:

“Great and wonderful are the things you do, Lord God All-Powerful. Right and true are your ways, Ruler of the nations.

All people will fear you, O Lord. All people will praise your name. Only you are holy. All people will come and worship before you, because it is clear that you do the things that are right.”

After this I saw the temple (the holy place of God’s presence) in heaven. The temple was opened. And the seven angels bringing the seven troubles came out of the temple. They were dressed in clean, shining linen cloth. They wore golden bands tied around their chests. Then one of the four living things gave seven golden bowls to the seven angels. The bowls were filled with the anger of God, who lives forever and ever. The temple was filled with
smoke from the glory and the power of God. No one could enter the temple until the seven troubles of the seven angels were finished.

**The Bowls Filled with God's Anger**

16 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple. The voice said to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the seven bowls of God’s anger on the earth.”

2 The first angel left. He poured out his bowl on the land. Then all the people who had the mark of the animal and who worshiped his idol* got sores that were ugly and painful.

3 The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea. Then the sea became blood like the blood of a dead man. Every living thing in the sea died.

4 The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and the springs of water. The rivers and the springs of water became blood. Then I heard the angel of the waters say:

   “You are the One who is and who always was. You are the Holy One. You are right in these judgments that you have made.

6 The people have spilled the blood of your holy people* and your prophets.* Now you have given those people blood to drink. This is what they deserve.”

7 And I heard the altar* say:

   “Yes, Lord God All-Powerful, your judgments are true and right.”

8 The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun. The sun was given power to burn the people with fire. The people were burned by the great heat. Those people cursed the name of God. God is the One who had control over these troubles. But the people refused to change their hearts and lives and give glory to God.

9 The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the animal. And darkness covered the animal’s kingdom. People bit their tongues because of the pain. 11 People cursed the God of heaven because of their pain and the sores they had. But the people refused to change their hearts and turn away from the bad things they did.

12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates. The water in the river was dried up. This prepared the way for the rulers from the east to come. 13 Then I saw three unclean (evil) spirits that looked like frogs. They came out of the mouth of the giant snake, out of the mouth of the animal, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.* 14 These evil spirits are the spirits of demons.* They have power to do miracles.* These evil spirits go out to the rulers of the whole world. They go out to gather the rulers for battle on the great day of God the All-Powerful.

15 “Listen! I will come, and it will be a surprise, like when a thief comes! Happy is the person that stays awake and keeps his clothes with him. Then he will not have to go without clothes, and people will not see the things he is ashamed for them to see.”

16 Then the evil spirits gathered the rulers together to the place that is called Armageddon in the Hebrew language.

17 The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air. Then a loud voice came out of the temple* from the throne. The voice said, “It is finished!” Then there were flashes of lightning, noises, thunder, and a big earthquake. This was the worst earthquake that has ever happened since people have been on earth.

18 The great city split into three parts. The cities of the nations were destroyed. And God did not forget to punish Babylon the Great. He gave that city the cup filled with the wine of his terrible anger. 20 Every island disappeared and

**Notes:**

- **temple** God’s house—the place where God’s people worship and serve him.
- **idols** Idols are statues or other objects that people worshiped as gods.
- **holy people** Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.
- **prophets** People that spoke for God.
- **altar** Place where sacrifices or gifts are offered to God.
- **false prophet** A person that says he speaks for God but does not really speak God’s truth.
- **demon(s)** Demons are evil spirits from the devil.
- **miracles** False miracles—powerful acts done by the power of the devil.
there were no more mountains. Giant hailstones fell on the people from the sky. These hailstones weighed about 100 pounds each. People cursed God because of this trouble of the hail. This trouble was a terrible thing.

**The Woman on the Animal**

17 One of the seven angels came and spoke to me. This was one of the angels that had the seven bowls. The angel said, “Come, and I will show you the punishment that will be given to the famous prostitute. She is the one sitting over many waters. The rulers of the earth sinned sexually with her. The people of the earth became drunk from the wine of her sexual sin.”

Then the angel carried me away by the Spirit to the desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a red animal. The animal was covered with bad names written on him. The animal had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was dressed in purple and red. She was shining with the gold, jewels, and pearls she was wearing. She had a golden cup in her hand. This cup was filled with terrible evil things and the uncleanness of her sexual sin. She had a title written on her forehead. This title has a hidden meaning. This is what was written:

THE GREAT BABYLON MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND THE EVIL THINGS OF THE EARTH

6I saw that the woman was drunk. She was drunk with the blood of God’s holy people. She was drunk with the blood of those people who told about their faith in Jesus.

When I saw the woman, I was fully amazed. Then the angel said to me, “Why are you amazed? I will tell you the hidden meaning of this woman and the animal she rides—the animal with seven heads and ten horns. The animal that you saw was once alive, but that animal is not alive now. But that animal will be alive and come up out of the bottomless pit and go away to be destroyed. The people that live on the earth will be amazed when they see the animal. They will be amazed because he was once alive, is not alive now, but will come again. These are the people whose names have never been written in the book of life since the beginning of the world.

7“You need a wise mind to understand this. The seven heads on the animal are the seven hills where the woman sits. They are also seven rulers. Five of the rulers have already died. One of the rulers lives now. And the last ruler is coming. When he comes, he will stay only a short time. The animal that was once alive but is not alive now is an eighth ruler. This eighth ruler also belongs to the first seven rulers. And he will go away to be destroyed.

12“The ten horns you saw are ten rulers. These ten rulers have not yet received their kingdom. But they will receive power to rule with the animal for one hour. All ten of these rulers have the same purpose. And they will give their power and authority to the animal. They will make war against the Lamb. But the Lamb will defeat them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings. He will defeat them with his chosen and faithful followers—the people that he has called.”

15Then the angel said to me, “You saw the water where the prostitute sits. These waters are the many peoples, the different races, nations, and languages in the world. The animal and the ten horns (ten rulers) you saw will hate the prostitute. They will take everything she has and leave her naked. They will eat her body and burn her with fire. God made the ten horns want to do his purpose: They agreed to give the animal their power to rule. They will rule until the things God has said are completed. The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.”

**Babylon Is Destroyed**

18 Then I saw another angel coming down from heaven. This angel had much power. The angel’s glory made the earth bright. The angel shouted with a powerful voice:
“She is destroyed!
The great city of Babylon is destroyed!
She (Babylon) has become a home
for demons.*
That city has become a place for every
unclean spirit to live.
She has become a city filled with all
kinds of unclean birds.
She has become a city for every unclean
and hated animal.

3 All the peoples of the earth have drunk
the wine of her sexual sin
and of God’s anger.
The rulers of the earth sinned sexually
with her,
and the merchants* of the world
grew rich from the great wealth
of her luxury.”

4 Then I heard another voice from heaven say:
“Come out of that city, my people,
so that you will not share in her sins.
Then you will not get any of the bad things
that will happen to her.

5 That city’s sins are piled up as high
as heaven.
God has not forgotten the wrong things
she has done.

6 Give that city the same as she gave to others.
Pay her back twice as much as she did.
Prepare wine for her that is twice as strong
as the wine she prepared for others.

7 She (Babylon) gave herself much glory
and rich living.
Give her that much suffering and sadness.
She says to herself, ‘I am a queen
sitting on my throne;*
I am not a widow*;
I will never be sad.’

8 So these bad things will come to her
in one day:
death, sad crying, and great hunger.
She will be destroyed by fire,
because the Lord God who judges her
is powerful.

9 “The rulers of the earth who sinned sexually
with her (Babylon) and shared her wealth will
see the smoke from her burning. Then those
rulers will cry and be sad because of her death;.

10 The rulers will be afraid of her suffering and
stand far away. The rulers will say:

‘Terrible! How terrible, O great city,
O powerful city of Babylon!
Your punishment came in one hour!’

11 “And the merchants* of the earth will cry
and be sad for her (Babylon). They will be sad
because now there is no one to buy the things
they sell. 12 They sell gold, silver, jewels,
pearls, fine linen cloth, purple cloth, silk, and
scarlet cloth, all kinds of citron wood, and all
kinds of things made from ivory, expensive
wood, bronze, iron, and marble. 13 Those
merchants also sell cinnamon, spice, incense,
frankincense, myrrh, wine, and olive oil; fine
flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, carriages,
and the bodies and souls of men. 14 The
merchants will cry and say:

‘O Babylon, the good things you wanted
are gone from you.
All your rich and fancy things have
disappeared.
You will never have those things again.’

15 “The merchants* will be afraid of her
suffering and stand far away from her (Babylon). These are the people who became
rich from selling those things to her. The
people will cry and be sad. 16 They will say:

‘Terrible! How terrible for the great city!
She was dressed in fine linen;
she wore purple and scarlet cloth.
She was shining with gold, jewels,
and pearls!

17 All these riches have been destroyed
in one hour!’

“Every sea captain, all the people who
travel on ships, the sailors, and all the people
who earn money from the sea stood far away
from Babylon. 18 They saw the smoke from
her burning. They said loudly, ‘There was
never a city like this great city!’ 19 They threw
dust on their heads. They cried and were sad.
They said loudly:

* Demon(s)
Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

* Merchants
People who earn their living by buying and
selling things.

* Widow
A widow is a woman whose husband has died.
19 People in Heaven Praise God

After this I heard what sounded like many, many people in heaven. The people were saying:

Hallelujah (Praise God)!
Victory, glory, and power belong to our God.

2 His judgments are true and right.
Our God has punished the prostitute.*
She is the one who made the earth evil with her sexual sin.
God has punished the prostitute to pay her for the blood (death) of his servants."

3 Those people in heaven also said:

Hallelujah (Praise God)!
(†She is burning and, her smoke will rise forever and ever.)*"

4 Then the 24 elders* and the four living things bowed down. They worshiped God, who sits on the throne. They said:

Amen,* Hallelujah (Praise God)!"

5 Then a voice came from the throne. The voice said:

Praise our God, all you people that serve him!
Praise our God, all you people small and great that honor him!"

6 Then I heard something that sounded like many, many people. It sounded like the noise of flooding water and like loud thunder. The people were saying:

Hallelujah (Praise God)!
Our Lord God rules.
He is the All-Powerful.

7 Let us rejoice and be happy and give God glory!
Give God glory, because the wedding of the Lamb (Jesus) has come.
And the Lamb’s bride (the church) has made herself ready.

8 Fine linen was given to the bride for her to wear.
The linen was bright and clean.”

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Terrible! How terrible for the great city!
All the people who had ships on the sea became rich because of her wealth!
But she has been destroyed in one hour!

20 Be happy because of this, O heaven!
Be happy, God’s holy people* and apostles* and prophets*!
God has punished her because of the things she did to you.”

21 Then a powerful angel picked up a large rock. This rock was as big as a large millstone.*
The angel threw the rock into the sea and said:

That is how the great city of Babylon will be thrown down.
That city will never be found again.

22 The music of people playing harps* and other instruments, flutes and trumpets, will never be heard in you again.
No workman doing any job will ever be found in you again.
The sound of a millstone* will never be heard in you again.

23 The light of a lamp will never shine in you again.
The voices of a bridegroom* and bride will never be heard in you again.
Your merchants* were the world’s great people.
All the nations were tricked by your magic.

24 She (Babylon) is guilty of the blood (death) of the prophets,* of God’s holy people,* and of all the people who have been killed on earth.”

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Holy people Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.
Apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
Prophets People that spoke for God.
Millstone A large, round stone used for grinding grain.
Harps Musical instruments with strings.
Bridegroom A man ready to be married.
Merchants People who earn their living by buying and selling things.

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Prostitute(s) Women paid by men for sexual sin.
Elder(s) Elder means “older.” These are probably great leaders of God’s people. They may be the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups plus Jesus’ twelve apostles.
Amen To say “Amen” means to agree strongly.
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**REVELATION 19:9–20:6**

(The fine linen means the good things that God’s holy people* did.)

9 Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Those people who are invited to the wedding meal of the Lamb are blessed (happy)!” Then the angel said, “These are the true words of God.”

10 Then I bowed down before the angel’s feet to worship him. But the angel said to me, “Don’t worship me! I am a servant like you and your brothers who have the truth of Jesus. So worship God! Because the truth of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

**The Rider on the White Horse**

11 Then I saw heaven open. There before me was a white horse. The rider on the horse is called Faithful and True. He is right in his judging and in making war. 12 His eyes are like burning fire. He has many crowns on his head. He has a name written on him, but he is the only one who knows the name. No other person knows the name. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood. His name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him. They were riding white horses. They were dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 A sharp sword comes out of the rider’s mouth. He will use this sword to defeat the nations. He will rule the nations with a rod of iron. He will squeeze the grapes in the winepress of the terrible anger of God the All-Powerful. 16 On his robe and on his leg was written this name: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun. The angel said with a loud voice to all the birds flying in the sky, “Come together for the great supper of God. 18 Come together so that you can eat the bodies of rulers and army commanders and famous men. Come to eat the bodies of the horses and their riders and the bodies of all people—free, slave, small, and great.”

19 Then I saw the animal and the rulers of the earth. Their armies were gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. 20 But the animal was captured. Also the false prophet* was captured. This false prophet was the one who did the miracles* for the animal. The false prophet had used these miracles to trick the people who had the mark of the animal and worshiped his idol.* The false prophet and the animal were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 Their armies were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse. All the birds ate these bodies until the birds were full.

**The 1000 Years**

20 I saw an angel coming down out of heaven. The angel had the key to the bottomless pit. The angel also held a large chain in his hand. 2 The angel grabbed the giant snake (that old serpent). The giant snake is the devil (or Satan). The angel tied him with the chain for 1,000 years. 3 The angel threw the snake into the bottomless pit and closed it. The angel locked it over the snake. The angel did this so that the snake could not trick the people of the earth until the 1,000 years were ended. After 1,000 years the snake must be made free for a short time.

4 Then I saw some thrones and people sitting on them. These were the people who had been given the power to judge. And I saw the souls of those people who had been killed because they were faithful to the truth of Jesus and the message* from God. Those people did not worship the animal or his idol.* They did not receive the mark of the animal on their foreheads or on their hands. Those people became alive again and ruled with Christ for 1,000 years. 5 (The other dead people did not live again until the 1,000 years were ended.) This is the first raising of the dead. 6 Blessed (happy) and holy* are those people who share

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* holy people: Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

* prophecy: A message or teaching from God.
in this first raising of the dead. The second death has no power over those people. Those people will be priests for God and for Christ. They will rule with him for 1,000 years.

**The Defeat of Satan**

7When the 1,000 years are ended, Satan (the devil) will be made free from his prison in the bottomless pit. 8Satan will go out to trick the nations in all the earth—Gog and Magog. Satan will gather the people for battle. There will be so many people that they will be like sand on the seashore. 9Satan’s army marched across the earth and gathered around the camp of God’s people and the city that God loves. But fire came down from heaven and destroyed Satan’s army. 10And Satan (the one who tricked those people) was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur with the animal and the false prophet.* There they will be tortured (punished) day and night forever and ever.

**People of the World Are Judged**

11Then I saw a large white throne. I saw the One who was sitting on the throne. Earth and sky ran away from him and disappeared. 12And I saw the people that had died, great and small, standing before the throne. And the book of life was opened. There were also other books opened. These dead people were judged by the things they had done. These things are written in the books. 13The sea gave up the dead people that were in it. Death and Hades* gave up the dead people that were in them. Each person was judged by the things he had done. 14And Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. 15And if a person’s name was not found written in the book of life, then that person was thrown into the lake of fire.

**The New Jerusalem**

21Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared. Now there was no sea. 2And I saw the holy city coming down out of heaven from God. This holy city is the new Jerusalem.* It was prepared like a bride dressed for her husband. 3I heard a loud voice from the throne. The voice said, “Now God’s home is with people. He will live with them. They will be his people. God himself will be with them and will be their God. 4God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, sadness, crying, or pain. All the old ways are gone.”

5The One that was sitting on the throne said, “Look! I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted.”

6The One on the throne said to me: “It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give free water from the spring of the water of life to any person that is thirsty. 7Any person that wins the victory will receive all this. And I will be his God, and he will be my son. 8But the people who are cowards, people who refuse to believe, people who do terrible things, people who kill, people who sin sexually, people who do evil magic, people who worship idols,* and people who tell lies—all those people will have a place in the lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

9One of the seven angels came to me. This was one of the angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last troubles. The angel said, “Come with me. I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” 10The angel carried me away by the Spirit* to a very large and high mountain. The angel showed me the holy city, Jerusalem. The city was coming down out of heaven from God. 11The city was shining with the glory of God. It was shining bright like a very expensive jewel, like a jasper. It was clear as crystal. 12The city had a large, high wall with twelve gates. There were twelve angels at the gates. On each gate was

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**false prophet**  A person that says he speaks for God but does not really speak God’s truth.

**Hades**  Place where people go after they die.

**Hades**  Place where people go after they die.

**new Jerusalem**  The spiritual city where God’s people live with him.

**Alpha, Omega**  The first and last letters in the Greek alphabet, meaning the beginning and the end.

**idol(s)**  Idols are statues or other objects that people worshiped as gods.

**Spirit, Holy Spirit**  Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
written the name of one of the twelve family groups of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. The walls of the city were built on twelve foundation stones. On the stones were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod made of gold. The angel had this rod to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. The city was built in a square. Its length was equal to its width. The angel measured the city with the rod. The city was 12,000 stadia long, 12,000 stadia wide, and 12,000 stadia high. The angel also measured the wall. It was 144 cubits high. (The angel was using the same measurement that people use.) The wall was made of jasper. The city was made of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundation stones of the city walls had every kind of expensive jewels in them. The first foundation stone was jasper, the second was sapphire, the third was chalcedony, the fourth was emerald, the fifth was onyx, the sixth was carnelian, the seventh was yellow quartz, the eighth was beryl, the ninth was topaz, the tenth was chrysoprase, the eleventh was jacinth, and the twelfth was amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls. Each gate was made from one pearl. The street of the city was made of pure gold. The gold was clear like glass.

I did not see a temple in the city. The Lord God All-Powerful and the Lamb (Jesus) are the city’s temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it. The glory of God gives the city light. The Lamb (Jesus) is the city’s lamp. The peoples of the world will walk by the light given by the Lamb. The rulers of the earth will bring their glory into the city. The city’s gates will never close on any day, because there is no night there. The greatness and the honor of the nations will be brought into the city. Nothing unclean will ever enter the city. No person that does shameful things or tells lies will ever enter the city. Only the people whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life will enter the city.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life. The river was bright like crystal. The river flows from the throne of God and the Lamb. It flows down the middle of the street of the city. The tree of life was on each side of the river. The tree of life makes fruit twelve times a year. It gives fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for healing all the people. Nothing that God judges guilty will be there in that city. The throne of God and the Lamb (Jesus) will be in the city. God’s servants will worship him. They will see his face. God’s name will be written on their foreheads. There will never be night again. People will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun. The Lord God will give them light. And they will rule like kings forever and ever.

The angel said to me, “These words are true and can be trusted. The Lord is the God of the spirits of the prophets. God sent his angel to show his servants the things that must happen soon.”

Listen! I am coming soon! The person that obeys the words of prophecy in this book will be blessed.”

I am John. I am the one who heard and saw these things. After I heard and saw these things, I bowed down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed these things to me. But the angel said to me, “Don’t worship me! I am a servant like you and your brothers the prophets. I am a servant like all the people who obey the words in this book. You should worship God!”

Then the angel told me, “Don’t keep secret the words of prophecy in this book.
The time is near (for these things to happen),

11 Let the person that is doing wrong continue to do wrong. Let the person that is unclean continue to be unclean. Let the person that is doing right continue to do right. Let the person that is holy continue to be holy.*"

12 "Listen! I am coming soon! I will bring rewards with me. I will repay each person for the things he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega,* the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

14 "Those people who washed their robes* will be blessed. They will have the right to eat the food from the tree of life. They can go through the gates into the city. 15 Outside the city are the dogs (bad people), people who do evil magic, people who sin sexually, people who murder, people who worship idols,* and people who love lies and tell lies.

16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to tell you these things for the churches (groups of believers). I am the descendant* from the family of David.* I am the bright morning star.”

17 The Spirit* and the bride say, “Come!” Every person that hears this should also say, “Come!” If a person is thirsty, let him come; that person can have the water of life as a free gift if he wants it.

18 I warn every person that hears the words of the prophecy* of this book: If a person adds anything to these words, then God will give that person the troubles written about in this book. 19 And if any person takes away from the words of this book of prophecy, then God will take away that person’s share of the tree of life and of the holy city, which are written about in this book.

20 Jesus is, the One who says that these things are true. Now he says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen.* Come, Lord Jesus!

21 The grace (kindness) of the Lord Jesus be with all people.
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